

“FIRST IMPRESSIONS” 12TH. SUNDAY IN ORDINARY TIME (B)

Job: 38: 1-4, 8-11 Psalm 107 2 Cor. 5: 14-17 Mark 4: 35-41

By Brian Pierce, OP

The gospel for this Sunday certainly is a call to deep trust in the ABIDING PRESENCE of Christ with us, the Church. It is interesting to note that it is Jesus who first invites the disciples to "go across to the other side." God is always the one who speaks first, who loves first. Ours is always a response: "they took him with them in the boat."

These two steps, namely, Jesus' invitation and the disciples' "taking on" the invitation (their "yes"), could be looked at in terms of BAPTISM and DISCIPLESHIP. In our baptism God invites us "into the boat." When we say "yes" we are taking Jesus with us into that same boat. (Remember the Book of Revelation: "I stand knocking at the door; whoever opens it....?") God has knocked and we have opened.

And then begins the fun part. Discipleship is fundamentally a life of FAITH (not the same as belief). Faith is a deep, bedrock trust in God's presence in the world, in the Church and in our lives. When the storms of life whip up we come to the truth of just how deep is our faith. Life is full of overwhelming waves. When we cry out IN FEAR (Jesus asked, "Why are you afraid?"), we are NOT acting out of deep faith. Jesus does respond even to our fearful cries, but he does so with a reprimand. He knows that if we spend all of our lives reacting fearfully to life's storms, we will never know the fullness of life in God. So he tests their FAITH by sleeping through the storm. God is always with us -- that is a fact. But do we TRUST deeply? Can we ride out life's storms by trusting the quiet, still presence of God that is beneath the surface of the storm ("Be still and know that I am God.")? That is FAITH.

In baptism we were invited to "cross over to the other side" -- over to a life IN CHRIST. That CROSS-ing (a crucifixion indeed) is stormy, but when we said "yes" to Jesus, he climbed into the boat with us. He got INTO US -- deep down within us. The real test is to hold onto Jesus' presence even when he is still and quiet. Jesus is more concerned with teaching us how to trust through the storm than he is with calming outward storms. The Reign of God is within us, down beneath the stormy waves. The move from FEAR to FAITH is to go within, down deep, where we are free to BE PEACE for a world so overcome with storms. Let us be Peace!

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Thank you.

“Blessings on your preaching”,

Jude Siciliano, OP

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