

Holy Baptism

June 23, 2024

Zoom link:

<https://us02web.zoom.us/j/85887946777?pwd=eig4MEdsMUh6clV6b2dUblFOQ3I2Zz09>

Meeting ID: 858 8794 6777

Passcode: 782611

Proper 7B: The Fifth Sunday after Pentecost

Prelude

All stand as they are able

Opening Hymn

Tune: *Bunessan*

Baptized in water

Unison or harmony

Bap-tized in wa-ter, sealed by the Spi-rit,
Bap-tized in wa-ter, sealed by the Spi-rit,
Bap-tized in wa-ter, sealed by the Spi-rit,

Cleansed by the blood of Christ our King:
Dead in the tomb with Christ our King:
Marked with the sign of Christ our King:

The image shows a musical score for the opening hymn. It consists of two systems of music, each with a treble and bass staff. The first system is labeled 'Unison or harmony' and contains three lines of lyrics: 'Bap-tized in wa-ter, sealed by the Spi-rit,'. The second system contains three lines of lyrics: 'Cleansed by the blood of Christ our King:', 'Dead in the tomb with Christ our King:', and 'Marked with the sign of Christ our King:'. The music is written in a simple, hymn-like style with a key signature of one flat and a common time signature.

Heirs of sal- va- tion, trusting God's pro- mise,
 One with his ri- sing, freed and for- gi- ven,
 Born of one Fa- ther, we are God's chil- dren,

Faith-ful- ly now God's praises we sing.
 Thank-ful- ly now God's praises we sing.
 Joy- ful- ly now God's praises we sing.

Presider Blessed be † God: Father, Son, and Holy Spirit.
People **And blessed be God's kingdom, now and for ever. Amen.**
Presider There is one Body and one Spirit;
People **There is one hope in God's call to us;**
Presider One Lord, one Faith, one Baptism;
People **One God and Father of all.**

|
Collect of the Day

Presider The Lord be with you.
People **And also with you.**
Presider Let us pray.

O Lord, make us have perpetual love and reverence for your holy Name, for you never fail to help and govern those whom you have set upon the sure foundation of your loving-kindness; through Jesus Christ our Lord, who lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit, one God, for ever and ever. **Amen.**

All sit.

First Reading

Job 38:1-11

A Reading from the book of Job.

- ¹The LORD answered Job out of the whirlwind:
²“Who is this that darkens counsel by words without knowledge?
³Gird up your loins like a man,
I will question you, and you shall declare to me:

⁴“Where were you when I laid the foundation of the earth?
Tell me, if you have understanding.
⁵Who determined its measurements—surely you know!
Or who stretched the line upon it?
⁶On what were its bases sunk,
or who laid its cornerstone
⁷when the morning stars sang together
and all the heavenly beings shouted for joy?
⁸“Or who shut in the sea with doors
when it burst out from the womb?—
⁹when I made the clouds its garment,
and thick darkness its swaddling band,
¹⁰and prescribed bounds for it,
and set bars and doors,
¹¹and said, “Thus far shall you come, and no farther,
and here shall your proud waves be stopped?”

Reader The Word of the Lord.

People **Thanks be to God.**

Remain seated

Psalm 107:1-3, 23-32

to be prayed responsively

- ¹Give thanks to the LORD, for the LORD is good, *
God’s mercy endures for ever.
²**Let all those whom the LORD has redeemed proclaim ***
that the Holy One redeemed them from the hand of the foe.
³God gathered them out of the lands; *
from the east and from the west,
from the north and from the south.
²³**Some went down to the sea in ships ***
and plied their trade in deep waters;
²⁴They beheld the works of the LORD *
and God’s wonders in the deep.
²⁵**Then the LORD spoke, and a stormy wind arose, ***
which tossed high the waves of the sea.
²⁶They mounted up to the heavens and fell back to the depths; *
their hearts melted because of their peril.
²⁷**They reeled and staggered like drunkards ***
and were at their wits’ end.

