

Twelfth Sunday in Ordinary Time
June 21, 2015
Church of St. Leo the Great – Oakland, CA
Preacher – Rev. Timothy K. Johnson

Reading 1 [JB 38:1, 8-11](#)

The Lord addressed Job out of the storm and said:
Who shut within doors the sea,
when it burst forth from the womb;
when I made the clouds its garment
and thick darkness its swaddling bands?
When I set limits for it
and fastened the bar of its door,
and said: Thus far shall you come but no farther,
and here shall your proud waves be stilled!

Responsorial Psalm [PS 107:23-24, 25-26, 28-29, 30-31](#)

R. (1b) **Give thanks to the Lord, his love is everlasting.**

They who sailed the sea in ships,
trading on the deep waters,
These saw the works of the LORD
and his wonders in the abyss.

R. **Give thanks to the Lord, his love is everlasting.**

His command raised up a storm wind
which tossed its waves on high.
They mounted up to heaven; they sank to the depths;
their hearts melted away in their plight.
R. **Give thanks to the Lord, his love is everlasting..**

They cried to the LORD in their distress;
from their straits he rescued them,
He hushed the storm to a gentle breeze,
and the billows of the sea were stilled.

R. **Give thanks to the Lord, his love is everlasting.**

They rejoiced that they were calmed,
and he brought them to their desired haven.
Let them give thanks to the LORD for his kindness
and his wondrous deeds to the children of men.

R. **Give thanks to the Lord, his love is everlasting.**

Reading 22 COR 5:14-17

Brothers and sisters:

The love of Christ impels us,
once we have come to the conviction that one died for all;
therefore, all have died.
He indeed died for all,
so that those who live might no longer live for themselves
but for him who for their sake died and was raised.

Consequently, from now on we regard no one according to the flesh;
even if we once knew Christ according to the flesh,
yet now we know him so no longer.
So whoever is in Christ is a new creation:
the old things have passed away;
behold, new things have come.

Alleluia LK 7:16

R. **Alleluia, alleluia.**

A great prophet has risen in our midst,
God has visited his people.

R. **Alleluia, alleluia.**

Gospel MK 4:35-41

On that day, as evening drew on, Jesus said to his disciples:

“Let us cross to the other side.”

Leaving the crowd, they took Jesus with them in the boat just as he was.

And other boats were with him.

A violent squall came up and waves were breaking over the boat,
so that it was already filling up.

Jesus was in the stern, asleep on a cushion.

They woke him and said to him,

“Teacher, do you not care that we are perishing?”

He woke up,

rebuked the wind, and said to the sea, “Quiet! Be still!”

The wind ceased and there was great calm.

Then he asked them, “Why are you terrified?

Do you not yet have faith?”

They were filled with great awe and said to one another,

“Who then is this whom even wind and sea obey?”

Use in the Dioceses of the United States, second typical edition, Copyright © 2001, 1998, 1997, 1986, 1970 Confraternity of Christian Doctrine; Psalm refrain © 1968, 1981, 1997, International Committee on English in the Liturgy, Inc. All rights reserved. Neither this work nor any part of it may be reproduced, distributed, performed or displayed in any medium, including electronic or digital, without permission in writing from the copyright owner.

Homily

A year or so ago, well, when I was getting ready to be ordained, the professors told us that for a homily to be good the preacher should have the good news in one hand and the newspaper in the other. In other words, the good homily needed to be relevant to those who heard it.

Also, over the years, there has been much said about the timeliness, insight, and the almost uncanny ability of Rome/the Vatican to make moves for the most spectacular effect.

I think that both of these points come into clear relief in the conjunction of the readings we just heard and the publication on Thursday of Pope Francis' own first Encyclical letter, Laudatio Si, PRAISED BE, on the necessity of all humanity's greater care for creation, for our common home. The title, from the first to words of the letter, is the same as Francis of Assisi's beginning words in his Canticle of the Sun. Pope Francis' letter is directed to all people, not just Roman Catholics or even people of good will, but all humanity. This in itself is a first.

The letter was released just this past week ahead of this Sunday's readings read in all Roman Catholic churches throughout the world. A preacher would be a real dunce not to catch the connection.

The reading from the Wisdom Book of Job is the beginning of God's dramatic, poetic response to the previous 37 chapters of Job's outpouring of his many trials, tribulations, and sufferings. God's response, in a nut shell, is that the wise person finds meaning in suffering and trusts that the Lord governs the universe with purpose and fidelity.

