

I

Good morning, and happy Father's Day to all our fathers and father figures in the congregation this morning. Thank you for all you do to shape our lives, and for the example you provide us in managing the ups and downs in life. I hope that you feel honored and loved today for all your hard work.

Comedian Jim Gaffigan posted on Twitter, "My 4-yr.-old gave me a handmade card for Father's Day. Maybe for Christmas I'll draw him a picture of some toys." A man named Mike Primavera tweeted, "Get your dad what he really wants this Father's Day by turning off the lights when you leave a room." And a tweet from username Dad and Buried reads, "Called my dad to wish him a happy Father's Day and we spent the whole time discussing back pain and ibuprofen. The circle is now complete." (1)

There are few things in life more rewarding than having a great relationship with your parents. Pro golfer Bubba Watson listed his priorities in his Twitter description as "Christian. Husband. Daddy. Pro Golfer." He and his wife Angie have two adopted children, and Watson says that joy of being a father far outweighs any professional success he has achieved. He took some time off from golf after the first adoption so he could bond with his son. As he said, "I had to be there for my son, so golf was the farthest thing from my mind . . . Trying to be a good husband, a good dad, was the most important thing." (2)

Good fathers and mothers have a natural impulse to protect their children and to serve as an example to them in tough times. I think it's appropriate that our Bible text for today falls on Father's Day. This is a story about the disciples caught in a terrible storm. They need courage. They need leadership. And they need an example of how to face a challenge that is beyond their strength. If you've ever been through a storm like that in your life, then I believe you'll get something out of today's Bible passage.

Our story begins at the end of a typical day for Jesus and his disciples. Jesus has been teaching huge crowds of people by the Sea of Galilee. But the crowds have finally gone home, and it's time to pack up and head to their next ministry spot in the region of Gerasenes, in modern-day Jordan. It must have been a tiring day. Jesus went to the back of the boat to catch a nap. And suddenly a storm swept in. Verses 37-38 read, "A furious squall came up, and the waves broke over the boat, so that it was nearly swamped. Jesus was in the stern, sleeping on a cushion. The disciples woke him and said to him, "Teacher, don't you care if we drown?"

There is a corporate training company called Survival Systems that has a Leadership & Team Development program that simulates surviving a plane crash or a ship sinking at sea. So they take a group of corporate employees out into the ocean and put them in a situation that simulates having to escape a sinking ship. The training program involves teaching teams skills such as "raft evacuations, underwater escape, surface-water survival, jumping from a height—and even how to be rescued." One purpose of the training program is to "improve stress control" and build leadership skills. (3)

How would you react in a situation like that? What would a life-threatening storm reveal about your leadership skills and ability to control stress? Perhaps if we can imagine

ourselves in a tiny plane being buffeted by a storm that is threatening to tear our small craft to pieces, we can appreciate the terror that seized the disciples when a terrible storm came up on the Sea of Galilee. The wind and the waves threatened to swamp their little boat. Some of these disciples were seasoned fishermen. They had been sailing on this sea since they were little boys. They had encountered storms all their lives. So, imagine how ferocious this storm must have been if these expert fishermen thought they were going to die. They were so frightened they woke Jesus, who was sleeping in the stern of the boat and asked him, "Teacher, do you not care if we perish?"

Many of us have asked the same question at some time in our lives. We've hit a storm in our lives. Not just a stressful event. But an event or a season of life that is so devastating that we don't have the strength to face it on our own. And where is Jesus? Jesus seems asleep in the stern of our boats and we want to ask, "Do you not care that we perish?"

**You see, everybody goes through storms at some time or another.** Our storm may be a problem marriage. The American Institute of Stress has a tool called the Holmes-Rahe Stress Inventory that ranks certain life events in terms of their negative impact on a person's life. "Death of a spouse" ranks as the most stressful life event in the inventory, with "Divorce" and "Marital separation from mate" as the second and third most stressful life events anyone can face. (4)

A healthy marriage is vitally important to most people's sense of identity, security and well-being. When a marriage falls apart, the partners can go through the same stages of grief as someone whose spouse has died.

