

12th SUNDAY IN ORDINARY TIME (YEAR B)
Who can this be? Even the wind and the sea obey him.

The calming of the storm, as told in Mark's gospel today, points to the divinity of Jesus. The Church's selection of the first reading from Job draws this out more clearly; only the Lord God has power over such forces of nature. The question of the disciples at the end of today's gospel passage is a question we are invited to ask ourselves: *'Who can this be? Even the wind and the sea obey him.'*

One can sympathize with the reaction of the disciples as the gale blows and the boat is swamped with water. Would our own reaction be any different? In fact, are there not many times in our lives when we are faced with all sorts of difficulties and ask our Lord something similar to the question: *'Master, do you not care? We are going down!'* And yet, the Lord rebukes his disciples for this response by saying, *'Why are you so frightened? How is it that you have no faith?'*

I would like us to focus a little on Jesus in the boat while the wind rages and the waves crash in. He has such trust in his heavenly Father that his sleep is not even disturbed until the disciples wake him. He is in such a place of perfect love and trust that he is able to remain in perfect peace and know no fear.

This example set by Jesus helps us in, what the Church calls, the discernment of spirits. In John's gospel, Jesus says to his disciples, *'Peace I bequeath to you, my own peace I give you, a peace the world cannot give, this is my gift to you. Do not let your hearts be troubled or afraid'*.¹ Through baptism, and the indwelling gift of the Holy Spirit, we each share in this gift of deep inner peace. Spiritually, the call is to remain in this peace, to live out of this place of peace, and to not let anything tempt us to step out of it.

There are many occasions in our day that can tempt us away from this gift of deep inner peace. I have only to get behind the wheel of my car to find, before long, this gift of peace being challenged. Someone may pull out suddenly, or blast their horn unnecessarily, or maybe the traffic is such that the journey is prolonged. Before long I may be tempted with a feeling of frustration, or impatience, or indignation, or anger, or even rage. The choice I have to make is whether or not to go with these feelings and let them draw me out of peace, or whether I choose to cling to the Lord and let those feelings go. If I can let such feelings go, then I am learning to die to self in order to live for the Lord. These are simple disciplines we can develop while driving a car! I am sure that there are many other situations that you can think of where your inner peace is tested.

When wrestling with more difficult circumstances and situations in life, a common temptation in the midst of such storms is to think that God is no longer there, and to forget that He is always present to us, even if he is, as it were, asleep in the boat. Such difficult experiences in life are times in which the Lord can increase our faith in him, where we learn to remain with him in a place of peace and trust even when the storm rages around us. Such faith and trust can grow in both the small and big events in life, and each day provides a myriad of opportunities to grow in maturity in our spiritual life. And if we persevere in calling on the name of the Lord in our prayer, he will deliver us from every storm life can throw at us.

God bless,

Fr Andy

¹ John 14:27.