

Twelfth Sunday in Ordinary Time B2024

Let me start this homily with an observation. When people are moving through difficult times, as in the case of a serious illness or an incurable disease, a question comes often on their lips: Why me? Why only me? Why I am condemned to go through such a situation? Why does not God intervene and put an end to my suffering? Why does not he do something for me? Why is he silent as though he does not see what I am going through?

Those questions are legitimate, but they also show us that human suffering is a mystery that can blindly strike anyone. As it is difficult for us to comprehend totally the meaning of suffering, it is also hard for us to understand the reason why we have to undergo it.

Whatever might be our experience of suffering, one thing is sure: we are not the first to suffer and ask questions relative to it. Many people before us and in the past have gone through the same experience and raised the same questions.

The first reading of today recalls the story of Job as he was confronted with human suffering. It was when Job was at the top of his life, successful in business and prosperous in family, that he was struck by misfortune. Like any one of us, he complained before God; he asked him why he could not prevent all that to happen to him.

The text we have today is God's response to Job. In this response, God shows Job how he is the creator and the master of the universe. He has created everything that exists; he has ordained everything skillfully with a plan. He has put boundaries to the seas and limits to the earth. Therefore, he has power to do things that humans cannot explain or understand.

The point of this text is to invite Job to accept God's plan for him, to trust him and hope that he will not abandon him, in spite of the suffering of the moment.

Like for Job, God asks of us that in our own suffering we do not lose trust and hope in him. Suffering is like a dark night coming upon someone. But every night, as long as it might be, always has a dawn. Even in the midst of serious suffering, God is still with us. He guides all the events of our life for a good ending. As St Paul says, "We know that all things work for good for those who love God" (Romans 8, 28)

In other words, whatever might happen to us, we need strong faith and an unconditional trust in God. Even if our life is tossed up by a storm of sufferings and illness, a period of calm and consolation by the Lord will come. Even if we go through some dark nights in our lives, we have to be sure that the Lord will soon or later intervene, because it is his promise that he will be with us until the end of the world. He knows everything that is happening to us. He sees everything that is happening to us, because he is with us always.

All that helps us understand what is at the stake in today's Gospel as our Lord reproaches his disciples their lack of faith. The reproach of our Lord to the disciples means that they had forgotten that he was with them in that storm. For that reason, nothing bad could happen to them. Would it have been that they perish in that boat, would not our Lord die with them? But was that scenario even possible?

As it can be seen, the mistake of the disciples lies in the fact that, in that critical situation, they had doubt in the power of our Lord to protect them. They thought they were alone and struggling alone. And yet, our Lord was with them. Even asleep, our Lord is always awake and alive. Moreover, the disciples had recourse to our Lord only when their situation became desperate. Our Lord does not want us to call upon him only when things go terribly wrong, but rather at any time

Our faith teaches that any circumstance of life, be it of joy or sadness, is an equal opportunity to open our hearts to the Lord and burst in prayer. The problem, however, is that some people think of God only when they are victims of misfortune and bad luck. And when their situation improves, they sit back into their routine and turn the back away from God.

Today's Gospel invites us to the awareness of the continual presence of our Lord in our lives and to our Christian responsibility before God. It teaches us that our Lord is a powerful savior sent to us by the Father. The negative forces of life and all the power of evil that tries to destroy us cannot overcome him. This is why he is able to calm the storm on the sea and to let the wind obey him.

Whenever our Lord is present, there is peace and serenity. He can give us peace when the storms of life and problems assail us. But we have first to call upon him. We have to tell him what assails us and gives us anxiety. Then, he can command the wind and the sea to calm down and quiet.

On that day, what saved the disciples from shipwreck was the fact of taking our Lord in the boat with them before beginning the crossing. This is also for us the best guarantee against the storms of life: to take our Lord with us. The means by which we can take our Lord in the boat of our life, our family and business is faith, prayer and observance of the commandments.

Brothers and sisters, would you accept to take our Lord with you in the boat of your life, your family and your business?

Job 38: 1, 8-11; 2 Corinthians 5: 14-17; Mark 4: 35-41



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