Author and speaker Laura Petherbridge refers to divorce as the "soul deep accuser." After her husband had an affair and ended their marriage, Laura contemplated suicide. She says she knew she could not survive such pain without Jesus, yet she felt such shame that she wanted to hide from him too. She felt unworthy to come to God for help when she most desperately needed to be assured of His love. As she writes, "... rejection hauntingly whispers, 'You are a loser. You are unlovable. You are a failure. You deserve to be alone. Life is over. You will never be loved again.'" (5)

Some of you understand the pain she is talking about. Most marriages face a storm of some kind over the years. Some marriages don't make it through the storm, and the wreckage can be devastating. Especially for women. A recent study showed that women and children experience a 73% decline in their standard of living the year of their divorce. Ironically, men's standard of living increases 42%.

Just as important is the fact that more and more couples find that divorce is no real solution to their problems. Marriage counselors who a decade ago were advising couples to go ahead and part are now recommending couples hang in there and try to make it through the storm. Of course, that has been God's plan all along. Marriage problems are a storm many people are going through.

**The loss of a loved one is also a terrible storm with devastating effects.** William Sloane Coffin was a very popular and influential pastor who lost his son Alex in a car accident. He

says that he received lots of cards and phone calls and visits from friends and church members and fellow pastors. And most of them had no idea how to comfort him. He said the least helpful people were his fellow pastors. They quoted the Bible at him a lot. But they didn't understand his grief. As he said, "... the depth of my grief made those words unreal." (6)

**The worst part is that Jesus seems to be asleep.** "Why doesn't he intervene?" we cry out in our distress. Where is God in my distress? Do you not care that we perish?

Reynolds Price, in his book *Letter to a Man on Fire* tells of getting a letter from a young man named Jim who had just been diagnosed with cancer. Price had survived his own bout with cancer a few years earlier, and Jim was writing to him because he knew Price would understand his fear and his questions. Jim wrote, "I want to believe in a God who cares . . . because I may meet him sooner than I had expected. I think I am at the point where I can accept the existence of God . . . but I can't yet believe God cares about me." (7)

"I want to believe in a God who cares . . ." That's the question we will all wrestle with sometime in our lives. And if God does care about us, why does He let the storms happen? I believe we can see the answer in today's lesson.

**The story in Mark's Gospel is an affirmation. Yes, Jesus does care.** When the storms of life are raging, he does care. When it seems you cannot hold on a moment longer, he does care. When the waters threaten to engulf, he does care.

Remember this: Jesus had all power in heaven and earth available to him. He chose to empty himself of his power and take on the life of an average man. He chose to endure hardship. He chose to endure oppression from the Roman government and rejection from the religious establishment and his own family. He chose to be hungry, to be lonely, to be abandoned and betrayed by his closest friends. He chose to suffer wrongful arrest and torture and humiliation and death. Jesus chose to place himself into every imaginable storm because he had faith that God was using these storms for a greater purpose, for the salvation of the world. Jesus chose to place himself into every imaginable storm because he knew God Almighty was with him every step of the way. That's how he could face down every storm without fear.

Glenn Scrivener says that a few years ago he prayed to God that he would get to know God better. Within a week of that prayer, Glenn's employers deported him from England back to Australia, his long-time girlfriend broke up with him, and his parents announced they were divorcing.

In the midst of all these painful events, Glenn had a revelation: God was using these storms to answer Glenn's prayer. He realized that following Jesus often leads us into challenging pathways. Jesus may very well lead us directly into a storm. But it's not because he doesn't love us. It's not because he wasn't prepared for it. **It's because we can't understand the power and the peace of God unless we encounter it in the middle of a storm.** The best way to get to know God is to be caught in a storm with Him. (8)

And that's a lesson the disciples needed to learn, and they couldn't learn it any other way. So the disciples rouse Jesus from his sleep, and he speaks to the wind and the waves, "Peace! be still!" And the wind ceases and there is a great calm. Then he turns to the disciples and asks, "Why are you afraid? Have you no faith?"

**The central question in life is not how many storms we must pass through. The question is whether we have faith for the storms.** All of us will encounter storms. Sometimes it will seem as if God Himself has forsaken us. It is at such times that our faith will be critical.

A few years ago, a woman named Chastity Patterson lost her father. After his death, Chastity continued to send daily text messages to his old phone number. She just wanted to feel like he was still there, still sharing the ups and downs of her daily life. It was her way of dealing with a storm of grief. For four years, she sent daily text updates to her father's old phone number. And then one day, she got a reply.

