

HOW TO SAVE A SINKING CHURCH

Today's Gospel (Mk 4:35-41) is about awakening the faith that Catholics sometimes leave dormant in the vessel of their hearts. Today, we learn that God (Jesus) controls the oceans, the wind and even the waves (Job 38:1,8-11). This will come as a huge disappointment for people who think that humans controls climate change. The Boat in today's Gospel represents the Church, and the stormy waves and winds represent the attacks of Satan, who constantly attempts to 'sink' the Church and all its members within it. We see how Jesus saved them in the end, only when after been asked. Initially the disciples ignored Jesus because they thought they could fix everything by themselves. They foolishly thought that they were in control. Jesus is as much in control when He is asleep as when He is awake. Jesus appeared to remain asleep to test the faith of His disciples. He is always ready and at hand to rescue the hopeless and humble heart, if only we ask (Psalm 116:6). Jesus is addressing the entire Church today asking, '*do we have real faith in Him and do we honestly trust Him?*' Or, He may be asking Priests, '*do we think we can fix a sinking Church all by ourselves without His help?*' Repentance for our sins is the first step to save a sinking Church and ourselves. We must acknowledge our weaknesses (sins) and lack of faith by turning to Jesus' divine mercy in confessions. We rarely hear this preached as a solution to fix the Church's problems.

FAITH IS AN ATTITUDE OF TRUST in the presence of God and also our acceptance of His divine will. If we cultivate a genuine love for the Eucharist and recognise Jesus, not in His human flesh anymore, but rather in His Eucharistic Flesh, visible in Holy Communion (2 Cor 5:14-17), then the world would taste a little piece of heaven on earth and be at peace. The sinless Jesus died for our sins, and now it's our turn to die to sin. We Priests and Religious are called to lead the way and to strictly live by our vows. Like the waves that break on the shoreline, adhering to the bounds marked out for them (Job 38:8), so are we all called to live by the bounds marked out for us. If we Priests are unfaithful and break our vows, then we will have a broken sinking Church. In the same way if a spouse is unfaithful, then this leads to a broken marriage. This question of true faith will frame all the Sunday liturgies for the remainder of the year, which the Church calls *Ordinary Time* right up to *Christmas Time*. Jesus wants to navigate our lives with faith. He is inviting us to board the Ship of Life destined for heaven. We must begin that 'crossing over to the other side' now (Mk 4:35). Crossing from a life of sin over to a life of holiness. The Gospel tells us that it was the 'coming of evening', symbolising the end times of our earthly lives to come. Jesus wants us on-board now, before we depart this world. God bless, Fr. Brendan.