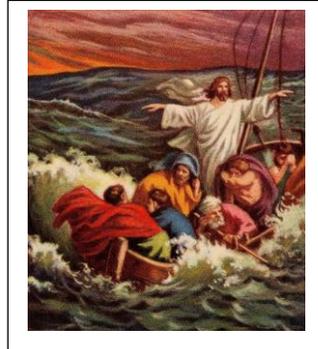


Coop's Scoops # 213 Sunday June 20th, 2021 - FATHER'S DAY

A GREAT PROPHET HAS ARISEN AMONG US!

GOD HAS VISITED HIS PEOPLE!

(Luke 7:16)



Readings: 2 Samuel 5: 1-12

Psalm 48

2 Corinthians 5:18- 6:2

Collect:

O God our defender, storms rage about us and cause us to be afraid. Rescue your people from despair, deliver your sons and daughters from fear, and preserve us all from unbelief; through your Son, Jesus Christ our Lord, who lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and ever. Amen.

The Holy Gospel: Mark 4: 35-41

³⁵ On that day, when evening had come, he said to them, “Let us go across to the other side.” ³⁶ And leaving the crowd behind, they took him with them in the boat, just as he was. Other boats were with him. ³⁷ A great windstorm arose, and the waves beat into the boat, so that the boat was already being swamped. ³⁸ But he was in the stern, asleep on the cushion; and they woke him up and said to him, “Teacher, do you not care that we are perishing?” ³⁹ He woke up and rebuked the wind, and said to the sea, “Peace! Be still!” Then the wind ceased, and there was a dead calm. ⁴⁰ He said to them, “Why are you

afraid? Have you still no faith?”⁴¹ And they were filled with great awe and said to one another, “Who then is this, that even the wind and the sea obey him?”

HOMILY: I remember well as a child how much I feared thunderstorms! I would hide and shiver and shake no matter how many times I'd been told I was safe with my family. The only thing that settled me was my Dad finding me, and then taking me to my bed or comfy couch and sitting with me locked in his arms for about five whole minutes. Then I was fine. Dad was my touchstone for believing that with him beside me I could never be hurt by anything. (Thanks Dad!) This being Father's Day, I think we can find some elements in our Gospel which also speak to the both the joys and the challenges of “fathering”.

Let's imagine the scene. The disciples and Jesus are in a smallish fishing boat crossing the smallish Sea of Galilee. Smallish, but wild with the storms come in. The winds pick up and the sky darkens. The disciples are men of the sea...they know a storm is coming, but no problem...they've been through many a storm. But the swells get bigger and bigger until fear begins to bubble in even these mighty hearts of mighty men. I imagine they reset the sail, if there was one, or tried to drag anchor, and bailed with lots of energy, and tried everything imaginable to make themselves a little safer.

And through it all, Jesus was sound asleep, troubled by nothing, his head resting on a cushion in the boat. Hear the shouts: “How can He sleep through this?” “Should we wake Him up?” “Let the Master sleep...it has been a long, long day for Him”... “We'll be all right.” And then one particular thundering roar, or one especially tricky huge wave, and all those noble thoughts left them. “Master...wake up.. help us...or we will die!”. Jesus calmly gets up and tells the storm to quieten down. And it does. Immediately. Imagine the silence and the exhilaration into which Jesus next spoke His questions: “ Why were you afraid? Why do you have so little faith?”, Then I imagine (but cannot know) that Jesus went back to sleep.

The only response from the disciples was “Who is this? Who is He? That even the wind and the sea obey Him?”

