



Things to Ponder

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Homily – Twelfth Week in Ordinary Time – Mark 4:35-41

Introduction: As We Walk Through a Storm

This weekend we are continuing in Ordinary Time, and our Gospel passage is from Mark who presents a vivid portrait of Jesus whose words and actions show that he is not merely human – but divine. After an exhausting day of teaching, Jesus leads his disciples away from the crowds (down-time?) and into the boats that they will use to cross the Sea of Galilee. This Sunday's particular reading describes how Jesus calmed a storm at sea. *Can you identify a personal storm in your life?*

As is so typical in Mark's Gospel, Jesus' disciples are frightened by the sudden storm. Mark notes the contrast between the disciples' terror and Jesus' peace – for Jesus is sleeping (during a violent storm!) untroubled by what is going on around him. *Can you identify your feelings during your storm?*

The disciples' words to Jesus are telling: “Do you not care that we are perishing?” Apparently, they are familiar enough with Jesus to dare to wake him up and to share their fear. *Do you have that kind of confident relationship with Jesus to raise your fears?*

This weekend's Gospel offers clear evidence of Jesus' power and authority as he calms the storm. In his day, power over nature was believed to be a sign of divinity – only the Almighty Yahweh calms storms. In fact, according to Mark's choice of a Hebrew verb, Jesus actually stands up in the violently pitching boat to command the raging sea: “Quiet! Be still!”

At the conclusion of this passage, the disciples are filled with great awe and left wondering about Jesus' real identity. “Who then is this whom even wind and sea obey?” The disciples' uncertainty about “who is this Jesus?” is a recurring theme in Mark's Gospel. *Who is this Jesus - for you?*

This Gospel is a metaphor for our lives today. We are in the boat, the storms of life are raging around us, and like the disciples, we may believe that Jesus is unconcerned or “sleeping.” You and I can only hope that we will be familiar enough with Jesus as his early disciples. In particular, if we feel that Jesus is sleeping and unconcerned about our worries and fears, are we comfortable enough to wake him up and voice our needs? It is interesting in this vivid passage that Jesus does not chide his disciples for waking him up. Instead, he chides them for their lack of faith, for their lack of

perspective. *Where are you on the “faith scale” – #1 being the lowest; #10 being the highest. Why did you rank yourself in this way?*

I would invite you to take time to read and ponder the words from the *Gospel of Mark 4:35-41*.

What word or words caught your attention?

What in this passage comforted you?

What in this passage challenged you?

Further Reflections and Questions:

“Do you not yet have faith? *When has my faith been tested? Identify a situation. What happened?*”

“They were filled with great awe.” *When have I been most aware of God’s power and majesty?* Jesus is with me throughout the storms of my life. Let’s face it! Life is not easy. He is able with a word to bring a great inner calm to me even in the midst of chaos and anxieties. He understands my fears – for he himself was human. In the storms of my own life, I too can cry out “Lord, do you not care?” He will hear me, reassure me, and say: “Why are you afraid? I am here with you. I haven’t forgotten you.”

Lord, there are times when I need to hear your voice ordering, “Peace! Be still!” There is no basis for my fear. You are with me, and I trust you.

It is during the storms of our lives that we discover what we really believe. Storms have a way of revealing the truth about ourselves.

There are some things we can only learn in a storm. Storms help us to see some things more clearly. *Have you ever experienced this?*

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