

## Commentary on the Gospel for Tue, Jul 2nd 2024

### Why are you afraid?

As we contemplate the miraculous calming of the storm, it's important to note that Matthew, the evangelist, provides us with a theological narrative, aimed at addressing the fundamental question that people have been raising since the start of Jesus' public ministry: "Who is this person?"

The disciples go with the Master on the boat to "the other side," symbolising the Christian community's journey. The boat, representing the Church, encounters a storm at sea, preventing it from progressing. Amid the perilous crossing, Jesus remains asleep while the disciples battle the raging waves..

The scene brings to mind Jonah, the prophet who was instructed to deliver the message of the Lord to the non-believers in Nineveh. While fleeing from Yahweh, he was found sleeping at the bottom of the ship (Jon 1:5). In our passage today, Jesus is also sleeping, and when the apostles wake him up, they cry, "Lord, save us! We are perishing!"

In the Bible, the term sleep is often used to refer to death. Jesus also used it figuratively, saying, "Our friend Lazarus has fallen asleep" (John 11:11) and "The child is not dead but asleep" (Mark 5:39-40). Matthew likely portrayed the journey on the boat as a symbolic representation of the life of the Church after Jesus' death. The disciples feel abandoned amidst the storms and turmoil of the world. They know that Jesus is present with them, but it seems as though he is asleep. Frightened by the dangers of the stormy world, the disciples cry out to the Risen Lord, "Lord, Save us!"

The Lord's presence is always with them and with us, as he asks us, 'Why are you so afraid?' This gentle reminder of his eternal presence brings comfort and reassurance, even in the most turbulent of times.

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