



GOSPEL GOSSIP

Where is your faith?

St Luke 8. 22-25

Sunday 23 February

Jesus asks this simple question in a complicated context. He is tired from ministering, and has given of himself to all in so doing. So, as we would say today, he needed some 'me' time. He asks his disciples to set off for the other side of the lake, and once aboard, he promptly fell asleep. As experienced sailors they may have seen the storm coming, but even if there were no indications of one, it was not unusual for a severe squall to hit the Sea of Galilee without warning.

The boat began to sink beneath the waves, and those fishermen were terrified. Yet Jesus still slept on, seemingly oblivious to both the storm and the danger. Panicking, they woke him and shouted their predicament to him. Was this shouting to overcome the storm or to vent their fearful frustration? Jesus awoke, stilled the storm and then rebuked them by asking 'Where is your faith?'

- What are / have been storms in your life?
- Why did they threaten to overwhelm you?
- Did you weather by yourself or share them with others?
- Do you believe that God was with you, or just 'out of it' – asleep?
- Do you sometimes feel that God doesn't care or understand?

The disciples seemed to have faith in Jesus; they roused him after all. But what was their expectations? Was it simply to ensure that what they were experiencing, he should as well? Was it because they did have some faith that somehow Jesus could sort things out, even if it were only offering comforting and encouraging words as they slipped into oblivion beneath the waves? Did they think Jesus capable of such a great miracle, defying nature herself?

- What needs to be calmed in your storms – the storm or you?
- When you turn to Jesus, what are your expectations for help?
- Do you have true faith in him or a vague hope?
- In what ways has God clearly acted in your 'storms' or has he done so without you noticing?
- How would you respond to Jesus' challenge – 'Where is your faith?' – with indignation, hurt or even anger?

The point of this significant nature miracle is not the fact that Jesus could perform it and so further reveal his divine power and credentials, but challenging those disciples, and his disciples today – us – as to where is our faith. The disciples wanted to be rescued from a dangerous position; Jesus wants us to be saved; the two are not necessarily interchangeable.