

A reading from the book of Job.

Pause - and look up at the assembly

The Lord answered Job out of the whirlwind:
“Who is this that darkens counsel by words without knowledge?
I will question you, and you shall declare to me.
Where were you when I laid the foundation of the earth?
Tell me if you have understanding.
Who shut in the sea with doors
when it burst out from the womb? —
when I made the clouds its garment,
and prescribed bounds for it,
and set bars and doors,
and said, ‘Thus far shall you come, and no farther,
and here shall your proud waves be stopped’?”



PAUSE for **THREE** seconds
then look up at the people
and say SLOWLY:

The WORD of the LORD.

Thanks be to God.

SECOND READING – B 12

A reading from the second letter of Saint Paul to the Corinthians.

Pause – and look up at the assembly

Brothers and sisters:
The love of Christ urges us on,
because we are convinced that one has died for all;
therefore all have died.
And he died for all,
so that those who live might live no longer for themselves,
but for him who died and was raised for them.
From now on, therefore, we regard no one
from a human point of view.
Even though we once knew Christ
from a human point of view,
we know him no longer in that way.
So if anyone is in Christ, there is a new creation:
everything old has passed away;
see, everything has become new!



PAUSE for **THREE** seconds
then look up at the people
and say SLOWLY:

The WORD of the LORD.

Thanks be to God.

GOSPEL READING – B 12

The Lord be with you.

And with your spirit.

A reading from the holy gospel according to Mark.

Glory to you, O Lord

When evening had come, Jesus said to his disciples,
“Let us go across to the other side.”
And leaving the crowd behind,
they took Jesus with them in the boat, just as he was.
Other boats were with him.
A great windstorm arose, and the waves beat into the boat,
so that the boat was already being swamped.
But he was in the stern, asleep on the cushion;
and they woke him up and said to him,
“Teacher, do you not care that we are perishing?”
He woke up and rebuked the wind, and said to the sea,
“Peace! Be still!”
Then the wind ceased, and there was a dead calm.
Jesus said to them, “Why are you afraid?
Have you still no faith?”
And they were filled with great awe
and said to one another,
“Who then is this,
that even the wind and the sea obey him?”



The GOSPEL of the LORD.

Praise to you, Lord Jesus Christ.

SCRIPTURES IN DEPTH

Reading I: Job 38:1, 8-11

Each of Job's comforters has had his say, and Job has responded to their arguments. None of them answered his basic problem: how could this suffering be explained in view of the fact that he had walked uprightly with God. Now YHWH himself finally speaks to Job “out of the whirlwind”—a typical device to denote a theophany.

YHWH's answer is to assert his utter transcendence and the inapplicability of all human criteria to judge his ways. Job was not present at creation! Our reading selects the creation of the sea, with its assertion of God's sovereignty over it (Job 38:11), thus preparing for the Gospel reading about the stilling of the storm.

Responsorial Psalm: 46:2-3, 5-6, 8-9

In this psalm four different groups of persons are invited to give thanks to God. The fourth group consists of those who have been rescued from a storm at sea. Thus, the psalm matches the first reading and the gospel.

The key words linking the psalm with the Gospel occur in Mark 4:29: “he made the storm be still.” In fact, this verse is held by some to be part of the literary background for the Gospel reading.

Reading II: 2 Corinthians 5:14-17

We have to see this passage in the context of Paul's first apology, which we discussed over the past few Sundays. Paul is contrasting the motivation of his own ministry with that of the false teachers by whom the Corinthians are captivated.

This impelling motivation is the love of Christ, concretely actualized in his death upon the cross. Hence, it produces a pattern of apostolate that is itself marked by the cross: Paul, like all true Christians, but unlike the false teachers, lives no longer for himself but for him who died and was raised.

The meaning of the second paragraph is much controverted. What does Paul mean when he speaks of regarding Christ from a human point of view? The fact that he acknowledges that he himself had once shared this point of view has led many to find the clue in Paul's pre-conversion conception of Christ.

If “Christ” is used here as a proper name, the meaning would then be that Paul, before his conversion, had known Jesus in the flesh but now knows him as the risen Lord.

The trouble with this interpretation is that it makes Paul treat the earthly history of Jesus as an episode of the past in a way that was characteristic of the Corinthian Gnostics in 1

Corinthians. It is no wonder that one critic (Schmithals) suggested that it is a Gnostic gloss added to the text.

An alternative view is to take “Christ” here, not as a proper name, but as “Messiah.” Paul is then saying that as a Jew he accepted Jewish (political?) notions of messiahship, but when he became a Christian he rejected the view in favor of the message of the crucified and risen One.

This interpretation has more to commend it, but it requires taking the words “from a human point of view” adjectively, as a modifier of Messiah. In Paul, however, this phrase, when used pejoratively, as it clearly is here, is used adverbially.

If we keep in mind the concrete situation in which the first apology was written, everything seems to fall into place perfectly.

Paul calls the Christology of his opponents a way of knowing Christ “from a human point of view.” They view Christ as a “divine man” or a wonderworker and claim that this is to regard him from a superhuman point of view.

Paul, however, castigates this view of Christ as fleshly, sarkic (that is, “a human point of view”). To regard Christ as merely a wonder-worker is precisely that. He is rather the crucified and risen One, and only as such has he opened the new age.

The apparent contradiction between this realized eschatology of 2 Corinthians and the rejection of realized eschatology in 1 Corinthians (where the Corinthians asserted that in baptism they had already been raised) is explained once we realize that the situation in 2 Corinthians is completely different from that in 1 Corinthians. There the problem was the local Gnostics; here the problem is the wandering preachers who interpret Jesus as an earthly divine man.

Paul's theology is thus intensely situational. In response to one situation he can make a point that is completely contradicted when he faces another situation. It shows how careful we must be in trying to systematize Paul's theology—or any New Testament theology, for that matter.

Gospel: Mark 4:35-41

First, let us try to reconstruct the history of the tradition of this pericope. What historical nucleus underlies the story? Three things we can say for certain are historical facts: (1) the general scene—Jesus and his disciples crossing the lake in a boat and encountering a storm; (2) the impression of authority that Jesus gave in all that he said or did; (3) the data about Jesus' family.

The story has, however, been developed in the tradition along lines that were already familiar from the Old Testament, where YHWH stills the raging sea and where prophets still storms (see Jon 1:15). The story is now told to evoke an answer to the question

“Who is this?” The answer is that Jesus is the eschatological prophet in whom YHWH (see the First Reading and the Psalm) is epiphanously present.

Mark in turn has redacted this story. First, he has linked it to the parable collection in Mark 4 (note the opening words, “On that day ... said to his disciples”—“that day” is the day of parabolic teaching when Jesus promised the disciples that the mysteries of the kingdom of God would be disclosed to them).

The stilling of the storm is part of the disclosure. But the disciples do not yet understand. Hence the insertion of the typically Marcan words “Why are you afraid? Have you no faith?”

This reproach to the disciples and the fact that they raise a question without being answered point the reader to Peter's confession in Mark 8:27-30, where an incomplete faith is expressed, and beyond that to the cross and the resurrection, when the disciples will finally come to realize who Jesus truly is (Mark 16:7).

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