

GATHERED INSPIRED SENT



“As Jesus got into a boat, his disciples followed him. Suddenly a violent storm came up on the sea, so that the boat was being swamped by waves; but he was asleep.” Matthew 8:23-24

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What is Jesus doing? I imagine that this might have been one of the many questions arising in the Apostle's minds as they and Jesus were facing peril due to the violent storm attacking their vessel. “What is Jesus doing, sleeping while we are sinking?” “How can He sleep through all of this commotion?” “If He has the power to heal the sick and raise the dead, why cannot He not get up from His slumber and do something?” “Does He

care?” It is not difficult to imagine the many and varied questions that the Apostles might have been thinking and voicing as they faced the storm. We human beings are like that. It's normal for life situations to conjure an abundance of questions in difficult circumstances. The questions help to express the anxiety felt at the moment, while helping us to make sense of and find a solution to the event we are experiencing. The questions above and

those asked by the Apostles in the Gospel text are not questioning the personhood of Christ, but more so a way to better understand Him and their relationship to Jesus. The Apostle's questions are ours as well.

To be human is to experience the joys and sorrows of life. Life is a mixture of celebration and sorrow; of tranquil moments and those not so tranquil. Life is full of decisions and questions to be answered. As people of faith, we cling to Christ, finding hope and strength in His love for us. Yet, if we are honest, the difficult moments and the questions that arise in our minds and hearts unsettle us. Sometimes we believe the questions make us look as if we are lacking faith. This is not true. The disciple of Jesus always has questions. The questions, when asked honestly, are a sign of faith in the Lord's willingness to dialogue with us as we grow our relationship with Him. Questions are our invitation to Jesus to draw closer and teach us the lesson of faith that assists us in deepening our understanding of ourselves in light of His love. The questions which arise in the moments and events of our lives are the invitation to Jesus to teach





us how to more deeply understand His faithfulness to us. Yet, in all of our questions, the Lord remains in the boat with us.

As the storm raged, the Lord slept. Jesus slept not because He did not care about the lives of His Apostles. He slept because He knew that all would be well. The storm would subside, and He and the Apostles would be well because the Father was with them. This is the lesson we learn in this Gospel passage. While the various storms of life will rock the boat of our lives, Jesus sleeps to remind us that His presence brings peace, calm and hope despite the storms. As His disciples, we need to trust the peace the Jesus brings to

all the events of our lives, especially when we are discerning our response to His call to “Follow Me.” But in discernment, our questions will arise and we need to calmly let the Lord give us answers, remembering that He inhabits the boat of our lives.

Discernment is the process to clarify to the call of the Lord for our life. Discernment creates many questions: “How is the Lord calling me to serve,” “Why me,” “Am I able to serve the Lord in the religious life/as a priest,” “Can I live obedient, poor and chaste for Jesus?” These and many other questions arise as we prayerfully discern our response to the Lord’s invitation to follow Him. As we voice these questions in prayer we may wonder if the Lord is

Questions for Prayer and Reflection:

1. **How do I feel having Jesus in the boat of my life? Happy, calm, hopeful, nervous, scared? Why?**
2. **What are the three biggest questions I have in my discernment? What answers are the Lord giving me? Am I happy with these answers? Why?**



asleep as the answers come slower than we hope. Such moments in discernment cause us to feel alone, wondering if the Lord is even listening. In such moments, all we need to do is look over and find that the Lord is right next to us, in the boat of our lives, keeping us calm, reminding us that the Father is listening, and all will be well. Because God is present and listening even as the storm of questions swirls around us, we pray through the questions because these represent our wrestling with gaining clarity in the invitation of the Lord and how best to respond. The more honest the questions, the stronger our discernment because we pose our questions to God based on our relationship with Him. No matter how the journey of discernment unfolds for us, because God is with us, calming us, and loving us, we have the peace necessary to hear His voice and find the courage to genuinely respond in faith to His divine invitation.

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