²⁸Then they cried to the LORD in their trouble, *
and they were delivered from their distress.
²⁹**God stilled the storm to a whisper *
and quieted the waves of the sea.**
³⁰Then were they glad because of the calm, *
and the Holy One brought them to the harbor they were bound for.
³¹**Let them give thanks to the LORD for such mercy *
and the wonders God does for his children.**
³²Let them exalt the Holy One in the congregation of the people *
and praise the LORD in the council of the elders.

Second Reading

2 Corinthians 6:1-13

A Reading from Paul's Second letter to the Church in Corinth.

¹As we work together with him, we urge you also not to accept the grace of God in vain. ²For he says,

“At an acceptable time I have listened to you,
and on a day of salvation I have helped you.”

See, now is the acceptable time; see, now is the day of salvation! ³We are putting no obstacle in anyone’s way, so that no fault may be found with our ministry, ⁴but as servants of God we have commended ourselves in every way: through great endurance, in afflictions, hardships, calamities, ⁵beatings, imprisonments, riots, labors, sleepless nights, hunger; ⁶by purity, knowledge, patience, kindness, holiness of spirit, genuine love, ⁷truthful speech, and the power of God; with the weapons of righteousness for the right hand and for the left; ⁸in honor and dishonor, in ill repute and good repute. We are treated as impostors, and yet are true; ⁹as unknown, and yet are well known; as dying, and see—we are alive; as punished, and yet not killed; ¹⁰as sorrowful, yet always rejoicing; as poor, yet making many rich; as having nothing, and yet possessing everything.

¹¹We have spoken frankly to you Corinthians; our heart is wide open to you. ¹²There is no restriction in our affections, but only in yours. ¹³In return—I speak as to children—open wide your hearts also.

Reader The Word of the Lord.

People **Thanks be to God.**

All stand as they are able.

Sequence Hymn

LEVAS 221

This little light of mine

1. This lit - tle light of mine, I'm gon - na let it
2. Ev - 'ry - where I go, I'm gon - na let it
3. Je - sus gave it to me, I'm gon - na let it

1. shine, _____ This lit - tle light of mine,
 2. shine, _____ Ev - 'ry - where I go,
 3. shine, _____ Je - sus gave it to me,

1. I'm gon - na let it shine; _____ This lit - tle light of
 2. I'm gon - na let it shine; _____ Ev - 'ry - where I
 3. I'm gon - na let it shine; _____ Je - sus gave it to

1. mine, _____ I'm gon - na let it shine, _____ Let it
 2. go, _____ I'm gon - na let it shine, _____ Let it
 3. me, _____ I'm gon - na let it shine, _____ Let it

1. shine, let it shine, let it shine. _____
 2. shine, let it shine, let it shine. _____
 3. shine, let it shine, let it shine. _____

Holy Gospel

Mark 4:35-41

Gospeller The Holy Gospel of our Savior Jesus Christ according to Mark.
People **Glory to you, Lord Christ.**

³⁵On that day, when evening had come, [Jesus] said to them, “Let us go across to the other side.” ³⁶And leaving the crowd behind, they took him with them in the boat, just as he was. Other boats were with him. ³⁷A great windstorm arose, and the waves beat into the boat, so that the boat was already being swamped. ³⁸But 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?” ³⁹He woke up and rebuked the wind, and said to the sea, “Peace! Be still!” Then the wind ceased, and there was a dead calm. ⁴⁰He said to them, “Why are you afraid? Have you still no faith?” ⁴¹And they were filled with great awe and said to one another, “Who then is this, that even the wind and the sea obey him?”



