

Commentary on the Gospel for Sun, Jun 23rd 2024

Why are you so cowardly?

Pay attention to the narration of Mark about Jesus calming the sea. It was evening when Jesus and the disciples took the boat. There were also other small boats. They are venturing into the other side of the sea. Once in the boat, Jesus falls asleep while the disciples are left to face the tempests of the sea in the night.

Mark wants to tell the readers that Jesus was reaching the evening of his life. And he is no more physically with his disciples. His presence is there in the boat – that is the Church, which is being tossed on the tempests of the world. Therefore, when they faced the persecutions and struggles in life, they felt that Jesus, their God was sleeping and did not care about their struggles. That's why they complain: "Do you not care that we are perishing?" The gospel also mentions about other small boats moving with them. They represent the other communities of faithful in different regions. They are travelling towards the other side of the sea. It is a clear indication of the Church, journeying towards the heaven.

Jesus calms the sea by saying: "Quiet! Be Still." We hear that kind of a command from Jesus only when he used to drive out demons. Here, Mark must have been referring to the common belief of the time that the sea is the abode of the devil. The devil in the world is making the life of the Church difficult and creates a sense of perishing. But Jesus drives out the demons by commanding them to "be quiet!"

In the history of the Church, there have been numerous moments of tempests that traumatised the life of the Church. The same is true of our community, our family where we have gone through ups and downs. In all those moments, it is easy to see the image of the boat, shaken by winds and waves.

But in such moments of uncertainties and fear, it is important to remember that we are not alone. Jesus seems to be asleep and doesn't want to know about our problems. In fact, he addresses us with the same words that he addressed to the disciples that night on the lake. "Why are you so cowardly? Do you still not have faith?"

Jesus did not spare us of all the waves and tempests of life. The problems are there and they will remain. They are part of the human condition. There will be moments of doubt, of hesitation. Jesus is on board with us and that he will not let go of our hand. Even though sometimes we don't feel his presence, at times it seems to us that he is sleeping, yet our faith reminds that we are not left alone and he is there.