

St Pius & St Anthony 12th Sunday Ordinary Time Year B2

Ephesians 2:14 "He is our Peace!" Retreat with Him to cultivate calm, & then Return to complete the course.

Our gospel begs a little game of "Name those Lyrics": "Day destroys the night, night divides the day, try to run, try to hide, break on through **to the other side**" Yes, it's the Doors (Jim Morrison), or even better how about this one, "The weather started getting rough, the tiny ship was tossed, if not for the courage of the fearless crew, the minnow might be lost'. Yes, the theme song for Gilligan's Island! When I hear Jesus invite us to the other side, I hear Him, just as He did so many times in His ministry, He is reminding us of the wisdom of taking time out to recharge or refresh; an opportunity of rest to be renewed. Jesus sets His disciples a wonderful example of such necessary periods of restoration (*He will do this again in just 2 chapters in Mark 6:30-32 - 'Come away by yourselves and rest with me'*). The gospel tells us Jesus had been teaching all day (Mark 4 is basically a whole chapter of His teaching words – a chapter filled with parables) 4:1 tells us that '*A very large crowd gathered around him so that he got into a boat on the sea and sat down.*' We hear about the 'very large' crowd (that after a while calls for a period of retreat and rest), but the large mass leads him to step into a boat and push out just a little to create a floating stage, and larger amphitheater as the people reclined on the sloping banks and he taught ALL day. I'm sure the crowd, only grew, as the day wore on. So Jesus calls it a wrap and suggests they simply coast on over to the other shore to recharge.

But it won't be a 'coast' that the apostles experience. It is for Jesus as He slips into a deep peaceful rest up on a cushion up front (*as safe and secure, as a little kangaroo joey asleep in his mother's pouch*). As the boat crosses the sea, the apostles' level of anxiety rises along right along with the rising of the waves, whipped up by the wind. I wonder what causes them to forget who is with them (Jesus)? Were they more susceptible to fear because of simple fatigue, was it one of them who maybe had irrational fears of storms, and stirred up the others into a frenzied panic, or maybe this is stretch but were they still hearing echo of Jesus' words about 'the other side' in the dark of this night beginning to suspect, "Did Jesus mean 'the OTHER, OTHER Side'-like Rainbow bridge crossing=Death?" Who knows their motivations and I don't want to be hard on them, but they do lose it. Jesus describes them as 'terrified' (Mark 4:40). Terrified. They are torn up with fear. And I think this is where they really make things worse, by allowing the external storm to tear into them and disturb their inner peace, even to disturb their relationship to Christ. They lash out and even accusatorily attack Jesus! Picture this scene again. Jesus is sleeping like a baby up front in the boat, and they 'WAKE' him! I know we are talking about Jesus (and He would never do this), but I

have awakened people in my panic before and got the angry bear response from them, teaching me that I was better off with the first storm I had, than to stir up another by letting my panic spill over on to others. But I think of the apostles' 'reaction' as worse than the initial condition. As we say, I see them 'jumping out of the frying pan and into the fire', by their harshly judgmental disparagement of Jesus. They jump Him, Mark 4:38 ***"Teacher, do you not care that we are perishing?"*** (Care? Ohhhh, don't go there- It's Jesus -of course He cares!) Why'd they let the storm on the sea, rage into their hearts and stir them against their Savior? I like to compare this 'over-reaction' of theirs 'putting it on' Jesus, as similar to Martha's hyper-aggressivity in Luke 10:40, when she jumps all over Jesus, boiling over herself, because of having too many pans on the stove, when she pops off, ***"Lord, do you not care that my sister has left me by myself to do the serving?"***

I think of their reactions and how they worsen the situation, allowing the chaos outside to stir up a storm within them, too. Again, I don't want to be too hard on the apostles, because up until then they had done it all right. Specifically, they did have Jesus with them in their boat! Mark 4:36 says ***"they took him with them in the boat just as he was."*** Yes good , they had had Jesus in the boat with them. We must keep Jesus in our boat. But notice that other detail from Mark, "Just as He was". We have to also let Jesus be Jesus. Accept Him 'as he was". Trust Him. It is going to be okay. He is with us – Let Him Lead. Regardless of the winds outside, the waves pushing against us, the water spilling in, Jesus is in control. He all but says that when He asks, "Do you not yet have faith?" (Mark 4:40) Their extreme fear (lack of faith) worsened the situation, getting the best of them (taking away their peace!), and led them to insult/attack Jesus).

Yet, Jesus directly intervenes. "Stop" Well, okay He actually says "Quiet! Be Still" Not just commanding the waves and wind to cool it, but also the fear and fury within the hearts of His disciples. The effect of Jesus' intervention is the calming/soothing of the disciples' fear and anxiety, too. Not just the sea's turbulence is calmed (wind and waves die down) but also the unrest in the apostles that led to their sour words and erupting emotions. Jesus calms the storm. He always does. "Keep calm and carry on", Jesus teaches them. Keep him in your boat, but even more closely to oneself, keep Him in your heart. That is where the more dangerous storms arise (in the human heart) We need the calming presence of Jesus. Only He can give us this. He invites us (in any quiet time we give him, or any prayer we offer with Him) to 'come to the other side' the calm, the still side.

In John 14:27 Jesus says to us, ***"Peace I leave with you; my peace I give to you. Not as the world gives do I give it to you"*** He is talking about a peace the

world cannot disturb. If the world cannot give, it also cannot take it, if we keep ourselves centered in Him. Jesus had also taught in Matthew 11:28 "Come to me, all you who labor and are burdened, and I will give you rest." So, do we find ourselves in a storm? Maybe like the apostles AND like Martha, are the worries of work wearing on us, daily distresses disturbing us, feeling tossed about with trials, or all manner of the storms of life that swirl around us? Then we have keep Jesus in our boat, (and hold to Him **'as he is'**--Not project our own preconceptions on him, or worse, accuse Him of being our storm ('Don't you care?') Jesus wants us to have His peace. *(To recontextualize this whole episode: "Maybe this storm was going to be Jesus' way of letting the apostles, get rid of one more boat of their fleet- let it go-sink- perhaps it was a boat with an already too long a repair record, or a tax drain on their resources, or a time hog always having to be serviced by them, keeping them from more valuable ministry with Jesus? Mark 4:36 had given the detail, "other boats were with him)*

But again, Jesus He wants us to have His Peace, He is our calm in the storm, that center, still point of peace that we need. Through our daily prayer and quiet with Him, we find and keep our Peace!