

12th Sunday in Ordinary Time

The peace of Christ is the answer to every storm.

Job 38:1. 8-11

No matter what storms may rage, God has set bounds to them.

2 Corinthians 5:14-17

Because Christ has died for us, the life of one is to be lived for the life of all.

Mark 4:35-41

It doesn't matter what we are threatened with, as long as we remember that Christ is with us to put an end to our fear.



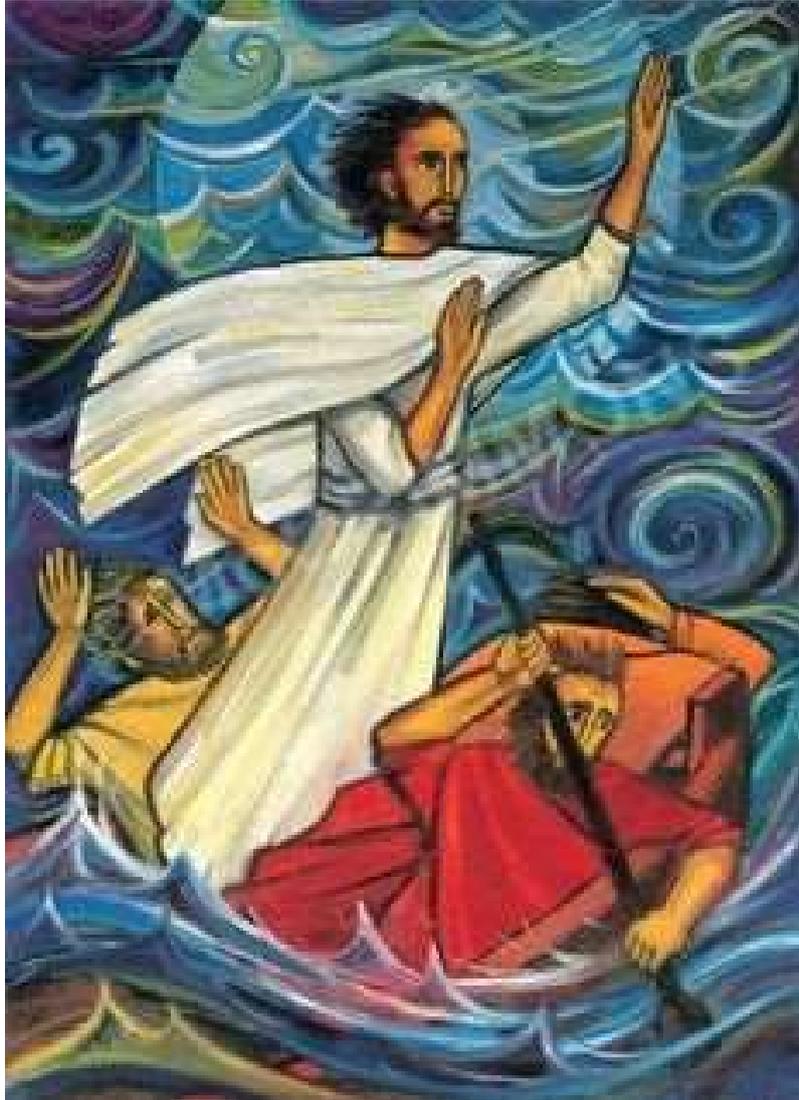
"Why are you terrified? Do you not yet have faith?"

Jesus has been teaching his disciples by means of parables. Now he taught them by means of a parable in action.

When Jesus and his disciples crossed the Sea of Galilee, a storm suddenly arose and threatened to capsize their small craft. The disciples were terrified and chastised Jesus who was asleep in the stern of the boat (the pilot's seat) ("don't you care?"). Jesus exercised the same authority that God used at creation. He restored order to the elements with a simple command: "Peace, be still!"

This event is an encouragement to the Church, the barque of Peter, which is often in danger, making no apparent headway, and sometimes feeling the Lord's

absence. In times such as these, with Jesus' abiding presence we can ride the winds of the storms that bring sickness, failure and disappointment to our lives.



"Who can this be? Even the wind and the sea obey him!"

SS John Fisher & Thomas More, Martyrs



John Fisher studied theology at Cambridge University and gained a reputation for his teaching abilities. He became Chancellor of Cambridge. He was made Bishop of Rochester at the age of 35, and worked especially to raise the standard of preaching. When in 1527 he was asked to study the problem of Henry VIII's marriage, he became the target of Henry's wrath by opposing the King's divorce proceedings against Catherine, his wife, and steadfastly rejecting Henry's claim to be head of the Church in England. John Fisher spent 14 months in prison without trial before being executed for "treason".

He was martyred in 1535 on Tower Hill, London,; buried in the churchyard of All Hallows, without rites or a shroud. His head was exhibited on London Bridge for two weeks as an example and then thrown into the River Thames.

