

12th SUNDAY IN ORDINARY TIME; Cycle - B; June 23rd 2024
Job 38: 1,8-11; 2Corinthians 5: 14-17; Mark. 4: 35-41

Dear Sisters & Brothers,

If you read Mark's gospel carefully you will meet *a Jesus* who is fully divine and fully human. Mark begins his gospel with the statement, "**The Gospel of Jesus Christ, Son of God,**" which is the clear declaration of the divinity of Jesus. In the first miracle of Jesus, which was the cure of a demoniac, even the demon acknowledged Jesus as **the Holy One of God**. Often people were astonished by his wisdom and knowledge. Through every miracle Mark tries to project the divinity of Jesus and picture him to be the Messiah. At the same time Mark presents his audience a Jesus fully human too, with all sorts of human emotions. Mark's Jesus is *sympathetic, sad, frustrated, hungry, loving, angry and tired*. We have quite a few incidents in Mark to show how the human emotions of Jesus became very visible.

In today's gospel Mark presents his readers a fully human and divine picture of Jesus. After a long day of preaching and working miracles the worn out Jesus asked his disciples to take him to the other side of the Lake of Galilee. But in the cool breeze of the lake he fell asleep. This is the only occasion we see Jesus taking a nap. Mark also says that Jesus was sleeping comfortably *on a cushion*. Of course, Matthew and Luke repeat the same incident in their gospels which they borrowed from Mark. Besides his human characteristics, Jesus in Mark is the Divine Son of God who is the Messiah. The stilling of the sea described in today's gospel is the portrayal of the full divinity of Jesus. According to the ancient belief only God has the power over natural forces.

In this miracle we see the calmness of Jesus on one side and the fear and the frustration of the disciples on the other side. When they started rowing the boat the disciples had the upper hand. For, at least some of them were fishermen in the same lake. They were familiar with the storms and rough water. But soon they realized their helplessness and approached Jesus as a last resort. Perhaps, due to their previous experience with Jesus they knew that, if wanted, he could help them. At the same time, they were upset and frustrated over the unconcerned attitude of Jesus. They expressed the same in their words, "**Do you not care that we are perishing.**" I don't think these words of the disciples were very polite. In no time Jesus rebuked the wind and it was calmed down. But from the following words of the disciples it is clear that they have not understood Jesus fully. For, they asked to one another, "**Who then is this whom even the wind and sea obey?**"

In this miracle story Mark exposes our typical human nature. Initially the disciples

were in control of things. When they failed and things went out of their hands, they got upset with the inactiveness of Jesus. In their words their anger, disappointment and helplessness are expressed. We all have a place in the same boat. **Remember, we are sailing through the sea of our life, starting from the shore of our birth to the shore of our death and the eternal life.** Initially when things go well with our material, physical, personal and family life, we all think that we have the upper hand. Soon we realize that things are not fully under our control. Like the disciples, we too have moments of feeling that Jesus never cares for us. Naturally, we get upset with him; at times we are angry with him and clearly we express our frustration to him. It is quite natural and there is nothing wrong in getting a little upset with Jesus. That is what we see in the Psalms which are the expression of the feelings of the people of Israel. They express their anger, helplessness, disappointment, abandonment and the feeling that God is unconcerned. As a loving Father God is not angry that His children express their frustration to Him. When we sit for our prayer, don't think that we are allowed only to offer our thanksgiving, petitions and praise to God. As children we can freely express all our feelings to Jesus, good or bad. Then you will hear the voice of Jesus, **“Why are you terrified? Do you not yet have faith?”** Let us humbly pray to Jesus, *‘Lord increase our faith and trust in you.’* At times due to our overwhelming frustration, we may not recognize Jesus standing with us and we fail to hear his voice. Apparently, even if he sleeps in our little boat of life, it is enough that he is in our boat.