

Commentary on the Gospel for Tue, Jul 2nd 2013

We've all been there. Things are going along just fine in our lives. We have Jesus in our boat, and everything is pretty calm, pretty secure. And, then, a storm comes up - any storm, any conflict, any illness, any threat. And, we panic. We feel helpless and afraid. And, our fear is powered by resentment. We turn to Jesus and say, "Where were you? How can you let this happen? Haven't I been good? Haven't I made sacrifices for others? If you are with me always, then why am I not always free from storms?" The more we think about it, the more we can point to very concrete situations in our lives that are very much like today's gospel.

"Why are you terrified, O you of little faith?" Jesus' question is a good one for us today. Some of us are very much in touch with our terror. We know where we are afraid, and where we are terrified. We are facing some very difficult challenges to our security and to our faith. For others of us, it is anxiety that challenges our faith. It's the daily anxiety about the hundred and one unsure outcomes in our lives that could hurt us or the ones we love. Our worries and our faith are often in an uncomfortable presence together in our daily lives. For still others of us, our fears are so covered up, perhaps boarded up, that we have to do some "exploration," some reflection to recognize them and name them.

Sometimes our everyday way of being is constructed by fear or "little faith." Our patterns, our ways of acting and interacting with others are built, based upon what we fear. Sometimes, I'm so "defended" or so "aggressive" or so "manipulative" - in a "me against the world, prepared for every storm" stance - that I need to hear Jesus ask today, "Why are you terrified, O you of little faith?"

I think Jesus wants us to know that he is with us, and that he has power over the "wind and the waves" - the storm stuff. But, instead of being with us, always stopping the forces of nature and free will from whipping up into storms, Jesus wants to be with us comforting us with our faith. Jesus wants us to know that our faith can help us deal with our fears - all our fears, even death itself.

Our act of faith today is to pray, "My life is in your hands." Some days, that will be said with tears streaming down our faces. Some days, it will be prayed in the presence of so much anxiety and fear. Some days, it can only be the Spirit praying those words within us. But the more days we say those words, the more deeply those words will come from our hearts. It is not so much that we "place" our lives in God's hands; rather, we recognize that our lives are in God's hands.

In our faith in the death and resurrection of Jesus, we express our faith in God's victory over all sin and death. We express our faith that we can "rest" in that victory - no matter what we are suffering or fearing. We can live with more peace, with more trust, with more hope, and with more risk. Instead of watching out for storms, we can comfort others in stormy weather. We can build communities of faith and hope and courage. We can bring light to the dark clouds of our world - even when a little faith takes away our fear.

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