

## **Weathering Storms**

Last week, tropical storm Isaias barreled up the East Coast. The U.S. Weather Service has updated its forecast for the late summer and fall. Bottom line: More storms on the way.

Storms don't just come in the form of tropical disturbances, hurricanes and nor'easters. Just living life brings disrupting storms.

Sometimes the "storm" is a rocky season of our marriage. But it can also be something with our kids, or our jobs. It can be about finances or health. It can be a turbulent time in the history of a nation.

What we can always be sure of is that there will be more storms, whether they are announced on the Weather Channel or at the dinner table. Storms are part of life.

Today's gospel presents Peter and the apostles on a boat, smack in the middle of a nasty storm. As they are being tossed about by the wind and waves, they fear that they will perish. (Matthew 14:22-33)

Unbeknownst to them, Jesus is with them in the midst of the chaos. What's more, he's extending his hand to Peter in the face of his terror.

One way of looking at this story is to understand it as a commentary on the church. Peter and the apostles in the

boat represent the Pope (the successor of Peter) and all of us riding the waves of history. There have been many storms in the church over the centuries that have rocked the boat of the church. There will certainly be more. Some think that we're in the middle of a frightful tempest right now!

At times it may feel as if "the ship" is taking on so much water that we're doomed to sink.

But Christ is with us. He will not abandon us. His words echo through centuries: "Don't be afraid. I am with you. Don't fear reaching that final shore."

The story is also about us as individuals and families.

Remember that Jesus reached out to Peter to save him from drowning in fear. At some point Peter had to *accept* the help Jesus was extending to him.

God puts people in our lives to help us ride out the storms. But we have to accept the help. Sometimes we resist. We're too proud, too stubborn, too fussy to accept where the help is coming from. At times we don't recognize the helping hand of grace that is right under our noses.

Louisa May Alcott once wrote: "*I am not afraid of storms because I am learning to sail my ship.*"

Every storm passes. Every storm has the potential to rain down wisdom for moving forward. Every storm brings

helpers, like Christ himself, to help us navigate the vast sea of life.

The test of love is to weather the storm together.

Pray for the grace to sail the wind and waves.

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