

12th Sunday in Ordinary Time

The role of God in calming the storms of life both in the history of the Church and in the lives of Christians is the central theme of the readings for this *Sunday*. In the first reading, God addresses Job for the first time, questioning his right to challenge God's authority and leading Job deeper and deeper into the mystery of creation. We hear how the Lord speaks to Job whose life was devastated by storms of the total loss of his possessions, the deaths of his dear ones, and a whole-body disease that left him in misery. "*Out of the storm,*" God reminds Job that He is in control.

Today's Responsorial Psalm (Ps 107) picks up the storm theme and tells us how the Lord saves the sailors caught up in the high waves of a tempest "*They who sailed the sea in ships ... saw the works of the Lord and His wonders in the abyss.*" by first "*raising up a storm wind,*" then "*hushing the storm to a gentle breeze.*"

Paul, who "rode the storm" of rejection by his former friends, also experienced storms of violent hostility from the Jews who refused to believe that Jesus was the promised Messiah. So, he explains in the second reading that Jesus died for us to make us a "*new creation.*" In order to receive this gift of love, we have to respond, living for Jesus in all situations of our lives because Jesus has gone before us through the uncharted sea of life.

We need to remember that Jesus is always with us in the boat of our life. All of us are making a journey across the sea of time to the shore of eternity. So, it is natural that, occasionally, we all experience different types of violent storms in our lives: physical storms, emotional storms, and spiritual storms. We face storms of sorrow, doubt, anxiety, worry, temptation and passion. The storms we encounter in

life are often what make us or break us. These storms can either bring us closer to God and one another or alienate us from God and others. And it is only Jesus who can still these storms for us.

Jesus can give us real peace in the storm of sorrow. When we are totally depressed with sorrow Jesus assures us of the glory of the life to come. Jesus consoles us at the loss of our dear ones with the assurance of eternal life for them in the Heavenly home of God the Father where we, too, will live one day. When the storms of doubt seek to uproot the very foundations of our Faith, Jesus is there to still that storm, revealing to us his Divinity and the authority behind the words of the Holy Scripture.

Jesus gives us peace in a tempest of doubt, tension and uncertainty, provided we humbly submit to Jesus' guidance. Jesus gives us peace in the storms of anxiety and worry about ourselves, about the unknown future, and about those we love. Jesus calms the storms of passion in people who have hot hearts and blazing tempers. Jesus captains the boat of our soul, not eliminating all storms but seeing to it that we do not sink, if we keep our Faith and persist in calling on God for help.

“Lord, don't you care about us?” Sure, He does! Is Christ asleep? We might often be tempted to think so when we sit by, helplessly watching the sufferings of a loved one, or in the face of personal tragedy, or in times of depression or natural disaster. In such moments we instinctively turn to God, and yet sometimes we don't find Him or He seems far away, apparently busy with other matters. But in our Gospel passage today, Jesus does calm the storm. And that's just it. Jesus does calm the storm not all storms forever, but each storm individually at the right moment, just when calming is needed.