

Homily St Pius & St Anthony 12th Sunday Ordinary Year B

What a dramatic gospel-like from an episode of 'Cosmos' penetrating the inner mystery of the universe, deep forces in space. But it is Jesus calming the seas-wind & waves! Yet, initially more striking to me is the panic of the disciples. The story starts out great- verse 35 "as dark came on, Jesus said, "Let us cross to the other side." Okay! Then verse 36 tells "They (the disciples) took him with them in the boat just as he was." It is so good that the Disciples know well enough to keep Jesus by them-He is in their boat. That should strengthen their confidence like caravanning in a group of vehicles to an unknown town, but having the one person who has been there before in your own car (*they know all the shortcuts-detours-tips to make trip smooth-where good bathrooms are along the way!), or how about when you go with a group to a show or game, and you know that the person holding all the tickets or confirmation number to get you all in, is sitting beside you! So the disciples should be on auto-pilot with Jesus when it comes to this seascape to the other side lake--- but, some wind picks up, water sloshes into boat, and they panic! What is going on with them, I do not know? They ought to have seen enough by now, watching Jesus effectively handle disease, crowds even demons miraculously, but obviously not enough. It made me question, how many miracles up to this point had the disciples witnessed Jesus perform. Mark's gospel makes it hard to count because often he'll say, "Jesus cured many sick who were brought to him"- & how do you quantify that? We are only in chapter 4, but a quick catalog has Jesus in chapter one curing a demoniac, healing Simons mother-in-law, & 'many others (?) that came to the door'. Chapter 2 had Jesus healing a paralyzed man. Chapter 3 Jesus cures a man with a withered hand and cast out many demons- gave healing peace to many sufferers. Then here we are in chapter 4, where after a long day of teaching, Jesus shows a command over nature by calming the sea and wind. I would think those earlier miracles would have built up more confidence, but maybe when it is your own body shaking, being tossed around in the ship; instinct cries out! (A good question for all of us: Would we have acted differently than they did? It should keep us humble). Stay tuned, this miracle is world shaking-or world settling, but with Jesus, greater things are coming- next chapter tells of Jesus raising Jairus' daughter from dead, later He'll feed multitudes on two occasions, and so many more healings. But about the disciples, I want to commend them for keeping Jesus in their boat. If we anticipate any storm-make sure Jesus is with you. Good practice – like making sure you equal or greater

number of life jackets on your boat as you have bodies on board, always keep Jesus in the boat with you. Which reminds me of the story of the little child left alone at home one time, who noticed a man at the front door, testing its locked or not, the ring camera activated, so the boy said, "Sir, I wouldn't try it I have Jesus with me", and the burglar thought, 'Great, what is prayer going to stop, this is taking candy from a baby' until he pried open the door and a huge dog clamped down on his arm- the boy telling him, 'Meet Jesus, our two year old Doberman!'

So the disciples learn today that Jesus is not only 'Master' to them, but also Master of the sea and sky. He says, 'Quiet: Be still' (vs 39) and the waves and wind obey- they calm down. A couple weeks ago on Pentecost we heard about the mysterious language of the Spirit. Is this is a demonstration of its power. What is it about Jesus' voice: what frequency is it on, or what dimension does it travel? Was there some deep-still tone that Jesus uttered that sent countering sound waves to equalize the disruption of the water/wind to bring about neutralization. Like animals hearing decibel levels out of reach of our own ears? What was it about Jesus' voice? But regardless, it worked. Jesus saves again, and with hope, the disciples' are lifted up one more degree or grade of trust in relationship to Jesus (and us too?)

And the effect Jesus has upon the disciples may become the greater miracle I call this gospel a double miracle- Jesus calms the storm of the wind & waves, yet what about the storm inside the disciples' hearts. In the storm, Jesus is sound asleep, like a baby (was it the cushion-was it special Tempur Pedic, Dream Cloud, Leesa, Caspar, Copper Dream mattress?), while the disciples are desperately clinging to the rails. It says they awakened him asking, "Teacher, do you not care that we are perishing?" (Mk 4:38). I imagine Jesus saying, "Hold on friends-cool your jets- Who is with you?" (He hasn't said yet, but Jesus will call himself 'the resurrection and life' Jn 11)- It might surprise us, but what if Jesus intended a little 'soft sink' to happen, that He would then conduct a raising operation for them all. Why not-He does just that for Peter in Matthew 14:30-31 to strengthen his faith even more? But confronted by the disciples' deep unrest, the stress and anxiety they are undergoing, Jesus cuts to the chase intervening to calm the storm (sea and wind) but also the storm in the hearts of the disciples. I think that is Jesus' harder work- the wind and water no problem, but calming the hearts of His followers - that is the more difficult task. So we can end asking ourselves that question, "What storms has Jesus accompanied us into? Did we make sure He was

in our boat? Do we trust His presence to see us through the storm? For sure, we want to keep Jesus in our boat, listening ourselves more closely to Him and sitting a little nearer to Him who will guide us through all adversity and agitation, staying centered in His Peace.