

Homily. 12th Sunday in Ordinary Time. Year. B. 22-23 June 2024.

On the boat that evening there were at least 4 experienced fishermen, the brothers Peter and Andrew along with James and John. They knew the Sea of Galilee as well as anyone could. They certainly knew that while it's mostly a calm body of water it can also, because of where it's positioned, be given to sudden strong winds and unexpected storms. In this way the Sea of Galilee, around which much of Jesus early work took place, is like our lives; plain sailing usually, but capable of changing rapidly into a tumult of danger, distress and fear.

Still, Jesus had been so very busy those few days and he needed to get away from the crowds for a while, so they took him onboard just as he was; tired, dusty and sweaty. Soon he fell into a deep sleep, trusting the fishermen for a few hours to know what they were doing as they ferried him across the waters. But, like I've said, things can quickly go awry and that evening they did in a spectacular and very scary fashion.

As the boat was being swamped the disciples did a smart thing and woke Jesus up. Given what they did in their crisis it's a bit concerning how infrequently we call on Jesus when our lives start getting fearfully out of control. Maybe it's the 'tough it out and keep carrying on' mentality that stops us calling out for help, or our prideful, even arrogant thinking that we can manage on our own and thank you very much. Whatever the reasons we've got to learn, and as often as needed, that there's no reason for any of us to be alone, cutting ourselves off from the Lord's help and the help of others, when we're experiencing heavy weather.

There's a saying which goes like this; Fear is the headwind of faith. This means that when we're afraid, feeling uncertain, overwhelmed and swamped by life's forceful headwinds, opportunity also comes our way for it's an ill wind indeed that doesn't blow any good. The good in these challenges is that they teach us that we're not isolated individuals, not beings without a connection to God, who is the source of Being Itself.

If and hopefully when we do wake up to our need for assistance, finding the sense to yell out for help, Jesus is there in our lives right where we last left him, sleeping soundly in the back of our minds and hearts. He's ever ready to rise up in our defence, always the saviour capable of stilling the winds and calming the storms around us and within us.

His question is rhetorical really; Why are you so frightened? How is it that you have so little faith? For the unexpected out of control headwinds are actually calling us to faith, to a deeper trust and to renewed confidence in him and his people who are all around us. The winds that once blew him into death were the same ones that summoned him to commend his life to God, so causing him to be lifted up into the fullness of life. They ended up making him a saviour for us in our gales, the faithful redeemer of our unsettled humanity and of our world in stormy times. St. Paul puts it to us this way in the 2nd reading; When we feel overwhelmed the door is also blown open for us to be also overwhelmed by the love of Christ who ends our old fearful ways and brings a new creation into being for us, one that is full of faith, grace and truth and of God's powerful love and life.