Those questions of Jesus have two very different meanings depending upon the emphasis of the words. If we place the emphasis on the word **“why”** as in **Why** were you afraid, **Why** so little faith? ... then it can sound as if Jesus is being unreasonably critical of normal fear in an abnormal situation. But if we place the emphasis on the word **“you”** ..as in “Why are **YOU** afraid? Why do **YOU** have so little faith” then Jesus is asking a probing question which can only be answered in the heart and soul of each one of His boatmates. Why were YOU afraid, Peter? What is it that is holding YOU back from more faith? And why were YOU afraid, John? What’s holding YOUR faith back? Think about it. The disciples had in the course of the previous three days seen a man with a withered hand cured. They had seen Jesus distressed because His family came to detain Him, thinking He had lost His mind. They had witnessed the water turned to wine at the wedding in Cana. They had sat on a hillside and listened to parables of the Kingdom. How quickly, in times of great distress they forgot what they had been beginning to believe! Forgot about the miracles! Forgot about the power of the Man Jesus in the boat with them. Happens to us too. Sometimes we all forget the history of our relationship with God. Fail to recall His presence and His faithfulness. And sometimes, we remember previous storms that were not quieted...situations where disasters actually overtook us, and all our prayers seemed to come tumbling like rain drops down upon on own heads. For not all storms are stilled. We can find ourselves asking “Is Jesus really able to help?” and find ourselves afraid.

We do not know from day to day just what will happen to us which may bring joy or sadness. We do not know from day to day just how our prayers will be answered. We don’t see time in the “eternal” sense, but in the day’s absolute crisis. Why then should we not be afraid? Why then should Jesus question what is holding our faith back? The answer lies in one solid fact. That **Jesus will never get out of the boat and leave us**. As an old hymn goes ‘He has not promised skies always blue, flower strewn pathways all our lives through, He has not promised sun without cloud, joy without sorrow, faith without doubt...but He has promised strength for the day, peace for the journey, rest on the way, unailing

kindness and undying love". What saves us from despair is the presence of the Saviour. What builds our faith is also the presence of the Saviour.

Which brings me back again to how I felt in the thunderstorms when my Dad was holding me. I felt safe. I felt loved. I had hope. Your role, Dads, is so extremely important. You keep your kids safe in so many ways...by your kindness, your teaching, your discipline, your strong presence, your example, and your provision, and your willingness to be vulnerable as well. What a wonderful achievement it is to realize that your kids feel protected and loved by you when they are facing storms of their own. Uncles and brothers and Grampas and friends and, yes, Mothers can also do fathering things for a child. Today, we salute Fathers who, like Jesus, speak calm into fear, and hope into despair.

The questions remain: Why am I afraid? Why are you? What holds me back from trusting more fully? What holds you back? The best time to examine ourselves on these questions is during periods of calm when stresses are minimized, for then, we can think clearly. For then, we can think clearly. Unfortunately, we commonly only turn to such inward questions when we are in the midst of a great storm, such as that upon the Sea of Galilee. I intend, and I hope that you will also form an intention, to spend some time this week asking myself those questions. And then I am going to pray and search the Scriptures for direction.

Finally, in all things and at all times, let us all remember that, whatever the storm, the powerful words of Jesus to all of nature and to our own sometimes quaking hearts is "Peace, be still". Thanks be to God. Amen.

Prayer for Fathers:

Holy God

With a Father's strength You guide and lead us,
With a Father's courage, You protect and help us,
You know Your children's names
You write them on Your palms
We thank You that good fathers love us like that too.

We ask your blessing this day on fathers across
Our land, in our church and in our homes.
Our children need Your blessing on their fathers,
To deepen their love for wives and partners,
Grounding in grace their sons and daughters,
That the family may be strong and safe for all.

We honour our fathers who have completed their journey and who we see no
more by sight, but see forever in the pictures of our minds and hearts.

We honour all who offer the ministry of fathering
to children not of their flesh but of their love.

Grant them joy and grant them peace
Through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.

(written by me in loving memory of my Father Earl
and for the blessing of all Fathers.)

Blessing:

Now may the God of PEACE THAT PASSES ALL OUR UNDERSTANDING keep your
hearts and minds fixed on the love of God and His Son Jesus Christ, and the
blessing of God the Father, God the Son and God the Holy Spirit be upon you and
remain with you always. Amen. -Judie+