Just before the fourth anniversary of Chastity's father's death, she received this text from his old number: "My name is Brad and I lost my daughter in a car wreck August 2014 and your messages have kept me alive. When you text me, I know it's a message from God." Brad texted that he was proud of how Chastity had managed the challenges in her life over the past four years. Chastity posted their text exchange to social media to show her friends and family "that there is a God and it might take 4 years, but he shows up right on time!" (9)

That's what the disciples learned from their struggles in the storm: there is a God and he shows up right on time. Do you believe in a God who loves you and has promised never to forsake you? Do you believe that however dark the clouds may be, behind those clouds, the sun still shines? Do you believe that beyond every cross, there is an empty tomb? If you do, you can weather the storm, however severe. If you do not, today is the day to appropriate that faith for yourself.

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2. Andrew Branch, "A Masterful win for family man Bubba Watson," [http://www.worldmag.com/2014/04/a\\_masterful\\_win\\_for\\_family\\_man\\_bubba\\_watson](http://www.worldmag.com/2014/04/a_masterful_win_for_family_man_bubba_watson). Cited in Jim L. Wilson, *300 Illustrations for Preachers* (Bellingham, WA, Lexham Press, 2015).

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4. <https://www.stress.org/holmes-rahe-stress-inventory-pdf>.

5. "5 Things People Don't Know About the Pain of Divorce" by Laura Petherbridge  
Crosswalk.com August 9, 2019. <https://www.crosswalk.com/family/marriage/divorce-and-remarriage/5-things-people-don-t-know-about-the-pain-of-divorce.html>.

6. Dr. Thomas Long ([http://www.csec.org/csec/sermon/long\\_4603.htm](http://www.csec.org/csec/sermon/long_4603.htm)).

7. [Reynolds Price, *Letter to a Man On Fire* (New York: Scribner, 1999), 25.] Cited by The Rev. Dr. Lewis Galloway, [https://day1.org/weekly-broadcast/5d9b820ef71918cdf20031a6/does\\_jesus\\_care](https://day1.org/weekly-broadcast/5d9b820ef71918cdf20031a6/does_jesus_care).

8. Glenn Scrivener in *sallysjourney*.

9. "Arkansas woman texted father's number every day after he died, she got a response four years later" by Morgan Phillips, Fox News, <https://www.foxnews.com/us/arkansas-woman-texting-father-every-day-response>.

ChristianGlobe Networks, Inc., [Dynamic Preaching Sermons](#), by King Duncan

## II

It is not easy being a father. One cynic, speaking from his own experience, noted that children go through four fascinating stages. First they call you DaDa. Then they call you Daddy. As they mature they call you Dad. Finally they call you collect.

The most common image that Jesus used in describing God was that of "Father." It makes me think that Joseph must have been a very special kind of father. We center much of our attention on his mother, Mary, but Joseph must have also combined those very special qualities of strength and gentleness that we associate with Jesus. Jesus had a very keen knowledge of the Old Testament Scriptures. In the Jewish home it was the father who had the primary responsibility for his son's religious instruction. Of course we know that Jesus had an unique relationship with God. Still, I have to believe that Joseph, though barely mentioned in the Gospel narrative, was probably an influential role model for Jesus. Why else would Jesus have chosen the imagery of "Father" to portray God?

Dads don't have it as easy as they used to, perhaps. But how important Christian fathers are! A study of church attendance sometime back showed that if both Mom and Dad attended church regularly 72 percent of their children remain faithful to the church. If only Mom attended regularly, only 15 percent remained faithful. So the church is thankful for Christian fathers. And so are Christian mothers, needless to say. The number of young women having to raise children in a single parent household nowadays is startling. Of course, it is not always the mother who is raising the children. Again, we can be thankful for Christian fathers who take on their share of responsibility for nurturing their young. So if you are here maybe your father had something to do with it.

In 1969, in Pass Christian, Mississippi, a group of people was preparing to have a "hurricane party" in the face of a storm named Camille. Police chief Jerry Peralta pulled up sometime after dark at the posh Richelieu Apartments. Facing the beach less than 250 feet from the surf, the apartments were directly in the line of danger.

A man with a drink in his hand came out to the second-floor balcony and waved at the police chief. Peralta yelled up, "You all need to clear out of here as quickly as you can. The storm's getting worse." But as other party participants joined the man on the balcony, they just laughed at Peralta's order to leave. "This is my land," one of them yelled back. "If you want me off, you'll have to arrest me."

