

Homily for the Twelve Sunday in Ordinary Time, Year B

Theme: "Wake up, Lord!"

In the first reading of today (Job 38:1, 8-110,) we encounter the suffering and ever distressed servant of God, Job. All along, in this controversy as regards the predicaments of Job, Job's friends (Eliphaz, Bildad and Zophar) have had their say, their mere opinions ... for they thought it was so easy to contest with the Almighty. For them, the understanding of the theology of retribution – that God rewards the just and punishes the wicked, was at play in Job's life. Elihu then comes along with a rather contrasting idea and he gives a defense of God that he does all He wills for He is the Almighty. And it is at this point that the Lord speaks!

The Almighty makes it known to Job that even though the earth and the sea seem so near, so bulky, he just can't give an account of their origination or even of their limits for God's omnipotence surpasses his; for God's knowledge is far greater compared to Job's ignorance. As such, Job need not contend with God but rather place his life at the hands of God ... for it is up to the omniscient God; the omnipotent God to have the last word in all His dealings.

But perhaps we can do well to ask: since we resemble Job in a myriad ways.

What is it that we are burdened with, for we think that the last word has to be ours?

Are we engaged in a contest with God yet our powerlessness is just but open for all to see?

Are we so good at seeking the mere opinions of others, without consulting God, say in prayer?

Are we troubled with life's storms and yet claim to have absolute answers, solutions ... rather than putting them down for God to give us the peace; the helping hand that we all deserve?

This is the same scenario that we are furnished with in the Gospel reading of today (Mark 4:35-41). Jesus gets into the boat together with the members of His inner circle. But when they got on the sea and they were caught off guard by an unexpected, turbulent storm. Convinced that they can still sail through the turbulent waters, the disciples give their best in stabilizing the boat they were in. With their efforts turning futile, they realize that it is not up to them to have the final word. What is harder to understand is Jesus' attitude. While His disciples are naturally alarmed and desperate in spite of the tempest, He sleeps on soundly. With the awareness that it wasn't up to them to calm the stormy sea, they call on Jesus ... the same Jesus they claimed to be in their company and yet He had fallen asleep on the cushion as soon as they got into the boat. Nonetheless, since our omnipotent God never turns a deaf ear to our pleas, the once sleeping Jesus wakes up, rebukes the turbulent sea and all turns calm.

On this boat, are all of us!! Take your minds aback and recall the day you became a Christian, that day when you said together with Saint Paul, as we have in the second reading of today, that the old past is gone for you had become a new creation, in Christ (2 Corinthians 5:14-17). By this solemn act, you must have joined the company of the followers of Christ in the boat. You got into the boat ... the Church, the family ... together with Jesus. However, due to the myriad life's commitments, you have since failed to keep your eye on Jesus. You have since failed to engage Jesus in each and every of your undertakings.

You have since failed to put all your burdens down so that God can be your guide.
You have since failed to spare a second, a minute, an hour, or even a day ... so as to communicate with Him, in prayer.
You have since failed to honour the Lord's day for what matters most are the earthly treasures that bare your name.
You have since failed to have that basic sense on sin.
You have since failed to take good care of our common home.
That being the case, you claim to be in the company of Jesus, you to claim to be in His boat ... and yet He is sleeping soundly on the cushion of your heart. And this begs the question: If Jesus is in my boat but He's sleeping, what am I to think? What is it that has become of me?

Cognizant to the fact that we are in a stormy sea of some kind, but Jesus is soundly asleep we can't help but implore Him: "Wake up, Lord!" We need you, Lord back to our active lives. We are not self-sufficient. Wake up, Lord and speak to our hearts for with you, life never dies!

And since by ourselves we cannot have Jesus fully and perpetually awake in our lives, let us implore the intercession of Mary, the Star of the stormy sea.