Gospeller The Gospel of the Lord.
People **Praise to you, Lord Christ.**

Sermon

Bill Stech

Holy Baptism

Thanksgiving over the Water

The Presider blesses the water of Baptism

Presider The Lord be with you.
People **And also with you.**
Presider Let us give thanks to the Lord our God.
People **It is right to give our thanks and praise.**

Presider We thank you, Almighty God, for the gift of water. Over it the Holy Spirit moved in the beginning of creation. Through it you led the children of Israel out of their bondage in Egypt into the land of promise. In it your Son Jesus received the baptism of John and was anointed by the Holy Spirit as the Messiah, the Christ, to lead us, through his death and resurrection, from the bondage of sin into everlasting life.

We thank you, Father, for the water of Baptism. In it we are buried with Christ in his death. By it we share in his resurrection. Through it we are reborn by the Holy Spirit. Therefore in joyful obedience to your Son, we bring into his fellowship those who come to him in faith, baptizing them in the Name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit.

At the following words, the Presider dips the foot of the Paschal Candle in the water

Now sanctify this water, we pray you, by the power of your Holy Spirit, that those who here are cleansed from sin and born again may continue for ever in the risen life of Jesus

Christ our Savior. To him, to you, and to the Holy Spirit, be all honor and glory, now and for ever. **Amen.**

Presentation and Examination of the Candidate

The candidate, parents and godparents, stand as they are able.

The Presider says

The Candidate for Holy Baptism will now be presented.

The candidates who are not able to answer for themselves are presented individually by their Sponsors.

Sponsors

I present Elijah Bronn Sparrow to receive the Sacrament of Baptism.

The Presider then asks the Parents and Godparents

Will you be responsible for seeing that the child you present is brought up in the Christian faith and life?

Parents and Godparents I will, with God's help.

Then the Presider asks the following questions of the parents and godparents who speak on behalf of the infants and younger children

Question Do you renounce Satan and all the spiritual forces of wickedness that rebel against God?

Answer I renounce them.

Question Do you renounce the evil powers of this world which corrupt and destroy the creatures of God?

Answer I renounce them.

Question Do you renounce all sinful desires that draw you from the love of God?

Answer I renounce them.

Question Do you turn to Jesus Christ and accept him as your Savior?

Answer I do.

Question Do you put your whole trust in his grace and love?

Answer I do.

Question Do you promise to follow and obey him as your Lord?

Answer I do.

The Presider then addresses the congregation, saying

Will you who witness these vows do all in your power to support this person in his life in Christ?

People **We will.**

The Presider then says

Let us join with those who are committing themselves to Christ, and renew our own baptismal covenant.

All stand as they are able

The Baptismal Covenant

Presider Do you believe in God the Father?

People **I believe in God, the Father almighty,
creator of heaven and earth.**

Presider Do you believe in Jesus Christ, the Son of God?

People **I believe in Jesus Christ, his only Son, our Lord,
He was conceived by the power of the Holy Spirit
and born of the Virgin Mary.**

**He suffered under Pontius Pilate,
was crucified, died, and was buried.**

He descended to the dead.

On the third day he rose again.

**He ascended into heaven,
and is seated at the right hand of the Father.**

He will come again to judge the living and the dead.

Presider Do you believe in God the Holy Spirit?

People **I believe in the Holy Spirit,
the holy catholic Church,
the communion of saints,
the forgiveness of sins,
the resurrection of the body,
and the life everlasting.**

Presider Will you continue in the apostles' teaching and fellowship, in the breaking of the bread, and in the prayers?

People **I will, with God's help.**

Presider Will you persevere in resisting evil, and, whenever you fall into sin, repent and return to the Lord?

People **I will, with God's help.**

Presider Will you proclaim by word and example the Good News of God in Christ?

People **I will, with God's help.**



Presider Will you seek and serve Christ in all persons, loving your neighbor as yourself?

People **I will, with God's help.**

Presider Will you strive for justice and peace among all people, and respect the dignity of every human being?

People **I will, with God's help.**

Prayers for the Candidate

Intercessor Deliver him, O Lord, from the way of sin and death.

People **Lord, hear our prayer.**

Intercessor Open his heart to your grace and truth.

