



Contributed by Fr. Ray Reitzel, C.R.

Born in Waterloo and is #9 in a family of 9 boys and 3 girls. One brother (Harry) is a C.R. priest, and two sisters are Notre Dame Sisters. He taught for 31 years at St. Jerome's H.S, Kitchener, and at St. Joseph-Scollard Hall in North Bay. He served in 4 parishes for 17 years. He is now semi-retired and living at Resurrection Manor, Waterloo, a residence for retired CRs.

TWELFTH SUNDAY IN ORDINARY TIME **JUNE 20, 2021**

GATHERING TIME (10-15 minutes)

Introduction to the Word:

In today's Gospel, the Apostles are caught in a **chaotic storm**, with their boat on the point of sinking, amidst a torrent of rain and terrible winds. This reminds us of the chaotic moments we have endured in our lives. Hopefully, after days, or weeks, or years, they may be transformed into "Holy Moments".

In his book *7 Habits of Highly Effective People*, Stephen Covey relates a story about how he was traveling on the New York subway early on a Sunday morning. He was in the car alone, reading his newspaper peacefully, when a father and three young children entered the subway car. The father sat by himself, but the children began running up and down the car, and making quite a bit of noise. Covey found himself thinking that this man was not a very good father, for clearly, he had no control over his children, and seemed oblivious to how they were misbehaving. Covey had barely finished this thought, when one of the children slipped and fell into him, ripping part of his newspaper. At this point, Covey lost control and yelled out, "Why can't you control your children?" The father looked up, and began to apologize profusely. He approached Covey and said, "I am very sorry. I am just overwhelmed right now. I was with my wife all night in the hospital and she died. I just went to pick up the kids and they don't know about her death yet. I just don't know what to do." Covey relates that he, of course, felt like a jerk. Covey saw something, but not clearly. Things appeared to be "one way," but they were in fact "another way." Although he thought he was seeing clearly, he was seeing blindly.

All three of our readings today challenge us to **see differently**. **Job**, a good and righteous man has had terrible things happen to him. He thinks that he has every right to challenge God to provide an explanation for the suffering that he is enduring.

Paul notes that it is important for us to come to the realization "that Christ died for all, therefore all have died, and rise in Christ." Unpacking this statement, Paul realizes that the love of Christ "changes" how we see everything differently.

The **Apostles** in Mark's gospel lack faith, not clearly seeing who Jesus is, and what Jesus is capable of doing in their lives.

Warm-up Activity (about 8–10 minutes):

“Who then is this, whom even the wind and sea obey?” (Mark 4:41). As a warm up for today’s readings, share your experiences as related to the following situations:

Can you think of a person that you thought you had “sized up” correctly, only to find out that there was much more to this person, than you had first thought? What had first led you astray in your judgment? What happened that made you change your judgment? **Or**, think of, and describe a situation where you thought you knew clearly what was happening, only to find out that you did not have all the information, and, in fact, were totally wrong about things.

THE TABLE OF THE WORD

THEME

The first reading and the Gospel reading are stories that are referred to as theophany stories. The Greek word *theophany*, means "**appearance of God.**" In these stories, God manifests Himself to Job, and in the Gospel, through Jesus to the Apostles. In each case, Job and the disciples are seeing in a certain way, but God’s appearance, or manifestation, reveals to them a clearer, deeper understanding of who God is in their lives. Interestingly, **nature** is a part of God’s manifestation in these readings. God appears to Job out of a **storm**, and Jesus, to rid the fear in the Apostles, stills the **wind and the sea**. These actions remind us that one of the ways that God still reveals Himself is through nature: “The **heavens** are telling of the glory of God; and their expanse is declaring the work of His hands” (Ps 19:1).

Many of us in our busy world find great delight in allowing God to reveal who God is: in the beauty of a sunrise or sunset; in the babbling of a brook in the woods; or the wonder of the rushing waters tumbling over Niagara Falls, crashing onto the rocks below, with a constant roar and resulting mist; or in the stillness of a night sky filled with stars. It is important for us to make space, and give ourselves the time, as the psalmist urges, “to be still and know that I am God”. (Ps 46:10).

