

From The Pastor

There is something comforting and essential to 'Ordinary Time'. It may seem like a long haul through the post-Easter season to Pentecost, and then two weeks of feasts before Ordinary Time arrives. It is a long haul, but all that is offered and celebrated is food for the journey of daily Christian life. The culmination of the Resurrection at Easter, confirmed by the power of the Holy Spirit at Pentecost, strengthened by the unity of the Trinity, and the love and presence of Jesus in the Eucharist on Corpus Christi sets the stage for all that is to happen in the season of Ordinary Time. The truths and foundations of our faith have been set before us through the ritual and celebration of our sacraments, but at some point we have to take in and deeply ponder all that has been given to us.

As we ponder these mysteries of our faith, how are they going to affect us? How will we allow them into our lives in a transforming way? Will they go below the surface of informational knowing and change our hearts in the way we live life in faith and love? Ordinary time is all about the journey of transformation. It is about taking in deeply the mysteries we have received and really allowing them to do something in us.

We begin Ordinary Time in the Twelfth week of the year, and it serves as an excellent bridge to ponder and take in all we have heard about Jesus as Lord. As we look at the gospel, Jesus has been teaching the crowds and the disciples. The day is ending and Jesus invites, 'let us go to the other side'.

The implication is that they will go to the other side of the lake, away from the crowds for rest and the nights' peace. This is not the case. Indirectly and symbolically, Jesus is still teaching. He is inviting the disciples to 'cross over to the other side' of understanding. To cross over from fear based living to a life of secure faith. We are all called to make this journey, for it is one that brings faith to the maturity of trust in Jesus as He is, and not as we want him to be.

This is a journey we must all make on our own. Notice that Jesus makes the suggestion to cross over, but they do so in the boat of the disciples. This is our journey to a deeper faith, and not one that God can just hand over to us. Notice too, that 'they took Jesus' into their boat 'just as he was'.

This is not a practical detail of not having time to get proper boating wear for rain or storms. It means that they accepted Jesus as he was. They heard his teachings, liked what they heard, and wanted to hear more so they could know and have what Jesus has. This is the crossing over. To know what Jesus knows and to have what Jesus has calls for a deep handing over of ourselves to the power and the truth of God.

This is not an easy journey. In fact, it is a perilous one that causes fear, resistance, and doubt. Enter the storm on the lake. This is another symbolic way of saying that the disciples, though seeking a deeper knowledge of Jesus, still cling to fear and uncertainty. We all know this feeling. We all go through 'storms' in life. The changes and troubles of life regularly throw us into inner turmoil while we search for a new balance of self-understanding in our present circumstance. This is the process and the faith work of transformation. This is what it means to 'cross over to the other side'. Many, if not most, never make this journey because it is perilous and discomfoting to find a deep abiding trust in Jesus. We resist for fear of losing ourselves as we have made ourselves to be. The call is to know and accept the way of Jesus.

Jesus has done his inner work and has found his inner peace grounded in surpassing trust in the Father. Do not think this was just handed to Jesus because he is God's Son. Jesus had to cross over and face his own inner storms of doubt and temptation. This is conveyed to us through the experience of his baptism, whereupon he was immediately driven to the desert where he was tempted by the devil. This was the crossing over time for Jesus who weathers his own inner storms of self-confrontation, and call to deep trust in the Father.

Having done his inner work and accepted the deep power of God within himself, Jesus can sleep in the boat even through a violent storm. The storm is much less on the water, and much more in the minds and hearts of the fearful disciples. So Jesus asks them, why are you so terrified? Do you not yet have faith? As yet, they have not found faith. They are still on the journey of inner transformation. But they are on the journey because they accepted the invitation to cross over to the other side of trust and new understanding in Jesus.

Where are you on your inner journey? How does this scripture affect you? Faith is so much more than an intellectual ascent to a body of religious truths. We accept the truths of God, but have we taken them deep into ourselves so that our lives can be transformed by them? It calls for a letting go of our way, for the freedom and trust of God's way. The crossing over and the letting go is very tough at times, but the new trust and freedom in love and divine power is worth the journey.

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