

Parish of St. Joseph, Morningside  
12<sup>th</sup> SUNDAY IN ORDINARY TIME, CYCLE B

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<b>PULPIT PLAN</b>	
<b>THEME</b>	: "Why are you afraid?" "The love of Christ urges us on..."
1 <sup>ST</sup> READING	: Job 38:1.8-11
Responsorial Psalm	: Ps 107
2 <sup>ND</sup> READING	: 2 Corinthians 5:14-17
GOSPEL	: Mark 4:35-41

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- For us who live along the east coast of KZN, the beautiful Indian Ocean is so familiar to us – if you came to the Sunrise Mass recently, you would recall just how stunningly beautiful it was!
  - But the ocean has not always been considered a place for fun, sports and beauty!
- In ancient times, it was believed that before the creation of the world, there was just a kind of enormous dark ball where everything was mixed up and confused!
- One day, God decided to put order into the chaos. He commanded everything to obey his orders.
- One thing refused to obey God – the sea!
- Ancient people thought of the sea as a terrible monster that only listened to God after a long hard struggle!
- So, it was considered to be his enemy and became a symbol of negative or evil forces!
  - People were afraid of the sea!
- But our first reading and psalm today describe how God overcame the resistance of the sea and forced it to obey him!
  - He put it in its place, fixed its borders and locked its gates so it could not get out to cause havoc;
  - He took away all its power so that it became like a little child wrapped up in bed!
- If we keep this Old Testament understanding of the sea in mind, it makes it easier for us to see why the disciples in the Gospel were so amazed when Jesus commanded the wind and the sea to “be still” and it obeyed him!
- Jesus has done what in the Old Testament, only God can do!
  - Notice that Jesus does not pray that God will calm the storm,
  - Nor does he even invoke God’s name
    - Jesus commands the storm **himself!**
- The sudden calm, causes the disciples to wonder:
  - “Who is in the boat with us?”
  - “Who is this whom we have committed our lives to?”
- Wow – there are SO MANY storms battering our lives today!
  - COVID, Load shedding, poor vaccine rollout, unemployment and economic challenges!
  - And in all this – to make things worse – Jesus seems to be asleep, deaf to our prayers for help!
    - Are you afraid?

- Do you wonder if God even cares?
    - Sometimes, I do – we all do!
- It may seem like we are alone in our little boat; tossed about by the powerful forces of chaos...
  - And so, we must follow the example of the apostles who remembered that Jesus was still with them –
  - Jesus is with us in this present storm and his love for us never ends!
- The same Jesus who, as God of all creation, has the awesome power to bring calm and peace to any situation!
- St. Paul writing to the Corinthians, reminded them in their difficulties, that the love of Christ should urge them on...
  - And so it does for us too...
- Our boat – family, community, Church – may be in dark and rough seas now but we must go on; we must continue to make the crossing to a new and better place!
  - We cannot abandon ship otherwise all will be lost,
  - We cannot turn around otherwise we will miss the future,
- Now, we must remember that we are urged on by God's love, our faith and our hope
  - to seek a new harbour, a safer and brighter place!
- The storm may be fierce, but it will die away because the love of Jesus overwhelms all things – even if we cannot see it now!
- Jesus is not asleep on the job!
- Jesus has not grown deaf to our prayers!
  - He is present to us in this situation, just as he is always present to his Church as it makes its way over the sea of time!
    - and his love is way stronger than the storm that comes along!