

Fr. Rudy's Reflections
The Twelfth Sunday in Ordinary Time
June 23, 2024

Jesus Calms the Stormy Sea

My Brothers and Sisters in the Risen Lord,

You might recall last week's Gospel that described agrarian imagery of the Kingdom of God with two parables—the mustard seed that is planted, grows, and flourishes and the parable of the sower whose seeds grow without intervention once they are scattered about the field. This week, in today's Gospel, Mark describes another image of the kingdom—this time with Jesus and his disciples in a scene amid a violent storm on the Sea of Galilee. As this group is tossed about by forces of nature, Jesus is able to silence the squall with a single rebuke: "Quiet now! Be calm!" This moment left an awe-inspiring impression on his disciples as they witnessed Jesus's almighty power against the chaos wrought by the world's ever-changing hostile environment. It was a beautiful and fascinating moment symbolizing the fragility of life and that only through Our Lord Jesus Christ may our souls find solace.

In many ways, our lives are like sailors on a boat who are maneuvering through dangerous and uncertain waters. We design and craft our boats individually, using our life experiences, hopes and dreams, and other factors we believe will help us stay afloat. We think our structure will help us be safe, secure, and happy in the waters we, as human beings, are drawn to; yet the seas of life can dramatically change at a moment's notice—and the way we sail, plan our course, or our enthusiasm for continuing the trip might be altered. Whether it is a sudden death of a loved one, an unforeseen illness, or a setback, life can throw us side-to-side, teetering on the edge, or even overboard with no life raft in sight. In these moments of doubt, fear, and uncertainty, many of us turn to our Lord in prayer and ask for his help. In these critical moments, however, when we cannot see a positive outcome, do we truly embrace and trust in the knowledge that through the power, love, mercy, and wisdom of God, we will recover, still the waters, and set our sails aright?

My questions to you today are the same Jesus asked his apostles after he quieted the sea: "Why are you so frightened? How is it that you have no faith?" In stress-filled moments, are we uncertain too; are we saying, "Who can this be?" In our egocentric minds, do we think we can orchestrate our lives without complete trust in God that "in [Him] all things are possible (Matt 19:26)? Yes, we pray, we ask for his help, but we must fully appreciate and live the truth that there is no limit to what he can do for us, what we can become in his name, and how we can help (with our love for him) to change the world.

"Is it not wonderful that even today in the leaky boat we call life, on the stormy sea we call existence, so many people still see the still point where He stands in the stern of the boat and says to the storm-tossed billows: 'Be still!' We hear, and the storm subsides, peace come; and with the first disciples, we find ourselves wondering: 'Who can this be who removes the discouragement, the fatigue, the doubt of life?'"—Rev. George Berwanger, *Hear His Voice*, 1995

Yours in Christ,

Fr. Rudy