Thomas More studied at London and Oxford. A lawyer, he was twice married, the father of one son and three daughters, and a devoted family man. A friend of King Henry VIII, Thomas was made Lord Chancellor of England, a position of power second only to the king. He opposed the king on the matter of the royal divorce, and refused to swear the Oath of Supremacy which declared the king to be the head of the Church in England. He resigned the Chancellorship, and was imprisoned in the Tower of London. He was beheaded in 1535 for his refusal to bend his religious beliefs to the king's political needs. Thomas More's head was kept in the Roper Vault, in Saint Dunstan's church, in Canterbury, and his body is at Saint Peter ad Vincula, just by the Tower of London,

Scene: Tower of London – in the cell St. Thomas More lived in for last 15 months of his life. In ‘A Man for All Seasons’ there’s heart-wrenching scene in that cell. Thomas More’s family were allowed in. The idea was that they might talk More into giving in to the king’s resolve to make himself head of the Church in England. His beloved daughter Margaret, is chosen to appeal to her father:

More: You want me to swear to the Act of Succession?

Margaret: “God more regards the thoughts of the heart than the words of the mouth.” Or so you’ve always told me.

More: Yes.

Margaret: Then say the words of the oath and in your heart think otherwise.

More: What is an oath but words we say to God?

Margaret: That’s very neat.

More: Do you mean it isn’t true?

Margaret: No, it’s true.

More: Then it’s a poor argument to call it “neat,” Meg. When a man takes an oath, Meg, he’s holding his whole self in his own hands. Like water. And if he opens his fingers then—he needn’t hope to find himself again. Some men aren’t capable of this, but I’d be loathe to think your father one of them.

Margaret tries different tacks. Her father’s just trying to make himself into a hero. To that Thomas More says: “with the world being what it is, Meg, why then perhaps we must stand fast a little, even at the **risk** of being heroes.” Margaret, close to tears, cries out: “But in reason! Haven’t you done as much as God can reasonably want?”

To which More replies, “Well finally . . . it isn’t a matter of reason; finally it’s a matter of love.”

John Fisher was beheaded on 15 June 1535 & Thomas More on 6 July.

John Fisher & Thomas More were canonised together by Pope Pius XI in 1935.

FIRST DAY OF SUMMER



The summer solstice (on June 20th or 21st) marks the first day of the season of summer. In this northern hemisphere, it is the longest day of the year, when the Sun is farthest north.

The Wood with No Names

The prophet Isaiah once foresaw a world in which

“the wolf shall dwell with the lamb, and the leopard shall lie down with the kid and the calf and the lion together, and a little child shall lead them.”

It was a vision of what has been called the “Peaceable Kingdom”—a world in which all the old fears and hostilities that have afflicted humanity since our loss of the Garden of Eden will have passed away—a world in which that old solidarity between humanity and nature that marked paradise will have been restored.

“And the cow and the bear shall feed together and the weaned child shall put his hand in the adder’s den, nor shall they hurt or destroy in all my holy mountain, for the earth shall be full of the knowledge of the Lord as the waters cover the sea.”

A seemingly impossible dream! And yet we’re always running into it in literature. For example, in **Lewis Carroll’s *Through the Looking Glass***, little Alice experiences the same kind of vision. Very soon after she passes through

that mirror over the mantelpiece and wanders into the strange chessboard landscape behind the Looking Glass, she crosses a brook and finds herself confronted by a very dark wood. “This must be the wood,” she thought, “where things have no names. I wonder what’ll become of my name when I go into the wood. Sure enough, as soon as Alice entered the wood, she enjoyed its coolness and she said what a comfort it was “after being so hot, to get into the—into the—into what? . . . I mean to get under the— under the—under this, you know!” And she put her hand on the trunk of a tree. She then couldn’t remember her own name. (The world around her had been washed clean of all the identities and names humanity has placed on things down through its long and fretful history.)

Just then a Fawn approached and together they walked along with Alice’s arm draped lovingly around its neck—until they began to exit the other side of the wood. Then, out of the wood, “I’m a Fawn!” cried her companion. “And, dear me! you’re a human child!” A sudden look of alarm came into the Fawn’s beautiful brown eyes, and in a moment it darted away at full speed. They were back again in that world of tags by which we superficially define things and one another. They were back again in that world of name-calling, back to those often silly but lethal distinctions by which we sort out the desirable from the undesirable in this world: Asian, European, Arab, Jew, Black, White, Catholic, Protestant, rich, poor, migrant, native born, sweet, sour—ad infinitum and ad nauseam.

The Church is supposed to be that Peaceable Kingdom that Isaiah foresaw or, if you like, a “wood with no names” such as Alice encountered.

Like Alice, we too have crossed a baptismal brook (the River Jordan, to be exact). We too have entered a Promised Land of new, Catholic values. Having done so, we are expected to shed all those tags and demographics by which the Caesars of this world would define us. We are expected now to recognize our mutual solidarity with everyone and everything in this universe. Saint Paul says as much in the second reading for today. How does he put it?

“From now on we regard no one according to the flesh . . . For whoever is in Christ is a new creation: the old things have passed away.”

Welcome then to the Peaceable Kingdom, to a world of benign amnesia in which all our old biases and festering resentments are meant to be forgotten, to yield to the remembrance of who we really are: the gracious offspring of a gracious God and caretakers of this garden we call “earth”.

GOSPEL WORDSEARCH

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