

Here's a text if you've only a minute ...

He rescued them from their distress. *Psalm*

For anyone who is in Christ, there is a new creation. *Second Reading*

'Who can this be? Even the wind and the sea obey him.' *Gospel*

God of the universe, we worship you as Lord.
God, ever close to us, we rejoice to call you Father.
From this world's uncertainty we look to your covenant.
Keep us one in your peace, secure in your love.

Old Opening Prayer

This week's texts if you'd like to reflect further:
Job 38: 1.8–11; Psalm 106 (107); 2 Corinthians 5: 14–17; Mark 4: 35–41



Stephen Gjertson: *Peace, be still*
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Twelfth Sunday of Ordinary Time
Year B, 23rd June 2024

'Who can this man be?'

Today's readings provide an opportunity to focus on our trust in God with great courage and hope. Three of the texts demonstrate the Lord's power over the sea, and his care for us.

In the **First Reading**, the Lord responds to Job's complaints that he has been punished unjustly. God speaks of his divine power over his own creation.

God's control over nature is also echoed in the **Gospel**, as Jesus calms the storm. The disciples panic as the gale takes hold, awakening Jesus, who chides them for their lack of faith. They are filled with awe as Jesus stills the waves, asking: 'Who can this be?'

The **Psalmist** tells of the sailors' fear as their frail boats are buffeted by the winds and waves, but they give thanks to the Lord for his loving care as he leads them to a safe haven.

St Paul expresses his gratitude for the overwhelming love of Christ, through whose life, death and resurrection we are offered a new creation. (**Second Reading**)

This week we might pray for an increasing awareness of the Lord's constant presence in our lives. We can express our gratitude for his love in the words of the psalm refrain:
O give thanks to the Lord, for his love endures for ever.



Opening Prayer

Grant, O Lord,
that we may always revere and love your holy name,
for you never deprive of your guidance
those you set firm on the foundation of your love.

Psalm 106 (107)

R./ O give thanks to the Lord, for his love endures for ever.

Some sailed to the sea in ships
to trade on the mighty waters.
They have seen the Lord's deeds,
the wonders he does in the deep.

For he spoke; he summoned the gale,
tossing the waves of the sea
up to heaven and back into the deep;
their soul melted away in their distress.

Then they cried to the Lord in their need
and he rescued them from their distress.
He stilled the storm to a whisper:
all the waves of the sea were hushed.

They rejoiced because of the calm
and he led them to the haven they desired.
Let them thank the Lord for his love,
the wonders he does for them.

I come, with open heart and hands, to the place where I want to pray:
perhaps a special place in my home or garden; perhaps walking, taking in
the wonder of God's creation. I let my mind gently slow down, allowing
God's loving gaze to rest upon me, to welcome me.

When I am ready, I slowly read this psalm of thanksgiving, pausing after
each verse. What am I noticing? Where am I being drawn?

Is there a word or phrase that particularly catches my attention?
Might the words *gale ... mighty waters ... storm ... tossing the waves ...
distress* signify anything for me? I open my heart to the Lord.

Or how about *rescued ... hushed ... calm ... rejoiced ... led ... haven ...
love ... the wonders he does*? I ponder, and speak to the Lord of this.

Perhaps I stay with the line 'he led them to the haven they desired'.
What am I desiring just now? What does that haven look like for me?
Where is my place of calm? I can share this with the Lord too.

When ready, I give thanks and slowly close my prayer, perhaps using the
psalm refrain, or a simple *Glory be ...*

Gospel Mark 4: 35–41

With the coming of evening, Jesus said to his disciples,
'Let us cross over to the other side.' And leaving the crowd
behind they took him, just as he was, in the boat; and there were
other boats with him. Then it began to blow a gale and the waves
were breaking into the boat so that it was almost swamped. But he
was in the stern, his head on the cushion, asleep. They woke him
and said to him, 'Master, do you not care? We are going down!'
And he woke up and rebuked the wind and said to the sea, 'Quiet
now! Be calm!' And the wind dropped, and all was calm again.
Then he said to them, 'Why are you so frightened? How is it that
you have no faith?' They were filled with awe and said to one
another, 'Who can this be? Even the wind and the sea obey him.'

How am I feeling as I slowly enter into prayer? Is there anything causing
me to feel unsettled? I try to let go of any concerns, fears and reluctances,
letting myself be guided by God's spirit.

I read the Gospel slowly and carefully, staying with anything that draws
me. Perhaps in my mind's eye I picture the scene.

What am I noticing about the disciples, about Jesus, about myself?
What thoughts and emotions are stirring?

Jesus asks the disciples why they are frightened and questions their faith.
Maybe I now imagine myself in the boat with Jesus. It is calm once the
storm has settled. How do I feel? What do I say to Jesus?

What does he say to me? What does he ask of me?

Perhaps I ponder the same question that the awe-struck disciples
themselves asked: 'Who can this be?' Who *is* Jesus for me?

How do I react to events and emotions in my own life that scare me?
Do I turn to Jesus for help, or do I try figure it out on my own?
I speak to the Lord about this, as to a loving friend.

Jesus understands our fears and doubts in times of struggle when our
focus may be drawn away from him. I ask Jesus to help me always hear
him say: 'Be calm! ... I am here with you'.

Resting in the Lord's constant love for me, I end my prayer slowly.
Our Father ...