Doing this consistently and intentionally will reward us with new insights about God, and what God yearns to accomplish within our lives. How beautiful it is, when we set our minds and hearts to search for God, beyond what we ordinarily see. As in this passage from the prophet Jeremiah: “For surely, I know the plans I have for you, says the Lord, plans for your welfare, and not for your harm, to give you a future with hope. Then when you call upon me, and come and pray to me, I will hear you. When you search for me, you will find me; if you seek me with all your heart, I will let you find me, says the Lord”. (Jer 29:11-14).

Leader: Jesus reveals himself to be Lord over the chaos of the wind and sea, calling to mind: God bringing order out of chaos in Genesis; splitting the waters of the Red Sea to bring the Israelites to safety; and becoming victorious over the chaotic waters (PS 74:13-14; 89:9-10; 104:6-7). We pray today that we will have faith in God within the chaos and suffering of our own lives, and in the world today, trusting that God will never desert us.

Lord Jesus, we celebrate the depth of your love and your grace, in the world and in our lives,

Lord, have mercy.

Christ Jesus, prompt us to trust in your ways, even when we feel lost or overwhelmed,

Christ, have mercy.

Lord Jesus, help us to be open to the new ways that you may choose to reveal yourself to us,

Lord, have mercy.

Let us pray (together):
*Grant, O Lord,
that we may always revere and love your holy name,
for you never deprive of your guidance,
those you set firm on the foundation of your love.
Through Christ our Lord.
Amen.*

SCRIPTURE REFLECTION TIME (45 minutes)

(As Christians we believe that the **WORD** of God, we hear proclaimed each Sunday is an empowering Word, and that God is present in the Word proclaimed. This is the Word that God wants us to hear today. The dynamic of the Small Christian Community, namely, reflecting on our life-story within the context of this Word, and sharing the insights of these reflections, is such that God's Spirit becomes present, and the gifts of the Spirit are experienced as empowering and life-giving. Because it is a privileged time it is incumbent on us in the small group to proclaim God's Word with due reverence, to be attentive to this proclamation, and respectful of the communal interaction. The facilitator has arranged for group members to proclaim the three readings.)

FIRST READING (Job 38.1-4, 8-11)

The Lord answered Job out of the whirlwind: "Who is this that darkens counsel by words without knowledge? I will question you, and you shall declare to me. "Where were you when I laid the foundation of the earth? Tell me if you have understanding. "Who shut in the sea with doors when it burst out from the womb? – when I made the clouds its garment, and prescribed bounds for it, and set bars and doors, and said, "Thus far shall you come, and no farther, and here shall your proud waves be stopped'?"

The Word of the Lord. **Thanks be to God.**

SECOND READING (2 Corinthians 5.14-17)

Brothers and sisters: The love of Christ urges us on, because we are convinced that Jesus has died for all; therefore, all have died. And he died for all, so that those who live might live no longer for themselves, but for him who died and was raised for them.

From now on, therefore, we regard no one from a human point of view. Even though we once knew Christ from a human point of view, we know him no longer in that way. So, if anyone is in Christ, there is a new creation: everything old has passed away; see, everything has become new!

The Word of the Lord. **Thanks be to God.**

GOSPEL (Mark 4.35-41))

A reading from the holy Gospel according to Mark. **Glory to you, O Lord.**

When evening had come, Jesus said to his disciples, "Let us go across to the other side." And leaving the crowd behind, they took Jesus with them in the boat, just as he was. Other boats were with him.

A great windstorm arose, and the waves beat into the boat, so that the boat was already being swamped. But Jesus 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?" He woke up and rebuked the wind, and said to the seas, "Peace! Be still!" Then the wind ceased, and there was a dead calm. Jesus said to them, "Why are you afraid? Have you still no faith?" 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?"

The Gospel of the Lord. **Praise to you, Lord Jesus Christ.**

(Allow two minutes for quiet and for a brief reflection on a meaningful word or thought.)

Lectio Divina means “sacred prayer.” It was a popular form of prayer in the early Church. This Word proclaimed today is God’s own Word, God’s way of speaking to you today through his own Spirit. So take a few moments to be quiet, allowing this Word you have just heard to touch you as you reflect quietly on the three readings. Is there a word or thought that somehow attracts you or has your interest? If so, simply identify it—no need to explain it—just identify it.

