

In the Name of the Father, and of the ✠ Son, and of the Holy Ghost.

One of His disciples came to the Lord and said “Let me first go and bury my father”. The Lord replied “Follow me, and let the dead bury their own dead.” And His disciples followed Him as He got into the boat, and so great a tempest arose that the waves covered the boat. Suddenly it appeared to them as if following the Lord would bring death faster than remaining behind with the dying. It appeared as if He had led them into death.

It had seemed calm enough. The boat seemed safe. They were experienced sailors, fisherman who made their living in boats. They knew this sea. But without warning a routine trip turned dangerous. A tempest occurred, creating menacing waves that were so high they were cresting over the top of the boat. The men did what normal men would do – they went to the One who led them there. But they did not find Him doing what they thought He ought to be doing.

So it is with God. His ways are not the ways of fallen men. Isaiah foretold it: “‘For My thoughts are not your thoughts, Nor are your ways My ways,’ says the LORD. ‘For as the heavens are higher than the earth, So are My ways higher than your ways, And My thoughts than your thoughts.’”

The men were very frightened. He slept. They woke Him, and the Scriptures record their terse demand: “O Lord, save, we are perishing.” The Lord first rebukes the disciples: “Why are you afraid, O little of faith?” And then He just as easily as He rebuked the disciples, He rebuked the creation. He commanded the wind and waves.

Harkening to the voice of their creator, the wind and waves did what the disciples had not done – they obeyed their Master. The men did not die. He does not lead into temptation. He does not lead into death. He answered their prayer. They marveled, saying “What sort of Man is this, that even the winds and the sea obey Him?”

The Pharisees and Saducees and Scribes, and also the people, were asking the same question: “What sort of Man is this?” But they did not marvel. They came to a different conclusion. They believed Him to be a disrupter, a charlatan, a blasphemer. They decided that He was worthy of death.

So the Lord that invited His disciples to leave the dying, the Lord that saved them from certain death at sea, would Himself die and be buried with the dead, forsaken of His Father. No strong voice would command the darkness of Golgotha to cease. No Divine intercession would spare His life. The vale of death would overcome Him. Not menacing waves, but gravecloths and stone tomb would cover Him.

The account of the Calming of the Storm is not a parable. The Scriptures provide a factual record of an historic event. The Divinity of Christ is clearly shown. It is part of His Epiphany. He did what no mere man could do. For a moment the attributes of His Divine Nature were manifest through His Human Nature. He is a Man, He has arms and legs and speaks and sleeps. But He also commands the sea and the winds, and they harken obediently to His Word. He is God and Man, God in Man made manifest.

The account of the Calming of the Storm is an historic account. But it is also like unto life in this fallen world. Perhaps you have been in that boat. Perhaps everything seemed calm and safe. But in an instant, without warning, life's calm seas can become violent, dangerous, dark, threatening, unpredictable, seemingly without warning. Perhaps you have known such turbulence in your life. Perhaps you are in the midst of such menacing waves.

One economic downturn, one missed paycheck, one difficult diagnosis, the sudden onset of illness, the deceit or betrayal of one close to you, carelessness that leads to an accident, the death of one you loved – without warning the calm seas of life are dark and threatening.

The fallen flesh responds as did the disciples – it accuses God of malpractice. It assumes that your life is collapsing because God is sleeping, because He isn't paying attention, because He hasn't done what you think He should do. But that is unbelief, O You of little faith. Why have you been afraid?

Faith does what the disciples did. Faith prays to the Lord "Lord, save me, for I am perishing!", knowing, trusting, believing that the Lord to whom you pray is omniscient, omnipotent, and omnipresent. Faith trusts that the Lord loves you, wants only the best for you, and has bidden you to leave sin and death behind, and to follow Him into the Nave of the Holy Church.

He leads you out of death to life. So for you, you who believe, you who have been given saving faith in the Lord who saves, for you the factual account of the Calming of the Storm is a Word of great comfort and hope. For with a Word, the Lord through whom all things were made commanded His creation to obey, and it obeyed. And what appeared to be danger worked to make known God's salvation to the disciples.

It strengthened their faith, just as hearing that account strengthens your faith. And the same Lord gave His life for you, that you might truly live. He is God with Us, God with you, God with you as the storms of this life engulf you. When the skies grow dark and the waves threaten, you have a Comforter, a Mediator, an Intercessor, a Champion, a loving Lord who hears your prayer, a merciful and gracious Lord who saves you.

That is what "sort of Man" He is. He died for your sins, to save you from the dark and fatal seas of transgression and death. That is what "sort of Man" He is. He took up His life again on the third day, that you be led out of death and into life that has no end. That is what "sort of Man" He is. He saves you by the life-giving waves of the baptismal font, drowning your sins, drawing you out of the waters and into the Holy Nave of His Church, alive, forgiven, redeemed.

That is what "sort of Man" He is – He is God, the only True God, the God Man who bids you eat His Body and drink His Blood this day, that you have Communion with Him and with all those in the Nave of His Holy Church, both here on earth and those in glory, united in Christ, the Church that marvels at the grace and love of our Lord, the Church saved by the Lord who commands the winds and the sea and the sun and the moon and the angels and the heavenly host, the Lord who bids you "Follow Me", and gives you life.

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