

Twelfth Sunday in Ordinary Time (B)

The storms of life can be very unnerving and often overwhelming. It is easy for a person to become overwhelmed.

Why did Jesus, who is God, and therefore all-powerful, allow himself **to fall asleep** just when things were getting **really tough**, really scary, for his followers?

This is a question **we all have to face** sooner or later.

Maybe we won't be on a boat during a storm that threatens to sink us, but each one of us will run up against **some kind of storm** before we die.

In fact, in this fallen world, it is safe to say that the **storm is the norm**.

- It may be the long and painful sickness of a loved one,
- the death of beloved child,
- damage caused by a family member's addictions and infidelities,
- the ravages of war,
- a debilitating natural disaster,
- financial ruin
- problems within the church
- or maybe just intense, heart-sickening loneliness.

Why does an all-powerful God **go to sleep** in our boats and let these storms **rage** against us?

The Catechism tells us

Catechism #324: The fact that God permits physical and even moral evil is a mystery that God illuminates by his Son Jesus Christ who died and

rose to vanquish evil. Faith gives us the certainty that God would not permit an evil if he did not cause a good to come from that very evil, by ways that we shall fully know only in eternal life.

But we **can** understand God's ways **partially**, if we understand **God's agenda** for our lives.

God's agenda for our brief journey through earth isn't **perfect comfort** and **unbroken pleasure**.

- Rather, he wants us to achieve the wisdom, courage, joy, and inner balance of **spiritual maturity**.
- In other words, he wants us **to get in shape for heaven**.
- And that involves learning to trust in **him** more than in **ourselves**, learning that **we are not all-powerful**.

That's **hard to learn**, because it goes directly against the **spiritual DNA**, we have all inherited from **original sin**.

And so, sometimes, God goes to sleep in our boats and lets the storm rage, so that we will come to know and accept the **reality** of **our limitations** and the **truth** of our **dependence** on him.

Learning to **accept our limitations** and **dependence** on God is **especially hard** in today's world, which is so **technologically advanced** that it tends to put an almost **religious-quality faith** in **human potential**.

- There are still **some** problems that we haven't yet solved, but this **myth of scientific progress** tries to convince us that it's only a **matter of time** until we solve them.
- Not so, not so: **we cannot make heaven on earth; we cannot save ourselves** , which is precisely why Jesus came to be our Savior.

This deep religious faith in science is **seductive** for two reasons.

First, because it's so **popular** in today's culture.

- It's built into **advertising** campaigns, movie screenplays, and television scripts.
- It's even the motivation behind **activist groups** that promote things like abortion and homosexual marriage.
- They try to solve unwanted pregnancies and unwanted sexual orientations not by **seeking God's help to follow God's design** for human happiness, but by trying to **redefine** or **re-engineer** what it means to be a human being.

Second, this faith in scientific progress is seductive because it **flatters** us, it tells what the devil told Adam and Eve: "You shall be like gods."

But of course, that's just as much a **lie** today as it was at the beginning of history.

And so, God continues to give us opportunities - storms - **to learn to trust in him**, to surrender to him our **self-deification illusions**.

How can we **take maximum advantage** of these opportunities?

The very best way is **to learn to pray better**.

- Prayer is how **we** go to Jesus.
- Prayer is the **school** where we learn the beauty and wisdom behind God's agenda.
- Prayer is the **gymnasium** where we exercise and strengthen the faith that allows Jesus, the Prince of Peace, to become the Lord of lives not just in **theory**, but in **practice**.

Today, as Jesus renews **his commitment to us** in this Mass,

- let's ask him to be our **strength** amidst the storms of life,

and let's **promise** that this week, we will **renew our commitment** to becoming experts in prayer. For that prayer must come from the very depths of our hearts!