COMMENTARY:

Our **first reading** is from the **Book of Job**, a book that deals with the question of **evil and suffering**. People at that time (and, perhaps still today!) thought that the blessings of God came upon good people, and the punishments of God came upon evil people. From this perspective, it is easy to sort out who is good and who is evil! Although it may be true at times. The Book of Job tries to debunk this simplistic understanding as it presents Job, a righteous innocent man who has had many terrible things happen to him. In short order, he lost his oxen, donkeys, sheep, camels, servants, and family. His so-called friends keep pressuring him to admit what wrong he committed, to bring God’s wrath upon him, but Job continues to protest his innocence. Instead, he demands an explanation from God. Our reading today is the point in the story where God finally appears to speak to Job. Although we only have a sample of the many questions that God asks Job, the result is the same: Job begins to realize that God’s ways are no match for Job. He thought that in his confrontation with God, everything would become clear. Instead, Job is totally overwhelmed by the God who is beyond all. For God alone is responsible for the level of the sea, making the clouds its garment. In comparison, Job begins to realize his smallness and insignificance in the face of God’s overwhelming plans and power. In the end, Job replies to God, “I know that you can do all things, and that no purpose of yours can be thwarted...Therefore I have uttered what I do not understand, things too wonderful for me, which I did not know.” (42:2-3). We might note a famous quote from Job, “The Lord has given to me. The Lord has taken away!”

Our **second reading** is from **Paul’s** second letter to the Corinthians. Diane Bergant (*Preaching the New Lectionary: Year B*, Collegeville: Liturgical Press, 1999: 284-5) has two good insights about this reading. First, Paul is sharing his own experience of his relationship with Jesus when he says, “We once knew Christ from a human point of view” but now “we know him no longer in that way.” Before his conversion, Paul had regarded Jesus as a renegade, who led people away from the true worship God. But his conversion gave him **new sight**, so that he now understands Jesus from the point of view of faith. In addition, the reading conveys Paul’s understanding about Jesus’ representational character. The reference to the new creation helps us to understand how Paul is thinking. Adam stood for all humanity and his sin was the sin of all. Similarly, Christ stood for all humanity and his death was the death of all. Additionally, since Jesus was raised from the dead, this has effects on all humanity now, although the fullness of the resurrection for all is something to wait for in hope. But even now, because of the resurrection, Christians see and act differently: they should no longer live selfishly but selflessly. The old ways have passed away, and Christians are now called to embrace the Way of Jesus.

The **Gospel of Mark** presents us with different groups of people, and their response to Jesus, the incarnation of God. There are those religious leaders who are **not open** to Him and eventually plot against Him, leading to His death. In contrast to these religious authorities, there are many “little” or insignificant people in the gospel, who are often unnamed, but have tremendous faith in Jesus. We might think of: the **leper** who approaches Jesus; the nameless friends who lower their paralyzed friend through the roof so that Jesus will heal him; the **woman** who has been bleeding for 12 years, and believes that she will be healed if she can only touch the fringe of his garment; the **synagogue official** whose little girl is deathly ill, and so on. Each of these people have tremendous faith in Jesus. A third

group is the Apostles. As a group they are well-intentioned but never seem to quite “get it.” In the passage today, Jesus is actually quite harsh in His assessment when He asks, “Have you still no faith?” Unlike the “little” people of the gospel, the Apostles lack faith in Jesus. We see this today when we often marvel at the faith of many ordinary people, and are upset at the lack of faith and courage, of some of our religious leaders. It helps to realize that in Mark’s gospel, the opposite of having faith in Jesus, is to be afraid. Hence, Jesus pairs these two sentences together: “Why are you afraid? Have you still no faith?”

In addition to thinking of this gospel passage at the level of the disciples in the boat with Jesus, we might also think about how Mark’s community who would have heard this passage some 35 years after the death and resurrection of Jesus. Mark’s community had undergone a terrible persecution under Nero, and it looked as though another persecution was looming. One of the early images for the church is the boat, and we could imagine that small church community of Mark thinking that chaos was about to be unleashed upon them again. It was as if the church is being tossed about in the storms of the times. These persecutions are still going on today in many Muslim countries and in China, where the Church is underground. Like the disciples in the boat, those in Mark’s community are crying out, wondering if the Risen Jesus cares about them. Just as Jesus spoke these words to the disciples, the Risen Jesus continues to speak these words to Mark’s community, and to the world today, in the midst of their (our) chaos: “Why are you afraid? Have you still no faith?”

