

12th Sunday in Ordinary Time-B1

My sisters and brothers in Christ,

Most of us don't think about anyone having the capacity to change the weather or to control the physical environment simply by thinking about it or praying about it. Most of us are very much caught up in the scientific ways of our present age. We can understand the surprise of the followers of Jesus when Jesus was able to control the storm and remove the danger.

These followers in the Gospel of Mark are Jewish people and would have immediately recognized that a person who could control nature must be God or at least a person very close to God. We who don't come from that culture would immediately seek some other explanation of what was happening. It could have been simply a coincidence. It could mean that the weather was already changing and the person recognized that. It could mean that the person had some unusual insight. But it certainly would not mean, for most of us, that the person was God.

The readings today are given to us to make us think about God and about the role of God in our personal life and in the life of the world. The first reading, from the Book of Job, states clearly that God creates all things and creates the weather as well as the physical universe. Those who understand and accept the Book of Job as the Word of God will be able to understand the Gospel more easily than someone who does not believe and really doubts even the existence of a God.

The second reading is from Second Corinthians and states that for those who believe in Jesus as the Christ, as the Savior, all has changed and our understanding of the world will be very different from the person who does not believe. At one level, this is really apparent. If we believe in God, we are different from those who do not believe. If we believe that Jesus is God, we are even more different from those who do not accept this reality.

The Gospel, today from St. Mark, is very clear when it questions us: Who then is this whom even wind and sea obey? If we accept the Gospel account that the wind and the sea obeyed Jesus, then we must answer this question. If we reject that the wind and the sea obeyed Jesus, then we are

left without faith and without any belief that this Jesus has any special role in this world or in our lives.

What do you believe? We often hear today that all spiritual paths are equal in their effectiveness to get us to heaven. But how could this possible be true?

Lao Tse – the founder of Taoism was not God.

Buddha – the founder of Buddhism was not God.

Mohammed – the founder of Islam was not God.

It is only Jesus Christ who is God and who entered human history to bring God to us; to bring us His love, His forgiveness, His very own life to flow in and through us.

Even the founders of Protestantism: Luther, Zwingli, and Calvin were not God.

It was Jesus Christ who founded the Church that we know and can trace back to the earliest times of the practice of Christianity.

We therefore must take seriously who we encounter here at this Mass, in this Church, among these His people. For, indeed, He is God. Our mission as the Body of Christ, the Church is from God. It requires everything we have to give in order to fulfill this most sacred mission.

The Catholic Church in the United States is currently celebrating the ***Fortnight for Freedom***, emphasizing the "Freedom to Bear Witness:--to marriage as the union of one man and one woman, to the dignity of human life from conception to natural death, to the truth about the need to feed the hungry, comfort the sick, and welcome the migrant, and to religious freedom to live one's faith in public life. Importantly, we recall that our freedom does not come from this world, but from Jesus Christ **who is God**.

- Fr. David M. Chiantella