

A NOTE TO PARENTS

Jesus said to the disciples in the boat, "Why are you afraid? Don't you trust God?"
Mark 4:40

The disciples' fear was of two kinds. One was the natural fear of wind and waves, the fear for the boat, out of control in the tossing water, the fear of lightning, of drowning, of death. The other fear was, quite literally, *holy terror*—the fear that gripped them when they saw what Jesus could do. "*What manner of man is this, that even the wind and the waves obey him?*" It is the same fear that would strike them on the mount of transfiguration ... the fear that had driven Peter to his knees in a boat, crying out, "Depart from me, for I am a sinner!" (Luke 5:8) ... the fear that would send the women running in panic from the empty tomb.

God's absence is terrifying; God's presence can be terrifying too. When God seems far away—when Jesus is asleep (how dare he be asleep!)—we are afraid. We feel small and alone in a big and scary universe that seems totally out of control. But when God is most manifestly near—at those rare moments when the Life of the Holy One tingles through our veins, when a mighty deed is done in our own lives—then we are afraid, too. It is too much for us. We feel we will explode, or evaporate; we want to cry out, or fall on our faces, or run away. "Depart from me, for I am a sinner!"

But Jesus says, "Why are you afraid?" Jesus says that the Holy One is our Father and our Friend. And, in Gethsemane, the Son of God tasted the bitter taste of our fear. For him, too, God seemed far away, even asleep, as the terror closed in on him.

God did not still the storm for Jesus in Gethsemane; nor does he still all the storms in our lives. But when we take Jesus at his word, the unbearable begins to become bearable. The sheer, unknowable holiness of God becomes the loving embrace of One whose name we know, and who loves and accepts us. And in the big, wild, scary world, he is at our side, and he knows how we feel. It is because we have learned to trust Jesus, that we can trust God.

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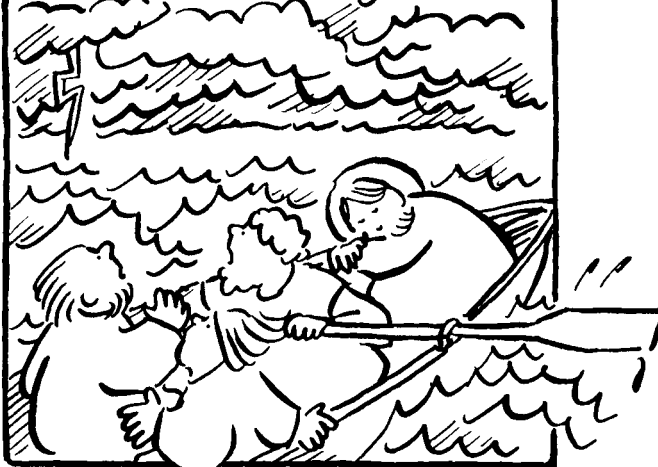
Year B
PROPER 7
TRACKS 1 and 2



It was evening. Jesus and his friends were tired. They got a boat, to row home.



As they rowed, Jesus fell asleep. The wind rose, and a storm began.



Jesus's friends were scared! They woke him up, shouting, "Don't you care if we all drown?"



Jesus told the wind and waves to be still. He said to his friends, "Why didn't you trust God?"



When Jesus stopped the storm, his friends were amazed. They said, "Who is he?! Even the wind and water obey him!" They began to understand that Jesus was more than just a good and special person. He was God.

What manner of man
is this
that even the wind
and the waves
obey him?

MARK 4:41

Decorate this verse with sun, moon, stars, wind, clouds, waves, and a picture of Jesus.