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Commentary on the Gospel: Christ Present in the Church

Gospel for the 12th Sunday in Ordinary Time (Year B), and commentary.

Gospel (*Mk* 4:35-41)

On that day, when evening had come, Jesus said to them, “Let us go across to the other side.”

And leaving the crowd, they took him with them, just as he was, in the boat. And other boats were with him. And a great storm of wind arose, and the

waves beat into the boat, so that the boat was already filling. But he was in the stern, asleep on the cushion; and they woke him and said to him, “Teacher, do you not care if we perish?”

And he awoke and rebuked the wind, and said to the sea, “Peace! Be still!” And the wind ceased, and there was a great calm. He said to them, “Why are you afraid? Have you no faith?”

And they were filled with awe, and said to one another, “Who then is this, that even wind and sea obey him?”

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Commentary

The three synoptic gospels narrate two storms that rose abruptly in the usually calm waters of Lake Gennesaret. The first one is found in

today's gospel. Many authors, especially the Church Fathers, have emphasized its symbolic nature. In this boat tossed about by the waves they have seen Peter's boat, the Holy Church. But they have also seen every Christian, in our effort to be faithful to the truths of our faith.

Given events in recent years, today we can think above all of the Church, our Mother. In this regard, let us recall what Pope Francis said about the Church in a document addressed to young people: "An institution as ancient as the Church can experience renewal and a return to youth at different points in her age-old history. Indeed, at the most tragic moments of her history, she feels called to return with all her heart to her first love" (Apost. Exhort. *Christus vivit*, 25 March 2019, no. 34).

Without a doubt, this invitation fills us with enthusiasm. Therefore each

of us should strive to respond to that call as well as possible – all the more so when some people imagine that God has abandoned us, or that he is unaware of what is happening in the world, in the Church and even in our own life. But whatever our personal impressions, we can be sure that this thought is merely a baseless temptation.

We only need to recall Isaiah's marvelous words, which can always bring us comfort and strength: "But Zion said, 'The Lord has forsaken me; my Lord has forgotten me.' 'Can a woman forget her nursing child, that she should have no compassion on the son of her womb? Even these may forget, yet I will not forget you'" (*Is* 49:14-15). On God's part, this is a true commitment, which our Lord confirmed shortly before ascending to heaven, with a new solemn promise: "And I am with you always, even to the end of the

world” (*Mt 28:20*). Always, even on days we are tempted to call “bad.” Each of us can consider here our personal “storms,” which certainly don’t amount to much but which nevertheless are no less unpleasant for our daily life.

In these storms our Lord tests our faith, and also our constant and trusting prayer to our Lady, Mother of the Church: when everything is going well and, even more so, when we hear some news that worries or saddens us.

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