

# Father Cantalamessa on Calming the Storm

## Pontifical Household Preacher on This Sunday's Gospel

ROME, JUNE 23, 2006 ([Zenit.org](http://www.zenit.org)).- Here is a translation of a commentary by Capuchin Father Raniero Cantalamessa, preacher to the Pontifical Household, on this Sunday's liturgical readings.

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### A Great Storm Arose

The Gospel of this Sunday is the calming of the storm. In the evening, after a day of intense work, Jesus got into a boat and told the apostles to go the other side. Exhausted, he fell asleep in the stern.

Meanwhile, a great storm arose which threatened to destroy the boat.

Frightened, the apostles woke Jesus, saying to him: "Teacher, do you not care if we perish?" After rising, Jesus ordered the sea to be calm: "Peace! Be still!" The wind ceased and there was a great calm. Then he said to them: "Why are you afraid? Have you no faith?"

We are going to try to understand the message addressed to us today in this page of the Gospel.

The crossing of the Sea of Galilee indicates the voyage of life. The sea is my family, my community, my heart itself. In small seas, as we know, great and unforeseen storms can be unleashed.

Who has not known some of these storms, when all is darkened and the little boat of our life begins to fill with water on all sides, while God seems to be absent or asleep. An alarming diagnosis from the doctor, and all of a sudden we are at the height of the storm.

What to do? What can we hold fast to and on what side must we lower the anchor? Jesus does not give us the magic recipe to escape all storms. He has not promised us that we will avoid all difficulties. He has promised us, however, the strength to surmount them if we ask him for it.

St. Paul tells us about a serious problem he had to face in his life, which he calls "a thorn in my flesh." "Three times" -- that is, countless times -- he says he prayed to the Lord to free him from it, and what did the Lord answer him?

Let us read it together: "My grace is sufficient for you, for my power is made perfect in weakness."

From that day, he tells us, he even began to glory in his weaknesses, persecutions and anxieties, to the point of being able to say: "When I am weak, then I am strong" (2 Corinthians 12:7-10).

Trust in God: This is the message of the Gospel. On that day, what saved the disciples from shipwreck was the

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fact of taking Jesus in the boat, before beginning the crossing.

This is also for us the best guarantee against the storms of life: to take Jesus with us. The means to take Jesus in the boat of one's life and of one's family is faith, prayer and observance of the commandments.

When a storm is unleashed in the sea, at least in the past, seamen used to pour oil on the waves to calm them. On the waves of fear and anxiety we must pour trust in God.

St. Peter exhorted the early Christians to trust in God in persecutions, saying: "Cast all your anxieties on him, for he cares about you" (1 Peter 5:7). The lack of faith of the disciples that Jesus reproached on that occasion was due to the fact that they doubted that he was "concerned" about their lives and safety: "Do you not care if we perish?"

God takes care of us, he is concerned about our lives! A frequently cited anecdote speaks of a man who had a dream. He saw two pairs of footprints that had been imprinted in the desert sand and understood that one pair of footprints was his and the other pair was that of Jesus, who was walking by his side.

At a certain moment, one pair of footprints disappeared, and he understood that this happened exactly at a difficult moment of his life.

Then he complained to Christ, who left him alone in the moment of trial. "But, I was with you!" replied Jesus.

"How is it possible that you were with me, when there was only one pair of footprints in the sand?" the man said.

"They were mine," replied Jesus. "In those moments, I carried you on my shoulders."

Let us remember this when we feel the temptation to complain to the Lord that he leaves us alone.

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