12th Sunday In Ordinary Time, Year C

Job 38:1, 8-11

In this majestic Hebrew poem Job has been asking God to justify His actions and this selection is part of God's response. The question posed by the Book of Job is one that still puzzles most people today: Why do good people suffer? God's response basically challenges Job's right to question the Almighty. It is a way of saying that God's ways and reasons are beyond man's comprehension. Throughout this entire book, Job has been the victim of one disaster after another. He has lost his children and his possessions, and he has come down with leprosy. Through all this, Job has remained faithful to God, but helped by his friends he begins to wonder why such things happen. One friend presents the argument that God does not act arbitrarily so He must be giving Job these afflictions because he has rejected God's warning and thus deserves extreme punishment. God answers by asking "Who and what is Job? Another god, rival to Yahweh? Does Job know the history, how it all started? Was he present at creation?" God does this with unanswerable questions: one of which is our reading for today. The first question (Job 38:4-7) is "Who made the earth?" The second question (Job 38:8-ll), which is today's reading, is "Who made the sea?" The third question, (Job 38:12-15) is "Who made light?" Notice that these three questions are the reverse order of the order of creation—God is walking us back mentally to see that only He was present at creation.

1. The Lord addressed Job out of the storm and said: Yahweh addresses Job out of the whirlwind and accuses him of a vast ignorance. He asks Job some unanswerable questions which in this section are about the origin of the sea, a tumultuous and threatening element which is pictured at first as a baby which needed and received Yahweh's tender care.

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

2 Corinthians 5:14-17

Brothers and sisters:

14. The love of Christ impels us, The love that Christ has for him motivates, persuades, urges and obliges Paul in his ministry and it should be the same with us.(3) once we have come to the conviction that one died for all; Christ died for all. He knew and loved us all when he offered his life. The Son of God loved me and gave himself for me!(6)(478) therefore, all have died.

15. He indeed died for all, so that those who live might no longer live for themselves Christians are born to a new life of grace that enables them to conquer selfishness and the tendency to live solely for private, personal interests. but for him who for their sake died and was raised. Both the death and the resurrection of Jesus were intended for our salvation. Everything is now changed! We can't judge with the same criteria anymore. We can now no longer live for ourselves but are to live a new life of service in imitation of Christ.

16. 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. Paul had once judged Jesus according to purely outward appearances and had persecuted him in his Church. But he had to change his view of Christ in the light of revelation in the Spirit. If we see Christ from God's viewpoint, then we should view everyone from that same perspective.
17. So whoever is in Christ is a new creation: the old things have passed away; behold, new things have come. Baptism transfers us from the bondage of sin and slavery to the blessings of salvation and sonship. We literally become a new creation! Once we accept Christ as our Lord and Savior, we give him permission to take up residence in us. We are not merely turning over a new leaf, we are beginning a new life under a new Master. This means that we must follow his leadership on a daily basis.

Mark 4:35-41

The first reading proclaimed a message to Job from the Lord in a storm; it was all about the Lord's power. This reading complements that passage both because of the context of the storm, and also because of the question it ends with: "Who then is this, that even the wind and the sea obey him?" This story offers a lesson in discipleship under stress. The sea is eight miles wide at its widest point.

35. On that day, as evening drew on, Jesus said to his disciples: "Let us cross to the other side." This would have been a distance of six or seven miles.
36. Leaving the crowd, This and the following miracles are performed for the disciples' benefit. they took Jesus with them in the boat just as he was. And other boats were with him. Jesus had taught his parables from a boat. There is no further mention after this of these boats or their occupants.
37. A violent squall came up and waves were breaking over the boat, so that it was already filling up.
38. Jesus was in the stern, asleep on a cushion. This detail, which is the only instance of Jesus sleeping recorded in the gospels, is a brilliant commentary on Jesus' humanness and the hiddenness of his divine identity. They woke him and said to him, "Teacher, do you not care that we are perishing?" This must have been a truly terrible storm to have upset these experienced fishermen.
39. He woke up, rebuked the wind, and said to the sea, "Quiet! Be still!" Jesus uses the same language that he uses in the exorcisms. He rebukes the wind, just as he did the demons and tells the sea, as he would a person, "Peace, be still." The wind ceased and there was great calm. According to the OT, only God can control the raging sea. Here Mark is pointing us to Christ's divinity. This was a physical storm, but storms come in other forms too. When the disciples realized the presence of Jesus was with them, the storm became calm. Once they knew he was there, fearless peace entered their hearts.
40. Then he asked them, "Why are you terrified? Do you not yet have faith?" This is a strong rebuke. Did they lack faith in God or faith in Jesus? If it was lack of faith in God, they are rebuked for not following Jesus' example and sleeping through the whole thing. If it is a lack of faith in Jesus, he has just proved his power by quieting the storm, an act reserved for God. Calming the storm also suggests Christ's power over evil for the sea commonly

symbolizes evil and chaos. The boat is a symbol of the church, so the story challenges us to trust in Christ's power so that we can persevere through the storms that assail us.
41. They were filled with great awe and said to one another, "Who then is this whom even wind and sea obey?" Since only God can control the wind and the sea, things apparently subject to evil influence, this is an implicit confession of Jesus' divinity, at least to the extent that he does works customarily given to God in the Old Testament. Life is like a boat, exposed to a myriad of dangers, temptations, occasions to sin, bad counsels of men, passions of corrupt nature, etc. Never lose confidence—when temptations arise, keep your eyes on God, who alone can deliver us.

Some of the material for this commentary was taken from: (1) "Workbook for lectors and gospel readers: 1997" by Lawrence E. Mick, (2) "The Jerome Biblical Commentary," (3) "Workbook For Lectors And Gospel Readers: 1991" by Graziano Marcheschi with Nancy Seitz Marcheschi, (4) "The Bread of Life Catholic Bible Study" by Deacon Ken & Marie Finn, (5) "Ignatius Catholic Study Bible: The First and Second Letters of Saint Paul to the Corinthians" With Introduction, Commentary, and Notes by Scott Hahn and Curtis Mitch, (6) "Catechism Of The Catholic Church," (7) "Workbook for lectors and gospel readers:2006" by Martin Connell, (8) "Ignatius Catholic Study Bible: Mark" With Introduction, Commentary, and Notes by Scott Hahn, (9) "Mark: Good News for Hard Times" by George T. Montague, S.M., and (10) The St. Paul Center For Biblical Theology Online Founded By Dr. Scott Hahn.

In loving memory of Peg Schneller, who compiled these commentaries.