Peralta didn't arrest anyone, but he wasn't able to persuade them to leave either. He wrote down the names of the next of kin of the twenty or so people who gathered there to party through the storm. They laughed as he took their names. They had been warned, but they had no intention of leaving.

It was 10:15 p.m. when the front wall of the storm came ashore. Scientists clocked Camille's wind speed at more than 205 miles-per-hour, the strongest on record and much, much stronger than

Hurricane Katrina that did so much destruction to the Gulf Coast last summer. Raindrops hit with the force of bullets, and waves off the Gulf Coast crested between twenty-two and twenty-eight feet high.

News reports later showed that the worst damage came at the little settlement of motels, go-go bars, and gambling houses known as Pass Christian, where some twenty people were killed at a hurricane party in the Richelieu Apartments. Nothing was left of that three-story structure but the foundation. Of the two dozen people in the building, only one survived. (1)

Storms come. Sometimes they come suddenly and violently. Sometimes they tear your world apart.

Jesus and his disciples were crossing the Sea of Galilee. Suddenly a furious squall came up, and the waves broke over their boat, nearly swamping it. Jesus was in the stern, sleeping on a cushion. The disciples woke him and said to him, "Teacher, don't you care if we drown?" Jesus got up, rebuked the wind and said to the waves, "Quiet! Be still!" Then the wind died down and it was completely calm. And he said to his disciples, "Why are you so afraid? Do you still have no faith?" They were now more terrified and asked each other, "Who is this? Even the wind and the waves obey him!"

Storms come. They may not come in the form of a sudden, furious squall, or a hurricane. Sometimes they come in the form of a phone call--from a doctor confirming a diagnosis, from a police officer telling you of an automobile accident. Storms come in many forms--a note from a spouse saying she's leaving, a pink slip from an employer. Storms come. Just as they came to those disciples on the Sea of Galilee.

Here's what's frustrating: Sometimes when storms come, it seems as if God is asleep. "Teacher, don't you care if we drown?" asked his terrified disciples. And sometimes when we are going through a crisis, it does seem that either God doesn't hear or doesn't care.

You may remember Robert Browning's famous poem:

The lark's on the wing, God's in his heaven, All's right with the world.

The snail's on the thorn;

Browning wrote those words in the mid-Nineteenth century, an era of boundless optimism. But after two world wars, the Holocaust, and numerous genocides, as well as the terrible specter of international terrorism, few people would now dare to say, "All's

right with the world." Worse, as author Philip Yancey notes, "God seems to stay in his heaven despite all that's wrong with the world. Why doesn't He do something?" (2)

A Romanian man filed a lawsuit last fall against God for allegedly fouling up his life. The suit states that the man was promised a good life in return for "various goods and prayers," and that the

20-year sentence he's currently serving in a Romanian jail represents a clear breach of contract. (3)

That's absurd, of course, but have you ever felt like suing God? Be honest now. Sometimes terrifying storms come up in our lives and we turn to God and all we find is an awful silence. And we cry out with those disciples of old, "Teacher, don't you care if we drown?"

In our text for today, Christ does stir from his slumber. He rebukes the wind and says to the waves, "Quiet! Be still!" When the wind dies down and is completely calm, he turns to his disciples and asks, "Why are you so afraid? Do you still have no faith?" I believe this is the crux of the lesson. We know that storms come. We believe that Christ has the power to calm the storms. Why are we afraid to trust God's promises?

Christ knew that his disciples were human beings, given to fear. He knew that they were still growing in their faith. His retort to them sounds harsh, but it is the harshness of a coach who wants his players to get the routine down precisely so that when they are tested they will be able to respond as they were coached. Jesus wants to help us with our fear--for a greater tragedy than the storms that come in our lives is the inadequacy of the response that we make to those storms. Let me make some brief suggestions about how we can cope with life in the midst of life's storms.

First of all, prepare for them. That makes sense, doesn't it? If we know storms are going to come, don't you think we ought to prepare for them? A TV news camera crew was on assignment in southern Florida filming the widespread destruction from Hurricane Andrew. In one scene, amid the devastation and debris, stood one house on its foundation. The owner was cleaning up the yard when a reporter approached him. "Sir, why is your house the only one in the entire neighborhood that is standing?" asked the reporter. "How did you manage to escape the severe damage of the hurricane?"

