

# Letting Jesus Sleep

Daily Gospel / Liturgical Cycle A

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Matthew 8:23-27

As Jesus got into the boat, his disciples followed him. A windstorm arose on the sea, so great that the boat was being swamped by the waves; but he was asleep. And they went and woke him up, saying, "Lord, save us! We are perishing!" And he said to them, "Why are you afraid, you of little faith?" Then he got up and rebuked the winds and the sea; and there was a dead calm. They were amazed, saying, "What sort of man is this, that even the winds and the sea obey him?"

Introductory Prayer: Lord, I come to you in this meditation ready to do whatever it is you ask. Left to myself I often take the easy and convenient path, yet I know the way of a Christian is through the narrow gate. In you I find the reason to abandon the easy path for a more perfect mission of love. I'm ready to learn the meaning of your command: "Follow me."

Petition: Lord, grant me the grace of a mature faith.

1. God's Silence, Man's Faith: We can imagine ourselves in the place of the apostles, in this poor boat tossed by the turbulent waves. The situation instantly speaks to our worst of fears; yet Jesus sleeps. Our temptation is to wake him...and too many souls do so through complaining incessantly, despairing attitudes, withdrawing from prayer, or unloading anger on others. When in a moment of trial we find life is no longer under our complete control, the option of meltdown is always at hand. But we mustn't take that route; instead we must contemplate the power that emanates from the sleeping Christ. Trials are intended by God to draw us closer to him and increase our dependence on him. We have to live from faith; otherwise all that reigns is fear, insecurity and bitterness. The "Silence of Christ" is powerful. To pass over its meaning lightly is to abandon some of the deepest lessons of Christ's heart. The "Silence of Christ" must teach us.

2. The "Silence of Christ" Speaks to Our Faith: What is Christ's sleep like? As a young mother, Mary watched Jesus sleep many times. Archbishop Martinez writes:

"Jesus was exceedingly beautiful when he spoke the words of eternal life, accomplished wonders, looked with love, pardoned with mercy and caressed with tenderness. But I would like to have seen him while he was sleeping because I could have contemplated him to my heart's content, without the fascination of his gaze distracting me, without the perfection of his beauty and the glory of his splendor dazzling my eyes and enrapturing my soul. The beauty of Jesus awake is far too great for my smallness. Who could support it? I felt it more suited to me veiled by sleep, as the glory of the sun is more adapted to my eyes when I look at it through a translucent lens" (When Jesus Sleeps, p.15).

May I trust the power of Christ just as much when he chooses not to act as when he does.

3. God's Eternal Pedagogy: Water, a boat, the apostles and Christ... this scene repeats itself over and over again in the Gospel. Water is a symbol of the experiences of life taken on a human level; the boat is the experience of faith on a supernatural level -- it is our life with Christ. Christ's message is that we can never let our experiences of life overwhelm our experience of faith. We have to live not from the surface level of impressions of the moment, but from the deep channel of faith that reveals the action of God, the wisdom of his Providence and the ultimate destiny of eternity. Faith is what reveals Christ's presence in our boat; faith is what makes us believe that every wave and wind gust are blessed invitations to confide in the One who rules all. Faith is what permits God to console our hearts, calm our fears and preserve our joy in the midst of problems and difficulties that may take months or years to run their course.

Conversation with Christ: Lord, I know belief makes me vulnerable. But I know that I will not know your love if I do not believe that you can make me happier than I can be by myself. If I do not face the enemies of my soul and my mission and abandon myself to your grace, I will not know your victory.

Resolution: Today I will take a problem and, with complete trust and confidence in him, leave it totally in God's hands.