

We have had a lot of rain these days,
It's been annoying, to say the least...
disruptive....yes,
costly...absolutely!
Even our local farmers say it is too much: their fields are flooded and
they can't get their crops planted...
But these rains have been nothing like what the folks
down in Texas have been experiencing....
They are not like the tornadoes that moved through northern Illinois last month,
They are not as severe as the winter snows that besieged Boston last winter
or the current drought in California...

But still... whenever weather happens, it reminds we humans
how truly powerless we are before the face of the natural world...
Humans have always persons have known this kind of powerlessness....
Many ancient creation stories portray the evil one
as a monster of the deep or as the chaos of the seas...
these same stories have their 'preferred god' (might I say)
as having the power to control and subdue this chaos and these monsters...
these stories were created to illustrate the cosmic battle between good and evil,
between order and chaos...
between the power of one's God and the powerlessness of the opposing gods...

So, when the ancient people heard or this particular story
they would have thought about everything that I have just said ...
woooo....Jesus had the power to calm the seas...
his power is greater than the power of chaos, the power of evil...

But most of us don't know all that ancient mythology.....
we just see the disciples afraid in the boat on a stormy sea

and Jesus calms the seas and he saves them...

**So, we think it is all about calming weather patterns....
rather than understanding that that this story is all about calming
the fear and the panic within ourselves**

Allow me to explain a few of the many clues and metaphors in today's reading...

The opening line of the reading is: "On that Day" ...

That day was a long day of teaching for Jesus...

and now his day was done...

So Jesus says to 'them' his disciples: "Let us go across to the other side".

Literally, it sounds as if he's asking them to go to the other side of the lake...

metaphorically he was inviting them going inwards, to take his teachings to heart...

and have faith.

"they took him with them in the boat".

It is important to notice that it was the disciples boat...

not Jesus' boat...they brought Jesus into their space...

they had listened to him all day long...

when someone teaches you watch them...they are there...you are here...

but now, after a long day of watching and listening...

he invites them to take his teachings to heart...and they say yes...

by taking him into the boat.

So they begin to cross over, they begin to journey inside...

and Jesus falls asleep.

And a storm comes up but he's undisturbed by

the thrashing of the seas, the winds and the rain...

because he intimately knows of Yahweh and and he trusts his knowing...

**The disciples, on the other hand, are being tossed about,
at the mercy of the chaos and the storm...**

**This is meant to show us they might know in their heads...
but they have yet to trust their knowings in their hearts...
which is, of course, the true meaning of faith...**

**True faith is not the belief that someone out there will save us...
but true faith is trusting that the Holy is here, inside each of us no matter what may
happen, no matter what we have done or not done.
True faith is trusting that God will offer us the peace, the strength, the courage
to deal with every storm of life....**

**The disciples are panicked and fearful...they cry out:
“Teacher do you not care that we are perishing?”**

Jesus says:

He says: Peace! Be still!

**Perhaps he is commanding them as well as the seas because he asks them:
“Why are you afraid? Have you still not faith?”**

**I find it fascinating that everything calms down when Jesus says:
Peace! Be still...**

He doesn't tell the disciples to row harder or faster or to sit down..

He doesn't give instructions to raise or lower the sails ...

He speaks directly and firmly and with authority:

Peace...be still....

Can we imagine that being spoken to us in the middle of our life's storms...

**Can we imagine, that in the most difficult of times,
we hear the holy from deep inside of us, say to us:**

Peace!...be still...

**Could we follow God's direction and
instead of acting more rapidly and doing more,
could we find a place to sit and be still,
to go deep and find the still point of the Holy One
present in the middle of our fear and panic?**

Can we ...could we touch that place of Peace and Presence within...?

**and from that place of Peace and Presence
we will be able to make the compassionate, wise and courageous
choices that we need to make.**

We will be able to see what we can do...

and what we cannot do...

**We will be able to trust even when life doesn't work out the way
we want it to...**

**we have the Presence of Holy Love right there in our boats...in our hearts..
and we have no reason to be afraid....**

**After the storm died down, the disciples still had to navigate to shore,
they still had to row and steer the boat,
but they did it with great awe and respect for the presence of Jesus in their midst...**

**As we return to the everyday necessities of life, a
s we continue to pay attention to our responsibilities of job and family,
we would well advised to do the same:
to go back to our lives with great awe and respect for the Holy One in our midst...**

And for that we can say, thank you! amen