People **Lord, hear our prayer.**

Intercessor Fill him with your holy and life-giving Spirit.

People **Lord, hear our prayer.**

Intercessor Keep him in the faith and communion of your holy Church.

People **Lord, hear our prayer.**

Intercessor Teach him to love others in the power of the Spirit.

People **Lord, hear our prayer.**

Intercessor Send him into the world in witness to your love.

People **Lord, hear our prayer.**

Intercessor Bring him to the fullness of your peace and glory.

People **Lord, hear our prayer.**

The Presider then says

Grant, O Lord, that all who are baptized into the death of Jesus Christ your Son may live in the power of his resurrection and look for him to come again in glory; who lives and reigns now and forever. **Amen.**

The Baptism

The candidate is presented by name to the Presider, who then pours water upon the candidate, saying

Elijah Bronn, I baptize you in the Name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit. **Amen.**

Then the Presider places a hand on the person's head, marking on the forehead the sign of the cross [using Chrism if desired] and saying

Elijah, you are sealed by the Holy Spirit in Baptism and marked as Christ's own for ever. **Amen.**

When this action has been completed, a baptismal candle is lit and given to the newly baptized.

The Presider, at a place in full sight of the congregation, then prays over the newly baptized, saying
Let us pray.

Heavenly Father, we thank you that by water and the Holy Spirit you have bestowed upon this your servant the forgiveness of sin, and have raised him to the new life of grace. Sustain him, O Lord, in your Holy Spirit. Give him an inquiring and discerning heart, the courage to will and to persevere, a spirit to know and to love you, and the gift of joy and wonder in all your works. **Amen.**

The Presider then says

Let us welcome the newly baptized:

Presider and People then say

We receive you into the household of God. Confess the faith of Christ crucified, proclaim his resurrection, and share with us in his eternal priesthood.

All remain standing as they are able.

The Prayers of the People

Presider Brothers and sisters, children of God, the Lord shall give us the blessings of strength and peace. Beloved of God, let us pray, “Walk with us through the waters, O God; walk with us through the fire.”

Intercessor Deliver your Church, O God, from fear. Strengthen those you have redeemed by your presence. Give us all the courage to keep our baptismal promises. Walk with us through the waters, O God; **walk with us through the fire.**

Silence is kept.

O God, you have blessed us to be members of your household. Strengthen the unity of the Church—those serving you in the east, west, north, and south. Walk with us through the waters, O God; **walk with us through the fire.**

Silence is kept.

Break down the walls of division in our city and our nation. Bring us together as one human family, formed and made by your great and gentle hands. Walk with us through the waters, O God; **walk with us through the fire.**

Silence is kept.

O God, you are ruler of all things in heaven and earth. Hear our prayers for this parish family. Strengthen the faithful, arouse the careless, and restore the penitent. Grant us all a burning heart for our congregation, and all things necessary for our common life, and the embrace of the ministries with which you have gifted everyone. Bring us all to be of one heart and mind

within your holy Church. Walk with us through the waters, O God; **walk with us through the fire.**

Silence is kept

Holy One, we rely on, and give thanks for, your divine wisdom, knowledge and understanding. We know that, because of your Holy Spirit's guidance, we can make the right decisions in line with your will and purpose for this parish. We ask for the Spirit of discernment, that we each may be enabled to make those decisions that will lead us to the serving of your church in this place. Walk with us through the waters, O God; **walk with us through the fire.**

Silence is kept

Heal and comfort your beloved children, O God. Be with the needy and the sick in their trials [especially _____ and those you may name now]. May they know that they are precious in your sight. Walk with us through the waters, O God; **walk with us through the fire.**

Your power, O God, is evident in the mysteries of our universe. By water and your Holy Spirit you have made us a new people. We give you thanks and praise for all the blessings you give us [especially _____]. Walk with us through the waters, O God; **walk with us through the fire.**

Heavenly Parent, you have accepted us as your children. You have made us heirs with Christ. In your great mercy, receive us, and all who have died, into glory everlasting [remembering especially _____ and those you may name now]. Walk with us through the waters, O God; **walk with us through the fire.**

Silence is kept.

