

Saturday of the Third Week in Ordinary Time

Gospel text (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 him 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?”

“Why are you terrified? Do you not yet have faith?”

Fr. Joaquim FLURIACH i Domínguez
(St. Esteve de P., Barcelona, Spain)

Today, we see how our Lord scolds his disciples for their lack of faith: “Do you not yet have faith?” (Mk 4:40). They had seen demonstrations of His divine power that proved beyond doubt that Jesus Christ was God's Envoy. Nevertheless, some of His closest followers did not believe Him. They did not realize that they should fear nothing because the Lord was with them. In His rebuke, Jesus establishes a direct correlation between faith and courage. His meaning is clear. If you have faith in me, you will also have courage. If you do not have courage, it is because you do not have faith in me.

On another occasion when the Apostles doubted, it was explained that they did not believe because they had not received the Holy Spirit. Our Lord needed an

abundance of patience to teach the Apostles what they would, in turn, teach us, so that we too can courageously give testimony of the reality of Jesus, the Son of God. If we, who are His modern day disciples, say we have faith but then give way to fear when we should talk to others about Him, it is fitting that we share the scolding that Jesus gave to His fearful disciples after He had stilled the storm on Galilee.

We have received the Holy Spirit, which, if we always do our best to obey the Father's will, lets us see beyond doubt and fear that our Lord is positively guiding us in our walk of faith through life. Because we have the Holy Spirit, we have no reason to fear anything. Jesus is the one and only Lord of the Universe, because “even the wind and sea obey him?” (Mk 4:41), as His terrified disciples said to one another.

So, when you are afraid, ask yourself, —why am I so cowardly? Are my own fears so real or so necessary to me that I cling to them although they cause me to question my Lord's infinite Love for me? Our many brothers and sisters who have died as martyrs knew how to answer this question, not only with their words in times of tranquility, but also in times of danger, often at the cost of their lives. With the aid of God's grace, and in spite of their awareness of the dangers to themselves, many of our brothers and sisters take steps of courage that cause their faith and hope in our Lord to grow exponentially. And if they can do it, why not us? If we hold back, could it be because deep within our souls we do not have the same passionate desire to love our Lord with all our minds, hearts, and souls?

We can be made bolder by remembering one of the greatest examples of courage and faith —the Blessed Virgin Mary, Help of Christians, Queen of confessors— who even at the foot of the Cross maintained the light of faith. A faith that dazzled the world on the Day of the Resurrection!

Thoughts on Today's Gospel

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“When we pray properly, sorrows disappear like snow before the sun.” (Saint John Mary Vianney)

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“The Apostles should not fear threats: Christ —although silent— is in the boat and, for that very reason, it has never sunk.” (Benedict XVI)

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“The first and last point of reference of this catechesis will always be Jesus Christ himself, who is ‘the way, and the truth, and the life’ (Jn 14:6). It is by looking to him in faith that Christ's faithful can hope that he himself fulfills his promises in them, and that, by loving him with the same love with which he has loved them, they may perform works in keeping with their dignity.” (Catechism Of The Catholic Church, N° 1698)