

## Homily: Twelfth Sunday in Ordinary Time B 2024

### Who is this?

To appreciate the Gospel of today – the storm on the lake – we need to see it in the context of Mark’s Gospel – what went before this episode and what happens after.

Before this episode Jesus and his disciples are in Galilee, among their own people, and his ministry is going well – not perfect, there are a few problems here and there, but overall, it’s going quite well: the people are flocking to Jesus, he is healing many, and teaching them. All is pretty good, and then Jesus says in today’s Gospel – quite unexpectedly – “let us cross over to the other side.”

Why would he suggest that? Things were good on the Galilee side. So, why not stay there forever. Well, life is a journey. For whatever reason, we cannot stay in one place forever. Either by choice or by circumstances we are called at different times in life to keep on our pilgrim journey.

But the main thing to note is that Jesus says, “let us cross over to the other side”. Jesus never says, “you go on this difficult journey.” He always says, “Let us go. I will journey with you.”

So the disciples leave the shore of the sea of Galilee to journey with Jesus to the other side. Then a terrible storm comes up on the lake. And the disciples fear for their lives. They fear that they are going to drown. Jesus is with them in the boat, but he is sleeping (or he appears to be sleeping) and they cry out, ‘Teacher, do you not care? We are going down.’ Jesus woke up, and rebuked the wind, and said to the sea, “Quiet now. Be calm.” The wind ceased and there was great calm again.

Then he asked them, ‘Why are you so frightened? How is it that you have no faith? The disciples were filled with awe and said to one another, “Who

can this be? Even the wind and the sea obey him.” Through this terrible experience they have come to see that Jesus is much more than a teacher and healer. Even the wind and the sea obey him! They would never have found this out if they had stayed on the Galilee side.

And that’s where the Gospel of today ends. The next verse in Mark’s Gospel says, “They arrived (safely) on the other side of the lake …”

There are times in the lives of each of us when we can find ourselves in the midst of a terrible personal storm. We find ourselves surrounded by great problems that have emerged unexpectedly. Today’s Gospel assures us that Jesus is with us in those moments. He is not on some distant shore – in some safe place – no, he is with us in our distress, sharing the conditions we are experiencing, suffering with us.

We may not be able to feel his presence. Like the disciples in the boat we may cry out, “Lord, do you not care?” It’s perfectly OK to ask that question.

I pray with great confidence that Jesus will at the right moment stand up and bring peace in the midst of our storms and bring us safely to shore, to the next chapter of our life. Through the storms in our life, may we come to know the Lord in a new way, as the disciples did. May we be able to exclaim with them, “Who is this? Even the winds and the sea obey him.”

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