

CARITAS CHRISTI URGET NOS

*A Homily for the Twelfth Sunday of the Year (B)
St Paul's Parish, Gävle, Sweden.*

Texts: Job 38: 1,8-11; Ps. 106; 2 Cor. 5:14-17; Mark 4:35-41

“The Love of Christ overwhelms us” (2 Cor. 5:14). My beloved brothers and sisters in Christ, the readings of today are very instructive on the love of God for us in Christ. The story of the holy man, Job in the Old Testament teaches us in a powerful way that patience in prayer and unwavering faith in God lead us to victory.

In times of trials, when everything seems to have turned against us, in spite of our good deeds and long hours at fervent prayer, we are tempted to question God, we are tempted to ask him, “Are you unaware of all these? Where are you, Lord?” Job asked similar questions and God answered him with questions that in themselves answered all his questions and more.

In the Gospel text of today we see that the disciples found themselves in a situation that one could describe as life threatening. Their fear was confounded because their Master whom they trusted was there but was asleep in the midst of the danger. The danger in which they found themselves was genuine. Their fear was real. And their action, in their own understanding, was justified. The reaction of the Lord was of course, miraculous in itself. To the bewildered disciples, it was most reassuring, most consoling. It was an expression of love and it was overwhelming.

My dear brothers and sisters in Christ, we all are like people sailing in a boat through life's waters. Again and again, we are confronted by the angry waves: we are faced with all manner of trials and temptations. They come in the form of illness, loss of job, matrimonial problems, failure in business, you name them. But the assurance that the Lord gives us today is that he is always with us. We often forget that when He the Son of God was to become a member of our human family, the Prophet Isaiah said his name would be Immanuel: God-with-us. By becoming man, Jesus also became one with every human being. For this reason, he is always with us, in times of joy as well as in times of sorrow, in times of serenity and in times of trial.

He is always with us no matter how rough the tempest may be. And if we trust him, he always rebukes the tempest. He uses the same words: “Quiet now! Be calm!”

We all can learn the seriousness in what I am saying by reflecting on the mystery of his Sacrifice on the Cross of Calvary. That act, which is love that surpasses all understanding, is what we recall whenever we celebrate the Holy Eucharist. So, dearly beloved, I urge you all in the name of the Lord, let us pause and ponder. Is there any problem too great for the Lord?

Is there any difficulty too complex for the One who is the Alpha and Omega? I can testify that there is none. In another place St Paul asks a similar question: *"What can separate us from the love of Christ?" Can hardships or distress, or persecution, or lack of food and clothing, or threats or violence ... No. In all these we are more than conquerors by the power of him who loved us"* (Rom 8: 35- 37). His love for us has no end. It is too great for us to know. It overwhelms us.

So then, brothers and sisters, we should not set our hope on the things of this world, on material things. Those who do so become desperate when the material things fail. Some even take their own lives. Some suffer all kinds of serious – even life threatening illness as a result. But we are Christians and we know that we are pilgrims in this world. Our hope is in God in whom all quests will cease.

Dear Lord Jesus Christ,

Teach us that since you are always with us, there is no problem that confronts us which we cannot overcome if we rely on you, that there is no tempest that blows against our life's boat which you cannot silence. Amen.

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Gävle, Sweden,

21 June 2009.