

June 20, 2021
12th Sunday in Ordinary Time
Mark 4:35-41

On that day, as evening drew on, he said to them, "Let us cross to the other side." Leaving the crowd, they took him with them in the boat just as he was. And other boats were with him. A violent squall came up and waves were breaking over the boat, so that it was already filling up. Jesus was in the stern, asleep on a cushion. They woke him and said to him, "Teacher, do you not care that we are perishing?" He woke up, rebuked the wind, and said to the sea, "Quiet! Be still!" The wind ceased and there was great calm. Then he asked them, "Why are you terrified? Do you not yet have faith?" They were filled with great awe and said to one another, "Who then is this whom even wind and sea obey?"

Background:

Probably most people will hear this gospel as a miracle story. But it can also be thought of in terms of a healing or an exorcism. Instead of Jesus releasing a person from the evil of sickness or a demon, here Jesus takes control of the overwhelming power of a violent sea to restore peace. Those for whom Mark was writing would have understood this story as a kind of demonstration of Jesus' power to control the chaos in the natural world.

The apostles are significant in this text. From their youth, boys of Jesus' time were trained to face danger bravely. Any expression of fear, especially in public, brought shame upon oneself and one's family. The apostles must have been in a dire, life-threatening situation to have abandoned their composure and turned to Jesus for help. Jesus is portrayed as being in total control. He confronts the dangerous power of nature. In the face of fear, he understands the lack of power of the disciples. It is at the heart of the text for Mark's community. "Why are you terrified? Do you not have faith?" Their faith should give the disciples the ability to face fear and to act, trusting in the power of God to confront evil. The question that the disciples ask is also revealing. "Who is this whom even wind and sea obey?" The question may not be so much about Jesus but about our ability to trust in Jesus as we face the challenges of our life! The text also reveals how God in the person of Jesus responds when our faith does not seem strong enough in a given situation.

Reflection Questions:

1. What is your experience of stormy seas?
2. How is the image of being cast about on a boat in a stormy sea a good image for the times when you have felt powerless or in danger for your life?
3. Have you ever felt like the powers of chaos were more powerful than peace and order?
4. What stories of God bringing order out of chaos might the early disciples have remembered as this gospel text is being told?
5. At the beginning of the text, the disciples are portrayed first as trying to care for Jesus who wants to get away from the crowds that have been following him, then they are in desperate need of Jesus' intervention, and finally they are being challenged to act and live in faith. Do any of these moments resonate with you and your relationship to the Body of Christ?
6. Mark says the disciples took him on the boat *just as he was*. What does that phrase "just as he was" suggest to you? Why do you think Mark has included it in the text?
7. The gospel text ends with the question: "Who then is this whom even wind and sea obey?" How do you answer this question?
8. Can you take some time to talk to God about the chaos that you experience, or your own awareness of your own lack of faith? Try to talk honestly to God who was present to these disciples "just as he was."

The gospel background and reflection questions are written by Fr. Paul Gallagher, OFM. They are edited by Sister Anne Marie Lom, OSF and Joe Thiel. The excerpts from the Sunday readings are prepared by Joe Thiel. To be added to the distribution list, send your name and email address to annemarie.lom@gmail.com

Our Gospel Reflections are hosted by the Franciscan Sisters of Christian Charity. Their homepage is

<https://fsc-calledtobe.org/>. One link there is labeled Franciscan Gospel Reflections. A click on the icon will take you to the Gospel reflections for the upcoming Sunday. By following this link, you will be able to blog or comment on the reflection questions. The material will be posted on Fridays and will be available until the following Friday when the new material is posted.

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From Joe:

Here are the gospel background and reflection questions for June 20th, as prepared by Franciscan spiritual director Fr. Paul Gallagher. The gospel from Mark is about Jesus calming the stormy sea at night, after the disciples woke him when the breaking waves were filling their boat. He woke up, rebuked the wind, and said to the sea, "Quiet! Be still!" There was great calm. He asked them, "Why are you terrified? Do you not yet have faith?" They asked one another, "Who is this whom even the wind and sea obey?" The other readings also refer to calming the wind and sea, and that old things have passed away and new things have come. In the first reading, the Lord says to Job, "Who shut the sea within doors when it burst forth? I set limits for it." Psalm 107 proclaims, "They who sailed the sea cried to the Lord in distress; from their straits he rescued them. He hushed the storm to a gentle breeze; the billows of the sea were stilled." In the second reading from 2 Corinthians, Paul writes, "The love of Christ impels us. Whoever is in Christ is a new creation: the old things have passed away; new things have come."

Joe

> i < May the Word light your way each day!

Excerpts from the readings for June 20, 2021, the Twelfth Sunday in Ordinary Time

The Lord addressed Job out of the storm and said:

Who shut within doors the sea, when it burst forth from the womb;
when I made the clouds its garment and thick darkness its swaddling bands?
When I set limits for it and fastened the bar of its door,
and said: Thus far shall you come but no farther, and here shall your proud waves be stilled!

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.
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.
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.
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.

Brothers and sisters: The love of Christ impels us,
once we have come to the conviction that one died for all; therefore, all have died.
He indeed died for all, so that those who live might no longer live for themselves
but for him who for their sake died and was raised.
Consequently, from now on we regard no one according to the flesh;

even if we once knew Christ according to the flesh, yet now we know him so no longer.

So whoever is in Christ is a new creation:

the old things have passed away; behold, new things have come.

On that day, as evening drew on, Jesus said to his disciples: "Let us cross to the other side."

Leaving the crowd, they took Jesus with them in the boat just as he was. And other boats were with him.

A violent squall came up and waves were breaking over the boat, so that it was already filling up.

Jesus was in the stern, asleep on a cushion. They woke him and said to him,

"Teacher, do you not care that we are perishing?"

He woke up, rebuked the wind, and said to the sea, "Quiet! Be still!"

The wind ceased and there was great calm.

Then he asked them, "Why are you terrified? Do you not yet have faith?"

They were filled with great awe and said to one another,

"Who then is this whom even wind and sea obey?"

Excerpts from Job 38:1, 8-11; Psalm 107:23-31; 2 Corinthians 5:14-17; and Mark 4:35-41