"I built this house myself," the man replied. "I also built it according to the Florida state building code. When the code called for two-by-six roof trusses, I used two-by-six roof trusses. I was told that a house built according to code could withstand a hurricane. I did and it did. I suppose no one else around here followed the code." (4)

That man was prepared. But suppose that storm had been cancer or the loss of a child or some great tragedy, how could he have prepared? There are many ways.



HE COULD HAVE MADE SURE HIS RELATIONSHIPS WERE STRONG. His family relationships, his relationships with his friends. It helps when you are going through a storm to have others there with you. You may not be blessed with a family, but you can build your relationships here in the church so that you will have people who will serve as your support group. Ask someone who has gone through the storm of an illness or the loss of a loved one whether close relationships made a difference. They do.

He could have also prepared himself for the storm physically, mentally, spiritually. For example, does your general health make a difference in a storm? How well you've taken care of yourself can make a significant difference when you are struck by a catastrophic illness. We don't talk about this much at church, but maybe we ought to. A person undergoing surgery or chemotherapy or radiation will generally do better if his or her overall health is good. Being in good physical condition is also a good way to deal with the depression that inevitably comes with a terrible loss. Prepare for life's storms by keeping yourself fit. Don't wait until the storm comes.

Mentally and spiritually we prepare ourselves by building our lives on the Rock. There comes a time in our lives when we decide what we believe and how we will live. "I will live according to God's building code," we decide. "I will live a life of quality, trusting God's promises." There are other ways to live that might bring us more sensual gratification and less sacrifice, but we believe that our lives have purpose and meaning, that a loving Creator has intended our lives for something more than mere animal satisfactions. And so we seek to live our lives according to God's code so that, when the storms of life come, we respond reflexively with faith and not fear, just as a well-trained athlete responds in the contest as he or she has been coached. This is not to say that we cease being human. We still may go through all the steps associated with grief and loss--denial, anger, rejection, guilt, bargaining, depression/confusion, and acceptance. But we go through the process without being overwhelmed.

And then, eventually, when the storm has run its course, as all storms do, we see how God has guided us through. We had despaired at times that we could possibly make it, but we do make it and we give God the glory. And, if we are wise, we reflect on the lessons we have learned from this experience. For this is the purpose of storms--to produce growth.

Robert A. Schuller tells about a farmer in Washington who was especially proud of the apples he produced every year, and with good reason. His farm was at a high elevation, and the cold winds that came through there made his apples especially crisp and flavorful. Every year, after he harvested his crop, he would polish those apples until they virtually shone. Then he would put them into beautiful packages to show them off. These weren't your ordinary run-of-the-mill apples but the kind that made beautiful gifts to send loved ones for Thanksgiving and Christmas. As word of his marvelous apples spread, it got to the point where he was inundated with orders even before he had harvested the fruit.

One year, just before harvest time, a severe hailstorm pummeled his property. When it was all over, there wasn't a single apple without blemishes on its skin. There was nothing wrong with the apples. They just didn't look as pretty as they usually did, and the farmer was afraid that the people who had ordered them might be disappointed and ask for their money back.

Then he had an idea. He took all of the apples with the little blemishes on the outside and wrapped every one of them the same way he did every year. He put them in the same kind of packages. Then he added a note. It read: "Notice these high-quality apples. This year represents the finest crop. You can see the blemishes caused by the hailstorm, which created the extreme cold giving the ultimate flavor and ultimate crispness to these apples."

Well, not a single order was returned. In fact, just the opposite happened. The following year when his orders started coming in he had many requests from people who wanted to make sure they got the apples with the blemishes this year, too! (5)

That's the way it works for people of faith. We don't escape the blemishes. We wear them proudly, for we could not be who we are today without the growth that those blemishes brought with them.

Storms come. Some of you are young. It seems like you will live forever. That's wonderful, but if you are smart, you will prepare yourself for that time when life sends us the unexpected squall. Prepare yourself by building strong relationships. Prepare yourself by keeping yourself fit physically, mentally and spiritually. Decide to build your life on the rock of faith.

Rabbi Jan Goldstein recalls one unexpected benefit from the 1994 earthquake that rocked Los Angeles. The disaster caused massive power outages all over the city. But, for the first time in years, Goldstein saw his neighbors wander outside at night and gaze at the stars. Usually, the artificial lights that powered the city blocked out most views of the night sky. In Goldstein's experience, few Angelenos had the opportunity before this earthquake and the subsequent power outage to appreciate the beauty of the stars. (6)

I wonder if something like that didn't happen that night to the disciples. After the Master had calmed the storm, there was a great calm. But the wind from the storm had cleared the air in a wonderful way and, as they gazed at the heavens, they could see the stars as they had never seen them before. And they reflected on this man who had power over the wind and the waves. And they learned the meaning of a life built on God.

