

GOSPEL

Mark 4:35-41

With the coming of evening, Jesus said to his disciples, 'Let us cross over to the other side.' And leaving the crowd behind they took him, just as he was, in the boat; and there were other boats with him. Then it began to blow a gale and the waves were breaking into the boat so that it was almost swamped. But he was in the stern, his head on the cushion, asleep. They woke him and said to him, 'Master, do you not care? We are going down!' And he woke up and rebuked the wind and said to the sea, 'Quiet now! Be calm!' And the wind dropped, and all was calm again. Then he said to them, 'Why are you so frightened? How is it that you have no faith?' They were filled with awe and said to one another, 'Who can this be? Even the wind and the sea obey him.'

HOMILY OF ST JOHN PAUL II

22 June 1997, Excerpt

Today his Word questions our faith, which sometimes falters, causing us unfounded fears: "Why are you afraid?" he asks, "Have you no faith?" (Mk 4:40). There are many fears that torment us and can induce us to cowardice or discouragement: fear of the seeming silence of God, fear of the great world powers that claim to compete with God's omnipotence and providence, and lastly, fear of a culture that seems to

marginalize the religious and Christian meaning of life by depriving it of social significance.

The Gospel scene of the boat threatened by the waves, calls to mind the image of the Church plying the seas of history, on her way to the fulfilment of God's kingdom. Jesus, who promised to remain with his own until the end of time (cf. Mt 28:20), will not leave the ship to drift. In times of hardship and trouble, she continues to hear his voice: "Courage! I have overcome the world" (Jn 16:33). It is a call to strengthen continually her faith in Christ, and not to give in to difficulties. In moments of trial, when the "dark night" seems to obscure her way or when the storm of difficulties worsens, the Church knows she is in good hands.

The words we have heard in the second reading also urge us to trust in the Lord's presence and to renew our life as true believers: "Therefore, if anyone is in Christ, he is a new creation" (2 Cor 5:17). In the newness of life, a gift of our Lord to all who are baptised, there is no room for uncertainty and hesitation. Trust and peace are the sign of deep communion with Jesus Christ, who died "for all, that those who live might live no longer for themselves but for him who for their sake died and was raised".

REFLECTION QUESTIONS

What stood out to you from the Gospel or Reflection/Homily?



Head: Jesus connects fear to a lack of faith – how might they be connected? What does "if anyone is in Christ, he is a new creation" mean to you?



Heart: St John Paul II lists many fears we might have: the silence of God, great world powers and the current culture. Of what are you most afraid? Why?



Hands: We are told "God is love" and "perfect love casts out fear" (1 John 4:16,18). How does God cast out fear for you?

PRAYER

Spend some time in prayer with one another:

1. Conscious of what has just been shared, members briefly name/ describe their prayer needs.
2. Intentionally call on the Holy Spirit to be present (e.g. "Come Holy Spirit, please be present as we pray")
3. Offer prayers of thanks and praise to God.
4. Pray for each others' prayer needs. Where appropriate, you may like to encourage the group to place a hand on the shoulder of the individual that you are currently praying for.
5. Conclude your prayer time with another prayer of praise, perhaps praying the 'Glory Be'.