The poetry of God's shutting the sea within its limits is echoed in the Gospel story of Jesus' calming the sea. This story comes layered with multiple meanings: 1) Jesus' divinity in calming the sea; 2) the necessity of faith to avoid blindness to Jesus' identity as the Messiah and Son of God; and 3) the disciples only evolving faith in Jesus as seen in their awe and questioning.

There are certainly many ideas that could be taken from these readings, but this week with the news of this Encyclical letter and its official teachings for Roman Catholics and whomsoever else will listen, God's creation of the universe, His gift of it to us, and our responsibility to steward it well take front and center importance.

Whether we take the Genesis' stories of creation literally or believe, as most people do, in the evolution of the universe from a great bang, we, Roman Catholics at least, believe in God as the source and giver of all creation and of our need to treat that gift with the respect due to the giver, as both the readings from Job and Mark imply.

Pope Francis is calling us to be so aware of the dramatic changes that are affecting our environment at its foundations so that we repent the human selfishness and senselessness of our ways that are causing this and reform those mistakes. Now is the acceptable time before it is too late. This letter, Praised Be, is a clarion call to change, as soon as possible, to save what can be saved of God's great gift to us.

Pope Francis is not teaching science, as some climate change nay-sayers, even Catholics and members of Congress, are accusing him. Nor is this letter a political one, as the nay-sayers argue citing the American concept of "separation of church and state", which we American Catholics applaud, at the same time as we can have gratitude for Francis' offering of informing ours and "humanity's" consciences concerning what we ought to consider in our choices and our elected leaders. Francis, following his predecessors, is merely accepting what most scientists assert, that humans and our choices and activities are primarily responsible for these

climate changes and that all of humanity must change our habits and return the common good to God's creation. Francis' plea is meant as a spectacular wake-up call for all humanity, and we, in particular, need to hear it and respond.

I have not yet had time to read the whole of this Encyclical. It only came out on Thursday. However, I do plan to read, to pray over, and to examine my own conscience in the light of Praised Be. Francis' writing is basically clear (as opposed to many encyclicals), and the text is available online, excerpted in the papers, and will be in print in a few days. I encourage all of us to read it, to pray over it, and to reform our living.

Many who make fortunes off of our planet-despoiling products and many self-centered, self-interest groups are already trying to make fun of Francis' call. We, at least, should receive it with thanks, meditate on it, and reform our attitudes and ways. We are talking about God's creation of our planet, Earth, and it is not nice to fool with Mother Earth.

As we continue this thanksgiving service, let us praise God like St. Francis and Pope Francis for the glory and the gift of his Creation and let us give God thanks by an attentive listening to the letter, Praised Be, and a prayerful response to its call to protect that creation.

Fr. Tim's Closing Remarks

In the vein of Lewis Carroll from "Through the Looking-Glass and What Alice Found There":

"The time has come," the Walrus said,
"To talk of many things:
Of shoes – and ships – and sealing-wax –
of cabbages and kings."

I'd like to say just a word of thanks as I am coming close to ending this almost 23 years of being with you and serving you as pastor. I lived in our Blue House longer than I have ever lived anywhere else! And as hard as it is to move, even if only a few blocks, there is irony in retiring when I have just gotten the hang of the three year old, "new" translation of the Roman Missal and its convoluted English transliteration.

I have tried over these years to accompany this community as we seek to come into our own as God's children. I have seen my service as primarily offering the hospitality that encourages, nourishes, facilitates that journey; and I have thoroughly enjoyed and loved this time and you and becoming / being part of this community.

I am filled with memories from these years: the joys of baptisms, weddings, and the sacraments of initiation; the sorrows and joys of funerals; the renovation of all our buildings; the liturgies, music, homilies, presiders, and residents in the Rectory; the fantastic staff over the years. As I look back, the memories of so many parishioners are particularly touching.

During these years, paraphrasing St. Augustine, I have been for you a pastor and with you a Christian. My service for you will end with this month, but my journey with you, as the Church of St. Leo the Great, will continue to the end of my days. I make my swan song the same as Bob Hope: "Thanks for the memories."

A word of thanks to Norah Hippolyte, my right hand for years, for her work in helping to coordinate this celebration, to Juan Carlos Andrade my left hand, and Rosario Dueñas my brain, to all three for being my memory; to Mary Kelly, Mary White, and Judith Sumida for the grand al fresco luncheon to follow and their legion of helpers; to Agatha Lee and the Choir for the beautiful music; and to all of you for being here.

I hope that you enjoy the recessional music, which I see as a fitting end to these last 23 years and the introduction for Fr. Joseph Nguyen's service among us. Before that let us sing together our national Church anthem, "Come, Holy Ghost", in thanks for my time here and blessings on Fr. Joseph's ministry with our parish community. Please stand.