



Bringing Home the Word

Twelfth Sunday in Ordinary Time (B)

June 23, 2024

A Real Force of Nature

Sr. Dianne Bergant, CSA

One of the forces of nature that we have been unable to control is unruly water. We are actually helpless when caught between torrents of rain from above and surging water from below. It is no wonder the ancestors of ancient Israel who lived between the Tigris and Euphrates rivers characterized cosmic evil as tumultuous water that only the great creator-God could control. This is the scene described in the reading from Job. This water is not destroyed; it is only harnessed. We will have to wait for the end of time for such water to be abolished. ("The sea was no more" Revelation 21:1.) This divine

power over water is praised in the psalm response as well.

Belief in God's absolute power over chaotic water and cosmic evil lies behind the story of Jesus calming the sea. This story doesn't simply recount a display of Jesus' extraordinary command over the forces of nature. While certainly that, it is actually much more. It stands to reason that, if only the great creator-God can exercise control over this fearsome watery threat, and if Jesus can effortlessly exercise control over such water, then Jesus is somehow God. In today's Gospel, the audacious disciples, who initially were frightened by the ferocity of the squall, were astounded by Jesus' authority over the storm. They declared, "Who then is this whom even wind and sea obey?" (Mark 4:41). It is clear from this story that Jesus is the real force of nature.

Sunday Readings

Job 38:1, 8-11

Who shut within doors the sea,
when it burst forth from the womb?

2 Corinthians 5:14-17

So whoever is in Christ is a new creation: the old things have passed away.

Mark 4:35-41

[Jesus] woke up, rebuked the wind, and said to the sea, "Quiet! Be still!" The wind ceased and there was great calm.

If only the great creator-God can exercise control over this fearsome watery threat, and if Jesus can effortlessly exercise control over such water, then Jesus is somehow God.

A Word from Pope Francis

Jesus, begged by the disciples, calms the wind and waves. And he asks them a question, a question which also pertains to us: "Why are you afraid? Have you no faith?" (v. 40). The disciples were gripped with fear, because they were focused on the waves more than on looking at Jesus.

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REFLECTION QUESTIONS



- Have you ever had a "close call" when the worst did not happen?
- Did you remember to thank God?

Turn Off Your Phone and Listen!

Fr. Bob Pagliari, CSsR

I asked the forty college students I'm teaching this semester to observe a public conversation between two other students on campus and to report back about how effective or ineffective their listening skills were. Not surprisingly, most examples of poor communication involved one person punching text messages into a mobile phone while pretending to listen to what the other person was saying.

Is anyone surprised by this? Remember when our parents told us to be mindful of others? Mind full! What is our mind filled with these days when we're talking with someone else? Effective listening means paying attention to the other person. Only when our mind is full of nothing else but what the other person is saying, are we truly being mindful of



them and giving them our undivided attention.

Like all texting-while-driving temptations (our phone should be locked away in the glove compartment before we even put our car in gear!), when it comes

to listening to others, our multitasking endeavors and phone distractions should also be turned off and stowed away so we can give our undivided attention and our full mind to others. No exceptions. Anything less is disrespect!

I can distinctly remember an incident, before the advent of message machines, when I was in my superior's office and his landline phone began to ring. I asked if he was going to answer it. He replied that whoever it was could call back because it was far more important that he pay attention to me. That was mindful listening. And I've never forgotten how respected he made me feel.

Prayer is defined as talking with God, which includes listening. How often do we give our undistracted, un-multi-tasked, mindful attention to God when we pray? †

Wisdom from Catholic UPDATE

From "The Science of Religion: Presence and Power in the Sacraments"
by Robert E. Justus, MD

Many studies have indicated an association between attending religious services and overall happiness/life satisfaction. Also, longitudinal evidence suggests that those attending religious services are subsequently more generous and more engaged in civic activities. Experimental evidence shows that prayer increases forgiveness, gratitude, and trust. Religious service attendance is also linked to decreases in the likelihood of divorce and increases in the probability of lasting marriages, the building of lasting friendships, and the securing of social support. Interestingly, the factor that is most predictive of health benefits is attending religious services, not private spiritual practices, or self-assessed spirituality/religiosity. Specifically, it is the communal aspect of religious practice that is associated with better health outcomes. †

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*Creator God,
when life is
overwhelming,
teach us to pause
and breathe, and
then to look for
your son Jesus
in the midst of the
storm. We pray in
his name. Amen.*

The Redemptorists

WEEKDAY READINGS

June 24–29

Monday, Nativity of St. John the Baptist:
Is 49:1–6 / Acts 13:22–26 / Lk 1:57–66, 80

Tuesday, Weekday: 2 Kgs 19:9b–11,
14–21, 31–35a, 36 / Mt 7:6, 12–14

Wednesday, Weekday:
2 Kgs 22:8–13; 23:1–3 / Mt 7:15–20

Thursday, Weekday:
2 Kgs 24:8–17 / Mt 7:21–29

Friday, St. Irenaeus:
2 Kgs 25:1–12 / Mt 8:1–4

Saturday, Sts. Peter and Paul: Acts 12:1–11 /
2 Tm 4:6–8, 17–18 / Mt 16:13–19

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