

Homily – Mark 4: 35-41
12th Sunday in Ordinary Time, Year B
20th June, 2021 - Sooeey

The 1989 Armenian earthquake needed only four minutes to flatten that nation, and kill around Fifty Thousand people. Moments after that earthquake had stopped, a father raced to an elementary school to save his son. When he arrived, he saw, that the building had been leveled. Looking at that mass of stones and rubble, his heart sank until he remembered a promise he had made to his little boy, “No matter what happens, I’ll always be there for you.” Driven by that promise he found the area closest to his son’s room, and began to pull back the rocks and dig out the dirt. Other parents arrived and began sobbing for their children. They were saying things like, “It’s too late. You know they’re dead. You can’t help.” Even a police officer encouraged him to give up. But that dad refused to give up. For eight hours, then sixteen, then thirty-two, and then thirty-six hours he dug. His hands were raw, his energy was gone, but he refused to quit. Finally, after thirty-eight gut-wrenching hours, he pulled back a boulder and there he heard his son’s voice. He called out his boy’s name, “Arman! Arman!” A feeble voice answered him saying, “Dad, it’s me!” Then the little boy added these priceless words: “Dad, I told the other kids not to worry. I told them if you were alive you would save me, and that when you saved me they would be saved too. Because you

promised me Dad, ‘No matter what, son, I’ll always be there for you.’”

The role of God in calming the storms of life is the central theme of the Readings for this 12th Sunday in Ordinary Time. The First Reading tells us how the Lord speaks to Job whose life was devastated by storms of the total loss of his possessions, the deaths of his dear ones, and a whole-body disease that left him in misery. “*Out of the storm,*” God reminds Job that He is in control.

And in today’s Gospel, Mark assures the first-century believers that nothing can harm the Church as long as the Risen Lord is with them. He describes how, by a single commanding word, Jesus stilled a storm on the Sea of Galilee, returned the sea to its natural order and saved the apostles from drowning. The incident reminds us that Jesus, resting in our life’s boat is always ready to help us in the storms of life, when we seek His help.

In the Gardiner Museum in Boston there is a painting by Rembrandt entitled “The Storm on the Sea of Galilee.” It is Rembrandt’s interpretation of this scene. It shows panic etched on the faces of the disciples, as their small vessel is being raised up on a high wave, about to be crashed down. Two of the disciples are attempting to rouse Jesus who is asleep in the stern of the boat. But if you look more

closely, you will discover that there is something that is not quite right. There are too many people in the picture. There should only be thirteen: twelve disciples and Jesus. But instead, there are fourteen. It is then that you notice that one of the men in the boat is Rembrandt. He has painted himself into the picture. He has placed himself in the same boat - which is precisely what we should do. We are in the boat with Jesus, faithful but frightened. And we need to remember that Jesus is always with us in the boat of our life.

Well, we all experience different types of violent storms in our lives: physical, emotional, and spiritual storms. We face storms of sorrow, doubt, anxiety, worry, temptation, and passion. And it is only Jesus who can still these storms. If we ask, and respond with loving trust and obedience, Jesus will give us peace in our tempests of doubt, tension, and uncertainty. Well, Jesus captains the boat of our soul, not eliminating all storms but seeing to it that we do not sink, if we keep our Faith and persist in calling on God for help.

Linda Sledge recalls a day from her childhood that she will never forget. She was playing in the sand of a Hawaiian beach near where she lived, building towers with her red shovel and bucket. She had wandered away from her

parents. Suddenly a great wave knocked her off her feet into the ocean. She managed to get up on her feet, but the sand was flowing out from under her feet. Then another wave struck, and she had no footing. She cried out for her parents. All she could see was the vast ocean ahead. She thought she was doomed. Just then two strong arms reached out from behind and pulled her to safety. “Don’t be afraid,” her father said. “I’ve been watching you all the time.”— Those are Christ’s words to us today. He is not sleeping. He is watching over us. Why then are we afraid? Have we no faith?

In Alcoholics Anonymous, and in all the dependency groups based on the AA Model, there is a slogan which says “*Let Go – and Let God.*” It is a marvelously liberating thing to let go, and let God. Faith in Jesus’ abiding and sustaining presence will remove our unfounded fears and so with Saint Teresa of Avila we pray today:

Let nothing disturb you
Let nothing frighten you
All things are passing away
God never changes
Patience obtains all things
Whoever has God lacks nothing
God alone suffices.

God bless you all, **Amen.**

