

TWELFTH SUNDAY IN ORDINARY TIME

Year B

Job 38:1, 8-11

Psalm 107:23-24, 25-26, 28-29, 30-31

2 Corinthians 5:14-17

Mark 4:35-41

Gathering

(An unlit candle, a Bible open to this week's gospel, and, if available, a barometer rest on a cloth covered table in the gathering place.)

Prayer

(The leader lights the candle. Members rest in quiet attention to God's presence among and within them. After a time of quiet, members pray in two alternating groups as follows.)

Leader: Let us pray:

I: They that go down to the sea in ships that do business in great waters;

II: These see the works of the Lord, and his wonders in the deep.

I: For he commands, and raises the stormy wind, which lifts up the waves thereof.

II: They mount up to the heaven, they go down again to the depths: their soul is melted because of trouble.

I: They reel to and fro, and stagger like a drunken man, and are at their wits' end.

II: Then they cry unto the Lord in their trouble, and he brings them out of their distresses.

I: He makes the storm a calm, so that the waves thereof are still.

II: Then are they glad because they be quiet; so he brings them
 unto their desired haven.

Sailor's Prayer adapted from
The Book of Common Prayer

HEARING THE LORD'S GOSPEL

(The scriptures are proclaimed aloud with a pause after each reading. Following a pause after the proclamation of the gospel, the leader invites members to name a word or phrase from the gospel that stays with them, but without any additional comment. Some may repeat what another has already said.)

*When this naming is complete, the leader passes out copies of the scriptures of the week as needed. Pausing between them, the leader then poses these two questions: “**What draws you to this gospel?**” “**Where do you resist this gospel?**” The community pauses for a time of silent reflection. After about a minute, the leader invites members to consider the Reflection and Questions for the week. After a time for silent reflection, the leader invites members to re-arrange themselves in groups of three or four for sharing. The small groups move off so as not to intrude on one another.)*

Reflection

Many of us come from environments that are familiar with addiction, and all that comes with the disease. The fears are real: when will mom or dad binge again? Is there enough money? How much screaming and yelling will there be on Friday night? Mental health experts say that those who live over an extended period of time with the uncertainties of life that addiction brings develop a personality that is in a constant state of anticipation for disaster.

To the outsider, looking in, all may appear to be smooth sailing. For the spouse, child, parent, of the addicted however, the threat of a violent storm is always imminent. “Red sky at night, sailors’ delight, red sky in the morning, sailors take warning.” Even when the seas seem calm, the winds in your favor and sailing is smooth, for one who has experienced this trauma, typhoons and tsunamis are always there on the horizon.

This way of experiencing life makes the journey we all make that much more difficult. All of us can easily relate to the terror that the disciples feel when their fishing boat is being slammed to and fro in the wild seas.

Swamped and going down for what seems like the third time, we too may feel that the one who is supposed to take care of us and sleeps through our disaster has abandoned us.

We all face waters with undertows that we are sure will take us out to sea, leaving us feeling like we are doomed to drown. It's part of human nature to be frightened. What does a believer who is stuck in a storm do? I always yell," Hey God, can't you see I'm drowning here?"

Like the disciples we bring the terror to Jesus, revealing that we, like them, doubt that Jesus is really with us. But he is with us. He responds to our cry, just as he did to the disciples. He calms the seas that roil around us. The seas must still be navigated, but Jesus is a worthy shipmate and captain. Call on him.

Questions for Reflection and Conversation

- ◆ About what are you anxious and troubled these days?
- ◆ When have you felt swamped and alone, even abandoned by God?
- ◆ Reflect on a time, when in the midst of crisis, God's peace came over you.
- ◆ In the midst of a life-storm, is your faith stronger or weaker?

HEARING THE GOSPEL'S LORD

(After about fifteen minutes of sharing in threes/fours, the leader re-gathers the community. Once back together, members pause for a moment. The leader then poses these questions: "What do you want to hold on to for yourself from this session?" "How are you/we being called to live in response to God's word?" After a pause, the leader invites the community to a time of conversation. When this sharing is complete, the community moves to a time of prayer.)

Response in Action Suggestions

- ◆ Set aside ten minutes each day this week for reflection and prayer. Be gently in touch with your anxieties and fears. Hand them over to God and give thanks for the good things in your life.
- ◆ Keep your own fears and anxieties in perspective. Reach out in support to those who are more in need than yourself. Help out at a soup kitchen

in your area this week.

- ◆ If your fears and anxieties about life threaten to overwhelm you, reach out to your pastor or health care professionals who can help.

Prayer

(After a brief pause, the gospel or a portion of it, either of the other readings as appropriate or the responsorial psalm are proclaimed. The idea is to select a text that lends itself to inviting members to the time of silent prayer that follows. Following the proclamation, the leader poses these questions to the members: “What does Christ in his Spirit say to you now?” “What do you say to him in response?” The community pauses for a full five minutes of prayerful attention to God. A brief instrumental selection may be played during part of this time. After this time of silence, the leader invites members simply to mention a word or two, or a brief expression that captures what they hear Christ saying to them personally. The community receives this without additional comment.)

Following this sharing, the leader invites those who wish to mention a trouble for which they ask the community’s prayer. Members then join in singing, “O God, Our Help in Ages Past,” The song may be found on the Internet. When the song is complete, the prayer continues as follows.)

All: You, O Lord, who stills the raging of the sea, hear us, and save us that we perish not. O blessed Savior, who did save your disciples ready to perish in a storm, hear us, and save us, we beseech you.

(In two alternating groups, members pray as follows.)

I: Lord, have mercy upon us.

II: Christ, have mercy upon us.

I: Lord, have mercy upon us.

II: O God, hear us.

I: O Christ, hear us.

II: O Christ, graciously hear us.

All: God, Father, Son, and Holy Spirit, have mercy upon us,
save us now and evermore. Amen.

Sailor's Prayer adapted from
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