

June 23, 2024 TWELFTH SUNDAY IN ORDINARY TIME

READING I *Job 38:1, 8-11*

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!

RESPONSORIAL PSALM *Psalms 107:23-24, 25-26, 28-29, 30-31 (1b)*

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

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.

READING II *2 Corinthians 5:14-17*

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.

GOSPEL *Mark 4:35-41*

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?"

Practice of Charity

The difficulties and hardships we experience can leave us feeling like we are hit with a violent squall. Today's readings invite us to do hard work: to choose to see God's wonders amid the tempest.

- ♦ Take a moment to reflect on a time when you asked Jesus, as the disciples did in today's Gospel passage, if he even cares that you are perishing. Instead of being terrified as your boat fills up, how can you work with the Lord to still the waves and cultivate quiet and stillness?
- ♦ Choose an issue of justice with which you are unfamiliar and spend time learning about it. Resources are available under "Issues and Action" at the United States Conference of Catholic Bishops' website, uscgb.org.
- ♦ Consider how, as a member of a larger community, you can calm unjust seas with the Lord by advocating for justice.

Download more questions and activities for families, initiation groups, and other adult groups at <http://www.ltp.org/ahw>.

Scripture Insights

Mark's brief narrative of Jesus controlling the waters is replete with scriptural symbolism and interpretive force. In the Old Testament Scriptures, this creative force reveals both the power and presence of God. The manifestation of God in the lives of people, from creation throughout history, is called *theophany*.

At creation, God formed and separated the waters to create the seas, the skies, and the land, then populated them with all manner of fauna to roam the earth and sky. This powerful creative imagery flows seamlessly into God's controlling of the waters in the Exodus and returns throughout the Scriptures to show God's power and care over creation. Job indicates that God alone "shut within doors the sea, / when it burst forth from the womb / . . . / and said: Thus far shall you come but no farther, / and here shall your proud waves be stilled" (Job 38:8, 11). The psalmist confirms God's ability to raise and still the stormy seas. When the people cry out in distress, the Lord rescued them, "he hushed the storm to a gentle breeze, / and the billows of the sea were stilled" (Psalm 107:29).

In Mark's Gospel, Jesus does, through his power over the waters, what only God can do. Leaving the crowds for time with his disciples, Jesus suggests that they cross the sea of Galilee. He then sleeps through a violent squall that threatens to capsize their boat. Upon awakening, Jesus commands quiet and stillness. As calm overtakes the waters, he challenges his disciples' faith, and they recognize the theophany.

- ♦ In the face of the storm and terrified disciples, Jesus commands quiet and stillness. To whom is he speaking? Just the wind and sea? Or the disciples as well?
- ♦ How might quiet and stillness calm our stormy minds and open us to the power and presence of God in our lives even in chaotic times?
- ♦ Paul challenges us to live in Christ as in a new creation. How might this look in your life?