

SUNDAY PLUS

Do not be afraid

Lord of chaos



by Fr Denis McBride
C.Ss.R.

The fierce storm in today's Gospel is rebuked by Jesus, leading to the disciples' question, "Who can this be?" We believe with St Mark that the answer to the question, "Who is this man?" is that he is the Son of God. But the question remains whether our faith in Jesus will stay with us even during threat and danger and storm. The experience of the disciples on the Sea of Galilee is a graphic one: they feel all at sea, they feel up to their neck in difficulty; they feel powerless to withstand the environment of threat. For sure, their experience is not alien to us.

We believe that Jesus accompanies us on our journey to God: that he is "on board" with us. Sometimes, when we see such disorder and chaos around

our world, we might wonder if Jesus has chosen to doze through disaster – even though we know that his presence is no insurance against our own fear and anxiety. To journey with Jesus is to journey through storms, not around them. The peace of our Galilees will be disturbed. But we know that the disciples of Jesus went on to face shipwreck and hardship and rejection. Ultimately, many of them came face to face with a violent death and martyrdom. What kept them going is what keeps us going: a strenuous belief that Jesus is Lord of all chaos, a stubborn faith which tells us that there is no storm that will not be stilled at last by the peace of his presence.

In the meantime, we struggle on and hold on to our hats.

Fr Denis McBride's many CDs, DVDs and books are available from Redemptorist Publications, www.rpbooks.co.uk.

Just trust!

by Moire O'Sullivan

The day began so well. I was excited about that morning's hike. As I journeyed into the mountains, however, freezing fog closed in. I could no longer see the cliffs I knew were there. I panicked when I realised I could easily get lost or even die on what was meant to be an easy, relaxed outing.

I sometimes think God lets bad stuff happen to us to see how we'll fare. At that moment, my choice was either to fall apart or grow up fast. God didn't swoop in to save me from the cliffs or fog. Instead God let me face unexpected difficulty and invited me to adapt quickly.

I'm pretty sure Jesus wasn't fast asleep on that boat. He merely

closed his eyes, waiting to hear how his disciples would cope. Maybe Jesus wants to see if we too can keep calm and buckle down when he sends the occasional rough sea our way.

Moire O'Sullivan is a mountain runner, adventure racer, author, mum and a regular contributor to *Look*, the younger children's Sunday sheet of Gospel-focused activities and games, available from Redemptorist Publications, www.rpbooks.co.uk.

"Our deepest joy comes from Christ: remaining with him, walking with him, being his disciples."

Pope Francis

Forward as family

by Des Kelly

When you are hanging over a cliff and a friend is holding the rope you are afraid that he might let go.

There is a saying that we will never know how brave we are until we lie on our death bed. Just as many others have sat with their mothers, I was with mine as she lay dying. Yes, I was afraid but my mother's faith held and I remember her saying to my brother, "I have been praying for you and will continue to pray for you when I am in heaven." In the Gospel reading today we see Jesus showing that he has power over nature. Before Jesus performed most of his miracles someone first had to show faith.

Jesus is the only one who has overcome death and promises us eternal life and so we have faith that whatever happens in our lives he knows what he is about even though we might be afraid.

Des Kelly, a retired headteacher, now works to develop leadership in Catholic schools and parishes.

Lord, be with me in those moments when my faith is weak, when I feel as though I'm holding on by my fingertips. Give me courage. Give me strength when I am most in need. Amen.

Today:
Job 38:1, 8-11
2 Corinthians 5:14-17
Mark 4:35-41

Monday:
Genesis 12:1-9
Matthew 7:1-5

Tuesday:
Genesis 13:2, 5-18
Matthew 7:6, 12-14

(E) Ss John Fisher & Thomas More (Feast):
2 Maccabees 6:18, 21, 24-31
Matthew 24:4-13

Wednesday:
Genesis 15:1-12, 17-18
Matthew 7:15-20

Thursday:
Isaiah 49:1-6
Acts 13:22-26
Luke 1:57-66, 80

Friday:
Genesis 17:1, 9-10, 15-22
Matthew 8:1-4

Saturday:
Genesis 18:1-15
Matthew 8:5-17

Next Sunday:
Wisdom 1:13-15; 2:23-24
2 Corinthians 8:7, 9, 13-15
Mark 5:21-43