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1. Christian Values Quarterly, Spring/Summer 1994, p. 10.

2. Philip Yancey, *Where Is God When It Hurts?* (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1990).

3. The Week, October 28, 2005, p. 8.

4. Leadership 14, no. 1 (Winter 1993): 49. Steve Farrar, Standing Tall (Sisters, OR: Multnomah Publishers, Inc. 2001).

5. Dump Your Hang-ups (Grand Rapids: Fleming H. Revell, 1993).

6. Jan Goldstein, Life Can Be This Good (Berkeley, CA.: Conari Press, 2002), p. 96.

King Duncan [esermons.com](http://esermons.com)

III Placed here for you by Fr Joseph Pellegrino

At the end of the *Book of Job*, God addressed Job out of a storm and asked him if he was present when God created the world. In today's first reading God speaks about the creation and confining of the sea. In the Gospel, Jesus quiets a storm, and the disciples ask, "Who is this whom even the wind and sea obey?"

Insurance companies use a term to describe an uncontrollable natural force. They call this an act of God. That is an unfortunate term. It assumes that God causes nature to do harm to people. God does not do evil things to people. People do evil things to people. Pope Francis in the encyclical *Laudate Si, On the Care for our Common Home*, directs us to discover and prevent any catastrophe that could rightly be called an Act of Man.

Natural catastrophes are events that we are very much aware of here in Florida. We are always keeping an eye on the weather and how it will effect the waters around us. We have to have a lot of respect for stormy weather, particularly when a hurricane threatens. Here at St. Ignatius, we either have hurricane windows, or wood or metal doors and windows to protect the Church and all of our buildings. Hopefully, you have all made provisions to protect your homes also.

As careful as people have to be with their property that is on land, they have to be far more careful with that which is on the water. Boats have got to be secured. Trying to stay afloat during a major storm is foolish unless you are in a really large ship.

The ancients also had a healthy respect for the sea and for storms out on the sea. The ancients saw the sea as one of the most powerful forces in the world. They also saw the sea as a source of beauty. Life itself came from the sea. Food comes from the sea. Peace and serenity come from looking at the sea. If you don't believe me than you haven't gone out to see the sunset on Howard Park recently.

Even though it was such a powerful force, the ancients knew that God could control the sea. In the *Book of Job*, Job's pains lead him to question God's wisdom and power. God challenges Job with the simple statement found in the first reading for this Sunday: "I closed up the sea." God has even more power than the sea.

The fear of a storm at sea was too much for Jesus' disciples in the today's Gospel reading. Many of them were fishermen. They were terrorized when they saw the storm coming. When Jesus quieted the sea and the winds, they recognized the power of God working through him. Their question: "Who is this that calms the storm and the winds?" was similar to asking, "Who is the King of Glory?"

First, though, their faith was tried. Remember, when the storm came up, Jesus was asleep in the boat. It appeared that He was not concerned with their plight. It seemed that they had to ride out this storm alone. The fear that the disciples had is the

same fear that we all have when we are confronted with a crisis. We find out that we have a serious illness, and we become fearful for our lives and for our loved ones. We learn a terrible truth about one of our relatives or friends, and we fear that their lives and even our own reputations will be shattered. We often have to accept a change in our lives. Even changes as routine as moving from Middle School to High School, or High School to college, or college to independent life as a young adult can be frightening. We consider marriage and our responsibilities to a person we love, and then we consider our responsibilities to those people that we bring into the world, and we fear that we might not be up to the challenges of life. We fear that we are alone. But we are not alone. God sees. God knows. He's there in the boat of life with us as the storms rage. He challenges us as Jesus challenged his disciples, "Why are you afraid? Where is your faith?" Our all loving God is also an all-powerful God. He will calm the sea for us if we trust in Him. God does not forget us, even if we think He is sleeping.

Perhaps today's readings are not about nature after all. They are about God, the One who created the universe and cares for each one of us as an only child. He calls upon us to have faith that conqueror of the seas and of all chaos will help us grow closer to Him through all the challenges of our lives.