



LIVING THE GOSPEL

12th Sunday in Ordinary Time
June 23, 2024

Theme: "Who then is this, that even wind and sea obey him?"

Gathering Prayer

All: Grant, O Lord, that we may always revere and love your holy name, for you never deprive of your guidance those you set firm on the foundation of your love. Through our Lord Jesus Christ, your Son, who lives and reigns with you in the unity of the Holy Spirit, one God, for ever and ever. Amen.

Exploring the Word

Gospel Reading: Mark 4:35-41

³⁵ On that day, when evening had come, he said to them, "Let us go across to the other side." ³⁶ And leaving the crowd, they took him with them in the boat, just as he was. And other boats were with him. ³⁷ And a great storm of wind arose, and the waves beat into the boat, so that the boat was already filling. ³⁸ But he was in the stern, asleep on the cushion; and they woke him and said to him, "Teacher, do you not care if we perish?" ³⁹ And he awoke and rebuked the wind, and said to the sea, "Peace! Be still!" And the wind ceased, and there was a great calm. ⁴⁰ He said to them, "Why are you afraid? Have you no faith?" ⁴¹ And they were filled with awe, and said to one another, "Who then is this, that even wind and sea obey him?"

Gospel Focus

Storms can be a source of awe. Their thundering might can evoke in us an appreciation for the God who created the natural world. However, we are only able to have this reaction when we are safe from them. The disciples are not observing this storm from a cozy cabin window; they are in its midst and at its mercy. Therefore, their awe comes not from this power of the natural world but from the peace to which it gives way in response to Jesus' power. They are filled with awe at the control he displays, at the commands the sea obeys, and at the peace he brings. Much of our appreciation for God comes from what God does for us—stilling the storms or providing us shelter, watering the earth and allowing it to dry in due season.

Gospel Reflection

In our most fearful moments, several things can quell our terror. An imagine threat passes; the light of day reveals that the forms that that seemed so scary in the night were only shadows; a real and well-founded terror is dissipated when loved ones bear it with us. In today's gospel, the disciples are terrified that the sea will swallow them up. On the Sea of Galilee, especially in the afternoon, strong wind squalls often surge suddenly. The lake is ringed by hills that funnel

the wind, which whips up the waves. The disciples' fear is well founded as the boat begins to be swamped. Meanwhile, Jesus is peacefully asleep, like those, the psalmist describes who rest undisturbed, having placed their trust entire in God (Ps 3:6; 4:9).

When the disciples roused Jesus, he rebukes the wind in the same way that he rebukes demons and unclean spirits (Mark 1:25; 3:12; 9:25), and it immediately obeys. Jesus' questions to the disciples, "Why are you terrified? Do you not yet have faith?" are not so much a rebuke to them, as they are a way of teaching them how to cross over from fear to faith. The disciples have addressed him as "Teacher" when they cry out to him (v. 38). In addition, Mark portrays this as a teachable moment.

As frequently happens in the books of Wisdom, instruction is given through probing questions that lead the hearer into deeper insight. God uses this technique with Job in the first reading for this Sunday. It is not with an accusatory tone that God asks Job about the primordial days. Job is in terrible anguish and has cried out in misery to God.

God's answer in the midst of the storm is to point Job to the awesomeness of creation. The Creator speaks of having birthed the sea as it "burst forth from the womb," and then of having put boundaries around it. Just as a mother wraps a new born with "swaddling bands," giving the child a sense of security as it enters a new and frightening phase of existence, so God did with the sea at its creation.

God does not explain or take away Job's suffering as uncontrollable waves of loss threatens to swallow him up. Rather, the Holy One redirects Job to the awe and beauty of the created world and the divine power that recreates it in ever new and magnificent patterns of generativity. Turning from his own misery toward the inscrutable designs of the Creator, Job allows himself to be transformed through the pain.

So too in the gospel, Jesus' questions point the disciples toward deeper understanding of the power of the Creator at work in himself and in them. It is a power that creates and recreates through the pattern of death and rebirth. As God does with Job, Jesus does not explain away the disciples' terror but redirects them toward the One who is the creative power at the center of the universe. He leads them through their fear, enabling them to cross over into awe at the One whose recreative power is manifest in Jesus' stilling of every storm.

Old/New Testament and CCC links

First Reading — Job 38:1, 8-11

¹ Then the LORD answered Job out of the whirlwind: ...

⁸ "Or who shut in the sea with doors, when it burst forth from the womb; ⁹ when I made clouds its garment, and thick darkness its swaddling band, ¹⁰ and prescribed bounds for it, and set bars and doors, ¹¹ and said, 'Thus far shall you come, and no farther, and here shall your proud waves be stayed?'"

Responsorial Psalm — Ps 107:23-24, 25-26, 28-29, 30-31

R: Give thanks to the Lord, his love is everlasting.

They who sailed the sea in ships, trading on the deep waters,
these saw the works of the Lord and his wonders in the abyss. **(R)**

His command raised up a storm wind which tossed its waves on high. They mounted up to heaven; they sank to the depths; their hearts melted away in their plight. **(R)**

They cried to the Lord in their distress; from their straits he rescued them, he hushed the storm to a gentle breeze, and the billows of the sea were stilled. **(R)**

They rejoiced that they were calmed, and he brought them to their desired haven. Let them give thanks to the Lord for his kindness and his wondrous deeds to the children of men. **(R)**

Second Reading — 2 Corinthians 5:14-17

¹⁴ For the love of Christ controls us, because we are convinced that one has died for all; therefore all have died. ¹⁵ And he died for all, that those who live might live no longer for themselves but for him who for their sake died and was raised.

¹⁶ From now on, therefore, we regard no one from a human point of view; even though we once regarded Christ from a human point of view, we regard him thus no longer. ¹⁷ Therefore, if any one is in Christ, he is a new creation; the old has passed away, behold, the new has come.

Sharing and Discussion

1. What in the natural world evokes awe in you? Where do you find God present in creation?
2. The disciples experienced a life threatening crisis when they were with Jesus in the storm. Do you have a similar experience? Share your experience on how you felt during and after the event and if your faith in Jesus has helped you weathered the crisis.
3. The disciples were filled with awe and wonder "Who then is this that even wind and sea obey him." How would you have responded to such an encounter?

Closing Prayer

All: Compassionate God, your love is everlasting. Through your son Jesus we come to know the delight of life with you. Receive our prayers that we might grow in faith and trust in you. We ask this through Christ our Lord. Amen.

Leader: May the Lord bless us, protect us from all evil and bring us to everlasting life.

All: Amen

Holy Cross, Bible Ministry invites - Living The Gospel session – Every Wednesdays (8 – 9.30pm).

<https://us02web.zoom.us/j/2760073734?pwd=cDRZR2JQMGRobVkwTY3ZVF5L1BwZz09>

Meeting ID: 276 007 3734
Passcode: WordOfGod

All are welcome!

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References:

- (1) Gospel Reflection and Living The Pascal Mystery are taken from "Living Liturgy for Sundays and Solemnities"
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