Presider Almighty and transcendent God, your glory fills all creation, and your authority extends beyond time and forever: Let your Spirit open our lives to your grace and truth, that we may always see your Christ at his coming, to whom be glory and dominion forever and ever. **Amen.**

Confession of Sin

The Presider says

Jesus said, "The first commandment is this: Hear, O Israel: The Lord our God is the only Lord. Love the Lord your God with all your heart, with all your soul, with all your mind, and with all your strength. The second is this: Love your neighbor as yourself. There is no other commandment greater than these." *Mark 12:29-31*

A Minister then says

Let us confess our sins to God.

All remain standing, or kneel, as they are able.

Silence is kept.

Minister and People

**Most merciful God,
we confess that we have sinned against you
in thought, word, and deed,
by what we have done,
and by what we have left undone.
We have not loved you with our whole heart;
we have not loved our neighbors as ourselves.
We are truly sorry and we humbly repent.
For the sake of your Son Jesus Christ,
have mercy on us and forgive us;
that we may delight in your will,
and walk in your ways,
to the glory of your Name. Amen.**

A Priest stands and says

Almighty God have mercy on you, + forgive you all your sins through our Lord Jesus Christ, strengthen you in all goodness, and by the power of the Holy Spirit keep you in eternal life. **Amen.**

Peace

All stand as they are able.

Presider The peace of the Lord be always with you.
People **And also with you.**

The Ministers and the People may offer God's peace to one another in the name of the Lord.

The People then are seated.

Announcements

Holy Communion

Communion is not a reward. It is not a privilege for the righteous. It is an invitation to step towards God's table, where everyone has enough, and everyone has a place.

Representatives of the congregation bring the people's offerings of bread and wine, and money or other gifts, to the Presider.

The people stand when the offerings are presented and placed on the Altar

Offertory Hymn

Doxology

**Praise God, from Whom all blessings flow;
Praise God, all creatures here below;
Praise God above, you heavenly host;
Praise Father, Son, and Holy Ghost.**

The people remain standing.

Great Thanksgiving

Presider The Lord be with you.

People **And also with you.**

Presider Lift up your hearts.

People **We lift them to the Lord.**

Presider Let us give thanks to the Lord our God.

People **It is right to give our thanks and praise.**

God of hope, in your Holy Spirit you hovered over the face of the waters in creation, and in your pillar of fire you led your people to liberation across the Red Sea. Through the waters you brought your people into the life and land of promise.

In your Son's baptism at the Jordan, we see your creative and liberating purpose at work amid our human flaws and failures, and we hear anew with hope the promise of your voice.

In our own baptism, you number us among your saints, created and redeemed for your glory. Through baptism you bury us in death with Christ yet raise us to new life with him forever.

And so we gladly thank you, with saints and angels and archangels, and all the company of heaven, raising your unending praise as we say:

**Holy, holy, holy Lord, God of power and might.
Heaven and earth are full of your glory.
Hosanna in the highest.
Blessed is the one who comes in the name of the Lord.
Hosanna in the highest.**

The people continue to stand, or kneel, as they are able.

The Presider continues

Blessing God, who sent down your Holy Spirit like a dove upon your Beloved, send your + Spirit among us now to sanctify us by your grace.

By the power of that same Spirit, + make these gifts of bread and wine be for us the body and blood of your Son Jesus Christ;

who, at supper with his disciples, took bread, gave you thanks, broke the bread, and gave it to them, saying, "Take, eat: This is my Body, which is given for you. Do this for the remembrance of me."

After supper he took the cup. Again he gave you thanks, and gave it to his disciples, saying, "Drink this, all of you: this is my blood of the new covenant, which is shed for you and for many for the forgiveness of sins. Do this, as often as you drink it, in remembrance of me."

