

4. July 2023

Faith can calm storms

Mt 8:23-27

Then he got into the boat followed by his disciples. Suddenly a storm broke over the lake, so violent that the boat was being swamped by the waves. But he was asleep. So they went to him and woke him saying, 'Save us, Lord, we are lost!' And he said to them, 'Why are you so frightened, you who have so little faith?' And then he stood up and rebuked the winds and the sea; and there was a great calm. They were astounded and said, 'Whatever kind of man is this, that even the winds and the sea obey him?'

"Whatever kind of man is this?" In the light of faith, it is easy for us to answer this question, "This man is the Son of God, therefore He has authority over everything created, even over the winds and the sea."

At that time, people were only at the beginning of the events related to the coming of the Messiah. They had to gradually discover and understand who this Jesus was and what the significance of all that he did was. Although we now have a long tradition of faith in Jesus, which has been solidified throughout the history of the Church and confirmed by a "cloud of witnesses" (cf. Heb 12:1), it is still necessary to internalise the mystery of the Son of God and to try to understand His words and deeds ever better.

In today's Gospel, we encounter the power of Jesus, or rather the application of His divine authority over creation. First of all, the disciples' fear of the storm at sea is described. In the meantime, Jesus was asleep. The turmoil caused by the storm did not wake Him up, or perhaps He simply did not pay attention to it. The disciples, on the other hand, were in awe.

Jesus used the occasion to teach them a profound lesson. Instead of being infected by their fear, He rebuked them for their lack of faith. The disciples had not yet understood that the strength of faith can overcome situations as threatening as the one they were in. They had allowed themselves to be intimidated by the power of the storm, without offering resistance to fear through faith.

At this point, we can turn to the figurative interpretation of this passage, for we know that the Word of God is not only a narration of past events, but is a living teaching for people of all times. Since His Word is always relevant, we can apply it to the concrete situations of our lives.

Today's Gospel teaches us that we must not allow ourselves to be dragged down by the threats in our lives or to abandon ourselves to their negative dynamics. God is present even in the midst of storms and in all circumstances of life. Even if the situation in the world or in the Church, or a personal and family situation seems to be out of control and we cannot see any divine intervention, and we get the impression that God is "asleep", our faith must be made present in these very circumstances, and only with the strength that comes from faith can we overcome them. The greater and firmer our faith, the sooner God will intervene.

Indeed, faith is not something abstract, nor is it exhausted in the knowledge of the contents of belief. Rather, it is the concrete application of the certainty that God is the Lord in the various circumstances of life; not only in the sense of His omnipotence, but also in the conviction that He leads all things to good and that there is no situation that is unknown to Him or that He cannot use for the salvation of His own (cf. Rom 8:28).

This certainty invites us to a deep trust in God, who will give us true security. On the other hand, God Himself wanted to make us sharers in His authority. Let us remember that the disciples later performed great signs and miracles in the name of the Lord (cf. Mk 16:17-18), and this is still the case today.

In the situation that today's Gospel tells us about, Jesus wanted the disciples to face the threatening storm by faith. And this is what He wants us to do today when we find ourselves in the midst of various storms. It is important to look to Him, to call on His name and not to sink into the abyss of fear.

It is a comfort to know that, after the lesson given to the disciples, Jesus comes to their aid. He does not abandon the 'men of little faith'! He will do the same for us, but not before reminding us how necessary it is to grow in faith, so that He can always manifest Himself and intervene in our lives.

If the people of that time wondered "*Whatever kind of man is this?*", then the people of this time may also be touched by the testimony of someone who has a strong faith, questioning how he or she was able to overcome this or that. It would then be the ideal time for a good profession of faith to win these people to Christ.