

12th Sunday of the Year B

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by the standards of the flesh.
The old creation has gone,
and now the new one is here. (2 Co 5:16.17)*



First Reading

Job 38:1.8-11

Then from the heart of the tempest the Lord gave Job his answer. He said: 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; when I marked the bounds it was not to cross and made it fast with a bolted gate? Come thus far, I said, and no farther: here your proud waves shall break.

Second Reading

2 Corinthians 5:14-17

The love of Christ overwhelms us when we reflect that if one man has died for all, then all men should be dead; and the reason he died for all was so that living men should live no longer for themselves, but for him who died and was raised to life for them.

From now onwards, therefore, we do not judge anyone by the standards of the flesh. Even if we did once know Christ in the flesh, that is not how we know him now. And for anyone who is in Christ, there is a new creation; the old creation has gone, and now the new one is here.

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."

Meditation

In the midst of a storm, Jesus confronted the raging sea. With a single word he commanded wind and waves and exhorted his disciples to greater faith. This is not simply a nice story told to reassure the timid. It is a gospel word for everyone who, having embarked with Jesus, discovers in the storm that the master seems to be asleep. Jesus initiated the crossing and, alone with his disciples, steered for the eastern shore of the lake. After a tiring day, he fell asleep and remained so into the very heart of the storm until his followers were driven to a frenzy. On a certain Friday, too, he will seem swallowed up in the sleep of death, and the faith of his friends will waver. In the boat, the disciples shook him frantically until he awoke. As if he were exorcising a demon, Jesus threatened the powers of death lashing the boat. Suddenly, the lake was calm but their hearts remained troubled. In quieting the storm, Jesus has stirred up a question: Who is this? "They cried to the Lord in their distress; from their straits he rescued them. He hushed the storm to a gentle breeze, and the billows of the sea were stilled" (Ps 107:28-29).

No doubt Mark was speaking to a persecuted, terrified Church, exhorting them to faith. How could they endure except by turning to the One whom the wind and sea obey? He is always there in the boat, even if he seems to be asleep. Caught as we are in the storm of our day we must have faith in spite of everything.