Great is the mystery of faith.

Christ has died; Christ is risen; Christ will come again.

Father of glory, you have opened your heaven and come among us.

Be close to those who ache for your liberating power in the midst of travails, and seek your open heaven.

Visit all who need the healing, forgiving, peacemaking, and restoring touch of your Spirit, and look for your kingdom to come.

Bless all who long to be called beloved, by sibling or parent or spouse or friend or child, and any who are searching for the love that only you can bring, until all stand in your presence, and sing your name, and are enfolded in your embrace, Father, Son, and Holy Spirit, ever one God.
AMEN.

The Presider then continues

As our Savior Christ has taught us, we are bold to pray:

**Our Father, who art in heaven,
hallowed be thy Name,
thy kingdom come,
thy will be done, on earth as it is in heaven.
Give us this day our daily bread.
And forgive us our trespasses,
as we forgive those who trespass against us.
And lead us not into temptation,
but deliver us from evil.
For thine is the kingdom,
and the power, and the glory,
forever and ever. Amen.**

Breaking of the Bread

A period of silence is kept.

The Presider says

Alleluia! Christ our Passover is sacrificed for us;
Therefore let us keep the feast. Alleluia!

These are the Gifts of God.
And we are the people of God.

All are welcome to receive Holy Communion.

After all who desire have received, the Presider says

Let us pray.

Presider and People

**Loving God,
we give you thanks
for restoring us in your image
and nourishing us with spiritual food
in the Sacrament of Christ's Body and Blood.
Now send us forth
a people, forgiven, healed, renewed;
that we may proclaim your love to the world
and continue in the risen life of Christ our Savior. Amen.**

Blessing

A priest blesses the people, saying

You are the body of Christ.
May you have the heart of Christ, tender for mercy.
May you have the eyes of Christ to see a world in need.
May you have the feet of Christ to bring good news.

And may the blessing of the Holy One who made you,
+Creator, Redeemer, and Sustainer be with you today and always.
Amen.



Concluding Hymn

Go light your world

LEVAS 68

G $\frac{E_m}{G}$ G⁷ C G

1. There is a can - dle in ev - 'ry soul, Some burn - ing
2. Frus - trat - ed broth - er, see how he's tried to Light his own
3. We are a fam - 'ly whose hearts are blaz - ing. Let's raise our

F² F C/G G C

bright - ly, some dark and cold. There is a Spir - it who brings a
 can - dle some oth - er way. See now your sis - ter, she's been robbed and
 can - dles - light up the sky! Pray to our Fath - er in the name of

G C/E F F/G G Em/G G7 C C/G Em/G Dm/G

fire, Ig - nites a can - dle and makes His home.
 lied to, Still holds a can - dle with - out a flame. Car - ry your
 Je - sus; Make us a bea - con in dark - est times.

C C/E F² F C/G

can - dle, run to the dark - ness, Seek out the hope - less, con - fused and

F²/G G Em/G Dm/G C C/E F² F

torn. Hold out your can - dle for all to see it, Take your

C/G F/G Em⁷/G E⁷/G# Am F C/G Dm⁷/G Em/G G7 C

can - dle, and go light your world. Take your can - dle, and go light your world.

Dismissal

Minister My brothers and my sisters, let us go forth into the world, rejoicing in the power of the Spirit.
People **Thanks be to God.**



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Congratulations to the newly Baptized and his Family!

Elijah Bronn Sparrow, son of Alex Michael Sparrow and Rebecca Jean Morency, brother of Jack Sparrow. Elijah’s godparents are Amanda Joan Presnell and Samantha Rose Sparrow. Grandparents: Cynthia and Martin Chockley, Dan Sparrow, Beth and Don Skidmore.

Thanks to Rebecca Morency and Cynthia Chockley for serving as Readers, and to David VanLoo for his hymn accompaniment!

