

Twelfth Sunday in Ordinary Time

Reading I

[Jb 38:1, 8-11](#)

The Lord addressed Job out of the storm and said:
Who shut within doors the sea,
when it burst forth from the womb;
when I made the clouds its garment
and thick darkness its swaddling bands?
When I set limits for it
and fastened the bar of its door,
and said: Thus far shall you come but no farther,
and here shall your proud waves be stilled!

Responsorial Psalm

[Ps 107:23-24, 25-26, 28-29, 30-31](#)

R. (1b) **Give thanks to the Lord, his love is everlasting.**

or:

R. **Alleluia.**

They who sailed the sea in ships,
trading on the deep waters,
These saw the works of the LORD
and his wonders in the abyss.

R. **Give thanks to the Lord, his love is everlasting.**

or:

R. **Alleluia.**

His command raised up a storm wind
which tossed its waves on high.
They mounted up to heaven; they sank to the depths;
their hearts melted away in their plight.

R. **Give thanks to the Lord, his love is everlasting.**

or:

R. **Alleluia.**

They cried to the LORD in their distress;
from their straits he rescued them,
He hushed the storm to a gentle breeze,
and the billows of the sea were stilled.

R. **Give thanks to the Lord, his love is everlasting.**

or:

R. **Alleluia.**

They rejoiced that they were calmed,
and he brought them to their desired haven.
Let them give thanks to the LORD for his kindness
and his wondrous deeds to the children of men.

R. **Give thanks to the Lord, his love is everlasting.**

or:

R. **Alleluia.**

Reading II

[2 Cor 5:14-17](#)

Brothers and sisters:
The love of Christ impels us,
once we have come to the conviction that one died for all;
therefore, all have died.
He indeed died for all,
so that those who live might no longer live for themselves
but for him who for their sake died and was raised.

Consequently, from now on we regard no one according to the flesh;
even if we once knew Christ according to the flesh,
yet now we know him so no longer.
So whoever is in Christ is a new creation:
the old things have passed away;
behold, new things have come.

Gospel

[Mk 4:35-41](#)

On that day, as evening drew on, Jesus said to his disciples:
"Let us cross to the other side."
Leaving the crowd, they took Jesus with them in the boat just as he was.
And other boats were with him.
A violent squall came up and waves were breaking over the boat,
so that it was already filling up.
Jesus was in the stern, asleep on a cushion.
They woke him and said to him,
"Teacher, do you not care that we are perishing?"
He woke up,
rebuked the wind, and said to the sea, "Quiet! Be still!"
The wind ceased and there was great calm.
Then he asked them, "Why are you terrified?
Do you not yet have faith?"
They were filled with great awe and said to one another,
"Who then is this whom even wind and sea obey?"

HOMILY

Today we celebrate the solemnity of Saints Peter and Paul. This solemnity celebrates two great apostles: Peter, apostle to the Jews; and Paul, apostle to the Gentiles.

It also celebrates the faithfulness of disciples (see the second reading). It celebrates the establishment of the Church (see the gospel).

Most of all, this solemnity celebrates the victory of Christ that is shared with his faithful disciples—"the crown of righteousness awaits me" (as we hear in the second reading).

Let's reflect upon both St. Peter and St. Paul. Often when we have a flash of sudden insight we say: "I saw the light." There is a moment of insight which illuminates us. We may have been puzzling over something, and suddenly we see it in a new light. In one sense, nothing has changed. And yet everything has changed: we now see things differently. We understand what we had not previously understood. You could say that this applies to both St. Peter and St. Paul. For each of them, there came a moment when they saw the light.

For Peter, it was the moment when he realizes that Jesus is the Messiah, which we hear about in today's gospel. In a sense, nothing changes. Jesus and his followers will still be walking the roads of Galilee. The spies sent by authorities will still follow their footsteps. The crowds will marvel at the healings and wonder if the message of God's love can be true. And yet, everything changes. For Peter everything now begins to come together. He begins to see the whole picture, and Jesus can begin to give him more responsibility. It is significant that in the next chapter of Matthew's gospel, Peter, with two others, is witness to the extraordinary event of the transfiguration (17.1-9) when he will see the light in another, more literal sense.

Let's reflect upon St. Paul. This year we observe the two thousandth anniversary of the birth of the great Apostle Paul. He was born in Tarsus in present-day Turkey. I know an Air Force pilot who is currently stationed in the Middle East. He wrote to let me know that he was recently able to go to Tarsus and saw where Paul's home was there. He also saw his well and was able to get some water from it. He said that it was a special experience for him. That brings the realness of the person Paul really close and tangible. Pope Benedict XVI has declared this to be the Year of St. Paul beginning with the Vigil of today's Feast and ending on June 29, 2009. This man, St. Paul, saw the light, too.

On the road to Damascus, Paul's life turned upside-down. He was on his way to persecute Christians, but as he approached the city a bright light temporarily blinded him and he heard a voice say: "Saul, Saul, why do you persecute me?" (Acts 9.4). The dazzling outer light was accompanied by an inner understanding. He came to a true understanding of the Christian faith, which at that time was known simply as The Way. He saw that Christ was not dead but risen, and that Christ loved his followers so much that he was to be closely identified with them. To hurt his followers was to persecute Christ. Paul's life turned round. To general astonishment he became an evangelist, a preacher of the faith. He did not stop there, for he also grew in compassion.

It was not always easy. Even Paul, although he had seen the light in the most dramatic way, had to struggle with himself in the years ahead. His life, his struggle like Peter's, is an example to us also. We have to see the Church not just an organization, but as the place where Christ becomes known and loved, a living body of believers where Christ is present. The same Christ calls us, as he called Paul, not only to grow in faith, but to grow in compassion.

Jesus also asks us as he asked Peter and the other disciples, "Who do you say I am?" Not what does the world say, not what television says, but what do we say in our hearts?

Hopefully in our lives we ask and seek to know the depth of the riches, wisdom, and knowledge of God. We have the opportunity to say along with Peter, in wonder and awe, "You are the Christ, the Son of the living God."

What is our response to the question that Jesus asks us as well on this Solemnity, "Who do you say I am?"

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