

Twelfth Sunday in Ordinary Time † Sunday, 20 June 2021



In England & Wales Cycle of Prayer: Those who suffer persecution and denial of human rights

Keynote: God's presence brings calm and strength

Book of Job 38: 1, 8-11

The sea is depicted as a tumultuous and threatening element, and from the midst of this fearful tempest God speaks: '*Who pent up the sea behind closed doors when it leapt tumultuous out of the womb, when I wrapped it in a robe of mist and made black clouds its swaddling bands?*' Even the reference to 'swaddling bands' reduces the powerful storm to the weakness of a new borne infant – being calmed and controlled at a word from God. So Job – the God fearing man receives his answer or indeed, anyone in time of trouble their answer – for they have but to turn to God, even in the midst of the storms of life, and to place their trust in God's word.

Responsorial Psalm 106 (107): 13-16, 28-31

A song in praise of God's never ending love

Second Letter of Paul to the Corinthians 5: 14-17

In this section of his letter the Paul develops what it means to be an apostle placing his emphasis upon Christ as the sure foundation, in the end, being a disciple leads ultimately to Christ. The effect upon us is that there is a new creation – the disciple is re-created in Christ. Referring to this new creation that takes place for the true disciple of Christ, the apostle Paul writes '*The love of Christ overwhelms us... for anyone who is in Christ, there is a new creation; the old creation has gone, and now the new one is here.*' There is a sense here of the almost overwhelming power of God at work in our lives, if we will only admit to the presence of the Lord. That power of Christ also surfaces in the gospel chosen for today.

Gospel according to Mark 4: 35-41

'*With the coming of evening... they took Jesus... in the boat... then it began to blow a gale and the waves were breaking into the boat so that it was almost swamped.*' The vivid details provided in this account of the boat trip on the inland sea of Galilee, not only echo the content of the first reading today, but contain a valuable lesson too. Such sudden squalls are still a feature of this inland water surrounded as it is by hot dry uplands. Many commentators interpret the boisterous stormy sea as representing the powers of chaos and evil. By controlling the storm, Jesus does what God does, and defeats the forces of evil. The evangelist Mark, wants his readers to reflect upon the identity of this man Jesus sleeping on a cushion in the boat despite the raging storm. These everyday fishermen with him in the boat were well used to the waters hereabouts. But in their judgement the boat was in deep trouble – and sometimes in life we may find ourselves in deep trouble too. Mark, here, wants us to focus upon the presence of the person of Jesus. For the evangelist this Jesus is indeed the Son of God. Like the fearful disciples in the boat that evening, we can ask ourselves today: '*Who can this be? Even the wind and sea obey him.*'

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NOTE

Solemnity of the Nativity of Saint John the Baptist – Thursday, 24 June 2021