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This week in prayer

Please remember these persons and congregations in your prayers this week:

Our Bishops Bonnie, Michael, Justin, Moises (TEC); Elizabeth, Donald and Craig (ELCA) **and for** all priests, deacons, Ministry Teams, and those in formation

Anglican Cycle of Prayer:

June 23 The Church of England

Diocese of Michigan Cycle of Prayer:

June 23 Cathedral Church of St Paul, Detroit; St Thomas, Trenton; Good Shepherd, San Pedro, DR

St Barnabas Cycle of Prayer: Nancy, Bill S, Margaret

and our continuing prayers for: Jim M, Mardi, Pat, Robert, Selenah

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Faith in Action provides leadership in collecting donations to support households in need in the Chelsea and Dexter areas. They are in need of our continuing help. You may bring your donations to FIA, or to Nancy who will see that they get there. **If you bring food directly to FIA**, please let Nancy know, so she can continue to keep our records of donation. If you write a check, please make it to *Faith In Action*. The **next Food Drive at the church is Sunday, July 21**. Please contribute as generously as you can.

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Upcoming Commemorations

- June 24 The Nativity of St John the Baptizer
- 25 James Weldon Johnson, Poet, 1938
- 26 Isabel Florence Hapgood, Ecumenist, 1928
- 27 Cornelius Hill, Priest, 1907
- 28 Irenaeus of Lyons, Bishop and Theologian, c.202
- 29 The Apostles St Peter and St Paul

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Proper 7B June 23, 2024

2 Corinthians 6:1-13

Paul highlights powerful truths about faith and the human experience. First, he urges the Corinthians “not to accept the grace of God in vain” (6:1). Paul recognizes that surrendering to God in faith and cooperating with God’s grace are choices that we are invited to make anew every day. We will never arrive at a point where we cruise on autopilot! God grants absolute freedom to say yes or no at any time; there is never compulsion. For Paul, this is the wisdom of God’s love. He recognizes that love is deepest when it is freest, and grace is not something we own, but rather a mystery to which we maintain an attentive openness.

Second, Paul recites an arresting list of hardships he has endured on behalf of God’s work and the people whom he loves. Paul perseveres, despite the unpredictability and vicissitudes of life. Moments of suffering and challenge do not indicate that God is against us. Rather the continued experiences of receiving grace and receiving the gift of faith indicate that God is for us! Authentic hope is anchored in this truth, not in the fickle cycle of bad news/good news of a capricious world.

· What are the challenges and resistances you encounter in saying “yes” to the gifts of faith and grace?

Mark 4:35-41

Let’s begin our reflection where today’s gospel ends – “Who then is this?”

Jesus’ taming of the storm reveals him to be the one who has the power, in the worst and most hopeless of circumstances, to save those who trust and believe in him. Scholars of Mark have suggested that the original audience of this gospel might have been the church at Rome, a community that endured the persecution of Nero. Many Christians turn-coated on their brothers and sisters during this time of trial, and were experiencing a deep sense of shame and regret (this could explain Mark’s many references to the unbelief of the disciples –the audience is invited to see themselves in the story, cf. 4:40).

This was a church reeling, beset by chaos from within and without. Perhaps they were being invited to identify with the disciples in the storm and to recognize the one entity that had the power to deliver them from what appeared to be a hopeless situation. We too will experience moments when we feel we are helpless and desperate, and we might question God’s care for us as well. Mark exhorts us to discover and call upon the one whom the wind and sea obey.

· How do you answer the question, “Who is this then?”

· Where are you feeling beset by “windstorms” and “waves” and how do you experience the invitation to call upon Jesus in these moments?

This Bible study was written by Brian B. Pinter

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Our Mission:

We seek to grow as diverse disciples of Jesus Christ, and to serve Jesus by serving others in the world, guided by the values of Ancient Rites, Open Minds, and Affirming Hearts.



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