The Risen Jesus continues to speak these words to us today whenever we are overwhelmed in a chaos. While the Book of Job reminds us that God, and God’s ways are beyond us, the incarnation is the clear statement that God’s plans for us, are for our welfare, not our woe. The Resurrection has changed everything. Everything has become new. We need not fear! GOD IS HERE! We have an **eternal relationship with God**. God is here, now and forever, in our messy moments, in our holy moments: in our Prayer, sacraments, family, friends, Parish, community, government agencies....

(Allow about 10 minutes for the participants to react to the **Commentary** and identify a newly discovered insight or idea.)

Questions for Reflection and Discussion:

1. *“The Lord answered Job out of the whirlwind.”*

Can you think of a time when you were overwhelmed by the beauty, power, or grandeur of God?

Was it a positive or negative experience?

What do you think made it that way?

2. *“There is a new creation: everything old has passed away; see, everything has become new.”*

As you look over the last year or so, can you identify something of the “old order” that has passed away?

Can you identify something that has become “new” in your life because of the power of the Resurrection?

3. *“Why are you afraid? Have you still no faith?”*

Can you think of some transformation in your life when you were afraid and lacked trust in God, but have noticed a change?

What leads you to still be afraid and not have trust in God?

CARING-PRAYING TIME (15-20 minutes)

1. **Word for the Week:** “The best remedy for those who are afraid, lonely or unhappy is to go outside, somewhere where they can be quiet, alone with the heavens, nature and God. [Take four deep, slow breaths, in God’s presence]. Because only then, does one feel that all is as it should be.”—Anne Frank
2. **Suggestion for the Week:** Take some time to “Be still and know that I am God.”
3. **Intercessions:** (Response: **Lord, hear our prayer**)

Leader: Let us offer our intercessions to God who has first loved us, and sent His Son to reveal most fully God’s love and mercy to us.

FOR THE CHURCH, that the Church may continue to be a sign of the gracious and generous love of God for all people and for all the world, we pray...

FOR THE WORLD, that nations with plentiful resources may open their borders freely to refugees, where feasible, imitating the generous hospitality of God, who shows no partiality, we pray...

FOR THOSE SICK AND THE DYING from the coronavirus, that in the suffering and chaos of their lives, they will continue to search for God, and find God’s presence in and through their caregivers, we pray...

FOR THE CHRISTIAN ASSEMBLY, that we who have been born of God and know the God who is love, may extend God’s love and forgiveness to each other, we pray...

FOR JEWS, MUSLIMS AND CHRISTIANS, that mindful of a common God of love, and a common ancestor in faith, Abraham, they may not give up on their quest for justice and peace, but may find ways to live life together with mutual acceptance, forgiveness and love, we pray...

FOR ALL FATHERS, that by their prayer life, example, patience and wisdom, they will lead their families to our loving God the Father, we pray...

(take a few moments to pray for your own needs...)

Closing Prayer:

God who is beyond all, we know that your plans for us are for our welfare, not our woe.

Your Son, Jesus, who died for us, is proof of your love. Help us not to be afraid

as we imitate him in our lives, by loving generously and graciously. Through Christ our Risen Lord.

Amen.

With hands and hearts united in gratitude for God’s favors on us today, we pray that all those in our influence be moved to be open to your Word and your Spirit, while we pray united as one,

OUR FATHER...

Celebrating the Word, Resurrection Ministries of the Congregation of the Resurrection Ontario-Kentucky Province (including the former Resurrection Centre), 265 Westmount Road North, Waterloo, Ontario, Canada N2L 3G7. (Celebrating the Word was founded by Father Frank Ruetz, C.R., deceased 2012). The Scripture version used in this commentary is the New Revised Standard Version (copyrighted by the National Council of the Churches of Christ in the USA). For information: Email: provincialoffice@resurrectioncollege.ca website: www.resurrectionists.ca