

June 23, 2024  
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:**

Many people will hear this Gospel as a miracle story. It can also be thought of in terms of a healing or exorcism. Instead of Jesus releasing a person from the evil of sickness or a demon, here Jesus takes control of the evil power of a violent sea to restore peace. In addition, 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 situation to abandon their composure and turn to Jesus for help. Jesus is portrayed as being in total control. He confronts the dangerous power of nature and chaos.

The disciples respond to Jesus differently as the text unfolds. At first, they act as caretakers and protectors, providing him a place of solitude and rest after a long day of being with the crowds. As the storm overpowers them and the boat takes on water, they call him teacher and seek his help. After he rebukes the wind and calms the sea, they are in awe of him. He has not called upon God to act but he has directly confronted the wind and the sea. "Who is this that even wind and sea obey?"

For Mark's community the questions asked at the end of the text are pivotal "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 real. "Who is this whom even wind and sea obey?" The question may not be so much about Jesus but about their ability to trust in Jesus as they faced the challenges of being Christians in a world that was hostile to their belief in Jesus as Messiah. The text also reveals how God in the person of Jesus responds when faith does not seem strong enough in threatening situations.

### **Reflection Questions:**

1. What is your experience of stormy seas?
2. Have you ever felt like you were being tossed about by situations that were much bigger than yourself?
3. Do you recall other stories where the powers of chaos were represented by storms and turbulent seas?
4. As the text unfolds the disciples respond to Jesus differently. How would you characterize your response to Jesus at present?
5. Mark says the disciples took Jesus on the boat *just as he was*. What does that phrase "just as he was" suggest to you?
6. The Gospel text ends with the question, "Who then is this whom even wind and sea obey?" How do you answer?
7. 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](mailto:annemarie.lom@gmail.com)

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### **Excerpts from the readings for June 23, 2024, 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**

Friends,

Here are the Gospel background and reflection questions for June 23rd, as prepared by Franciscan spiritual director Fr. Paul Gallagher. The Gospel from Mark is the story of Jesus calming the storm. A violent squall came up while Jesus was asleep in the stern, crossing the lake with his disciples. When they woke him, he rebuked the wind, and said to the sea, "Be still!" The wind ceased and there was great calm. They said to one another, "Who then is this whom even wind and sea obey?"

The other readings also have references to control of the sea, rescue from distress, the love of God for all, and the new ways being different from the old. In the first reading, from Job, the Lord addressed Job out of the storm and said, "Who shut within doors the sea? When I set limits for it and said: Thus far shall you come but no farther, and here shall your proud waves be stilled!" Psalm 107 proclaims, "They who sailed the sea saw the works of the Lord and his wonders. His command raised up a storm wind. He hushed the storm to a gentle breeze; the billows of the sea were stilled. They rejoiced that they were calmed, and he brought them to their desired haven. Give thanks to the Lord, his love is everlasting." In the second reading, from the second letter to the Corinthians, Paul writes, "We have come to the conviction that one died for all, so that those who live might live for him. Whoever is in Christ is a new creation; the old things have passed away."

As recorded by Mark, this Gospel event takes place on a day when Jesus had been speaking to the crowds in many parables, and explaining some privately to his disciples. As evening drew on, he said to them, "Let us cross to the other side." They left the crowd, taking him with them in the boat just as he was. Other boats were with them as they were crossing the Sea of Galilee. The boat was filling with storm-blown water when they woke him to ask, "Teacher, do you not care that we are perishing?" After the sea was calmed, he asked them, "Why are you terrified? Do you not yet have faith?" They were filled with great awe. "Who then is this whom even wind and sea obey?"

Joe

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