

Sermon, June 20th 2021 – Family Eucharist
Mother Alice Ormondroyd's first Eucharist

May I speak in the name of God – Father, Son and Holy Spirit. Amen.

If I say the word 'storm' to you, what do you think of? Take answers.
Maybe a howling wind? Maybe crashing rain? Maybe thunder, or lightening?

How does it feel if we are caught in a storm? Take answers.
Frightening? Scary? A little bit exciting? Maybe it makes us feel quite small, quite exposed or vulnerable.

Well the story we've just heard is all about a storm that happens when Jesus and his disciples have gone out across the lake in their little boat. Now if there's a storm coming, do you think going out in a boat is a good idea? I don't think it is! Being in a boat when there is a storm is a really scary place to be – you want to be somewhere inside with a roof, somewhere where you feel safe. But for Jesus and his disciples they were in their little fishing boat on the lake, and as we heard, when the storm came the wind and the waves and the rain and maybe even the thunder and lightening were crashing down on them, and of course they were terrified. So scared that they clung to each other and cried out for help.

When I hear this story sometimes I wonder - why did Jesus take his friends out in their boat on the lake when a storm was coming? Why didn't he just suggest that they stay on the shore and wait until the storm had passed over? Why did he let them row into the middle of that lake, knowing that they were going to face a storm and be afraid?

And I think the answer is actually because he loved them. He wanted them to understand that there will be many storms in our lives. Some storms will be like the one they went through, a real, physical weather storm. But there will be many things that we go through that create storms inside us. Things that happen in our lives that make our hearts and minds are fearful and where we begin to lose our faith and hope.

Did you notice where Jesus was when the storm was going on? Take answers. He was asleep on a cushion! How could Jesus be asleep with all that crashing and bashing and tossing of the boat on the waves? I think the answer is because Jesus is the Prince of Peace. He is the Lord of Lords. He has power over all things, and just as we saw when the disciples woke him with their crying out, he let them go out in that storm because he knew that he was going to be with them to keep them safe. And maybe they needed to learn to have faith, and they needed to learn to trust Him. Maybe the disciples needed to see his power and realise that his promise to be with them and to keep them safe was a promise that they could believe in.

The disciples realised when they cried out in fear, that Jesus was with them. They remembered that Jesus loved them, they understood that he had the power to bring about peace, to restore their hope, and faith.

As a priest it is my joy and my privilege to journey with you through the many storms that you will face in your own lives, and to remind you that Jesus is Emmanuel, God with us. Jesus is with us in those storms, Jesus will never leave us, Jesus alone can bring peace and restore us to faith and hope. We need to go through these stormy times sometimes I think, so that God can perform miracles in our lives and show us again, when we have forgotten Him, just how

much He loves us. I pray that today you will know that whatever storms have passed, whatever storms are going on, and whatever storms lie ahead, Jesus is with you, as He is with all of us, for all eternity.

At the end of the ordination retreat that I was on this week, our leader shared with us this Prayer of Theresa of Avila, a prayer of blessing that I would like to share with you now:

Let nothing disturb thee,
nothing affright thee;
all things are passing,
God never changeth!
Patient endurance attaineth to all things;
who God possesseth
in nothing is wanting;
alone God sufficeth.

Amen.