

THE OTHER SIDE Mark 4: 35 – 41

'At the end of one day Jesus said to his disciples, ' Let's go across to the other side.'

So they took him in the boat just as he was.

Other boats came along too.

A huge storm came up.

Waves poured into the boat, threatening to sink it.

Jesus was in the stern with his head on a pillow, sleeping!

They woke him up and said, 'Teacher, doesn't it mean anything to you that we are going to drown?'

Awake now Jesus told the wind to 'pipe down' and also said to the sea, 'Settle down.'

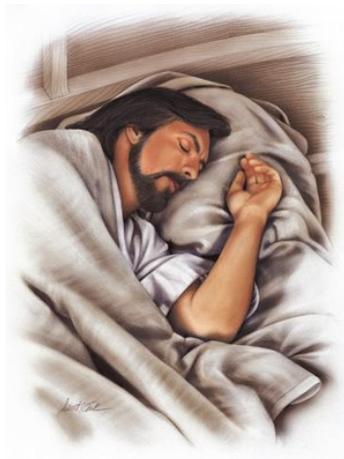
The wind ran out of breath; the sea became as smooth as glass.

Jesus reprimanded the disciples,

'Why are you such cowards? Don't you have any faith at all?'

They were all in awe and absolutely staggered, 'Who IS this person anyway? Who does he think he is?'

What next? The wind and waves are at his beck and call?'



It seems to me that we are being invited, albeit urgently, to take courage and go with Jesus to 'the other side'. I've heard some refer to the next life as 'the other side'. And I guess that takes a special kind of courage to yield to the call when it's our time to go home to God. But today we'll go with Jesus 'just as he is' – no need to dress up or even have a shower: just come. God knows what we're leaving behind for a while: home jobs, going through stuff that must be sorted, work on the farm... whatever. Leave it for now.

But where are you taking us, Lord? Jesus says, 'Don't worry about it, follow me.'

No sooner are we on board than there's an awful wind and the waves rock the boat. Our boat. It was calm when we left but now we'll all have to start bailing – this sea will drown us all. Don't you care, Jesus? We have no resources to help ourselves and we've just looked to see where you are and guess what? You're asleep! Some men can sleep anywhere. It's not good enough - we'll wake you up right now. 'Lord, don't you care? We're all going to drown.'

Jesus stirred and spoke to his Father about the wind and the waves. And they calmed down. What? Don't believe it, no-one can do that. But it's all quiet and we know that this inland lake is mercurial and volatile and the weather changes in a second. The difference in temperatures between the coast, warm, and the mountains, cool, means that strong winds drop, funneling through the hills onto this shallow lake which is 680 feet below sea level.

Whether Jesus was irritated because he had been woken up from a deep sleep or not, we don't know, but he was cross with his friends. 'Haven't you got ANY faith?' (fair suck of the sauce bottle...) But wait, the disciples know that Jesus is using the same language as he used when he orders the demon out of a person in the synagogue in chapter 1. In both cases the demonic forces recognize him and obey his commands. Jesus is amazed and troubled at his disciples' lack of faith when they had already witnessed so much. What does it take for our trust to totally reside in God? Are we afraid when God calls us to come to the other side?

What is our 'other side'? Is it gender, race or culture? Perhaps one of the most difficult boundaries to cross is between justice and injustice. In today's Gospel Jesus and others are crossing the boundary from the known – Jewishness – to the Gentile community across the water. When they land, a maniac rushes out of the cemetery. If we were frightened before, we certainly are now. We're not in our own comfort zone. Is Jesus telling us not to worry when we are in this situation?

Where are the boundaries that need crossing in our lives and community?
What keeps us from crossing them? Why are we still frightened?
Let's think about this for a minute and say to ourselves...

PEACE BE STILL.

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