

Tuesday of the Thirteenth Week in Ordinary Time

Gospel text (Mt 8:23-27): As Jesus got into a boat, his disciples followed him. Suddenly a violent storm came up on the sea, so that the boat was being swamped by waves; but he was asleep. They came and woke him, saying, “Lord, save us! We are perishing!” He said to them, “Why are you terrified, O you of little faith?” Then he got up, rebuked the winds and the sea, and there was great calm. The men were amazed and said, “What sort of man is this, whom even the winds and the sea obey?”

“Then he stood up and ordered the wind and sea; and it became completely calm”

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Today, the liturgy offers us one of the most shocking fragments of our Lord's public life. The scene shows a great vivacity that contrasts radically with the disciples' attitude and Jesus' behavior. We can imagine how frightened they must have been on the boat when “suddenly a violent storm came up on the sea, so that the boat was being swamped by waves” (Mt 8:24), though their distress was not enough to awake Jesus, who was sleeping. It was up to the disciples in despair to wake up the Master! “Lord, save us! We are perishing!” they cried (Mt 8:25).

The evangelist, taking advantage of these dramatic events, reveals to us the true essence of Jesus. The storm was still raging and the disciples full of fear and confusion, when Jesus, simply and calmly, “rebuked the winds and the sea, and there was great calm” (Mt 8:26). Jesus' Word brought the calm over the waters; but this calm was not meant to affect only the turbulent winds and waters of the lake: Jesus' Word, above all, was addressed to appease his disciples' fearful hearts. “Why are you terrified, O you of little faith?” (Mt 8:26).

And from embarrassment and fear the disciples shifted to admiration and astonishment, for they had witnessed this prodigy, unheard of until then. The surprise, the admiration, the wonder of such a drastic change in a situation they

were living awakened in them a central question: “What sort of man is this, whom even the winds and the sea obey?” (Mt 8:27). Who can assuage storms on earth and skies and, at the same time, those in men's hearts? Only He, who «sleeping as a man in a boat, can command the wind and the sea as God» (Nicetas of Remesiana).

Whenever we may be afraid the earth is collapsing under our feet, let us not forget that our Savior is God himself made man, and that He is always close to us.

Thoughts on Today's Gospel

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“He took His disciples with Him, and in a boat, that they might learn two lessons; first, not to be confounded in dangers, secondly, to think lowly of themselves in honour.” (Saint John Chrysostom)

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“Jesus does not want us to be passive people; He wants us to be active, responsible instruments, but at the same time, full of hope. This is the key to face the storms of life.” (Benedict XVI)

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“Filial trust is put to the test when we feel that our prayer is not always heard. The Gospel invites us to ask ourselves about the conformity of our prayer to the desire of the Spirit.” (Catechism of the Catholic Church, N° 2756)