

**19<sup>th</sup> Sun A / 20<sup>th</sup> Sun A**

**Introduction...**

Today I want to tell some stories.  
We all like stories, don't we?  
Especially stories with happy endings...  
Here goes.

In today's Gospel the disciples of Jesus are threatened by disaster...  
If you've ever been in stormy weather on the ocean or a lake,  
with strong winds in your face,  
waves towering over your small boat,  
and water coming into your boat...  
it's a scary situation.  
You suspect you need help... you're afraid you need help... you know you  
need help!  
But where is Jesus when you need him?

Did you ever go through a rough time in your life,  
and ask the same question...  
Jesus, God, where are you?

**Refrain... Have Mercy O Lord, Have Mercy on Us**

**I Me Alone**

At one time or another in our lives we suspect or recognize that we can't do  
life by ourselves.  
We are not strong enough, smart enough, or patient enough to weather all  
the storms in our lives.

Some of those storms are caused by our job,  
some by our friends,  
some by our families,  
some by our enemies,  
and some... by our own weakness, sinfulness, character defects...  
whatever they may be.

Sometimes we cause our own problems.  
At times my own impatience has caused problems,

And at other times my own need to be in control  
and have all the right answers  
have caused others and myself pain.  
Don't we all know deep down that we need help?  
We can't do it alone?

## **Refrain... Have Mercy O Lord, Have Mercy on Us**

### **II God Knows**

God knows we can't do it alone...  
God made us, knows us intimately and cherishes us.  
God knows we can't do it alone.

Our world can't go it alone...  
it's too messy, too many conflicts, too much evil and suffering.  
Just read the newspapers, or listen to the news... too much of it is Bad News.  
Or look at the problems your family has had to face...

I believe that when all is said and done, only God can make this mess right...  
and will... when God brings about a new heaven and a new earth...  
Read Rev 22.

Jesus has begun that New Creation...  
His Cross and Resurrection have begun the victory over the powers of Evil  
and Darkness and Sin.  
But the final victory is in the future.

What about now?  
Jesus announces the beginning of God's Kingdom, God's Reign.  
Jesus wants us to know that God loves us, even in the messiness of our life  
and in the messiness of our world.  
God does not abandon us.

However, we forget this...  
and cry out in the words of the Gospel...  
*Lord, save me.*

Why do we so easily forget God's love and care for us when times are going  
well?

Why do we so easily forget to thank God for our blessings?  
Why do we seem to turn to God only when times get rough?

We suffer amnesia.

### **Amnesia**

In our self sufficiency  
Our productivity  
Our numbness  
Our dumbness  
We suffer amnesia

In our wants and desires  
We are uninhibited buyers  
And tryers  
Of everything new...  
And we suffer amnesia

We stroll our malls  
Its sacred halls  
Its overflowing stalls  
We're not appalled...  
We suffer amnesia

So many uncaring  
Unnoticing  
Uninterested  
Ungrateful...  
We suffer amnesia

A profound, prolonged  
Fearless forgetting  
A heartless, headless  
Thankless and thoughtless  
Amnesia

Who is our God?  
Where is our God?  
Do we ever hear God?  
Fear God?  
Feel God?  
Know God?

Love God?

Or are we amnesiacs,  
Forever forgetting.

### **Refrain... Have Mercy O Lord, Have Mercy on Us**

### **III Our Hero, Jesus**

Remember our Christian story...  
Our Christian story is about the struggle of good against evil,  
light against darkness,  
sin vs redemption.  
We have our hero... Jesus,  
who really lived among us like us in all things but sin.

God sent his Son, Jesus, into our world.  
Jesus came to reveal God's purposes, God's way, to us.  
Jesus brought healing, compassion, forgiveness into this messy, sinful world.  
Jesus' mission is described by the Aramaic words *tekkun olam* –  
to heal the world.

What happened to Jesus?  
The powers of darkness plotted against him.  
The evil Satan tempted Jesus in the desert,  
*but Jesus would not follow in the footsteps of Adam and Eve...*  
*Jesus withstood the temptations.*

Satan bided his time and plotted against Jesus.  
He gathered foot soldiers around him,  
and when the time was ripe he sprang his trap.

Jesus was arrested, beaten, tried and condemned.  
The very jaws of death shredded Jesus on the Cross.  
How gleeful was Satan when he heard those words of Jesus from the Cross,  
"My God, my God, why have you forsaken me."

Jesus himself seems overwhelmed by this messy, stormy world, and the evil that is in it.

Jesus takes our mess into his own heart, the heart of God.

Jesus becomes the tears of God.

Death conquers Jesus.

Satan's goal is achieved.

Darkness has triumphed over light, violence has trumped peace, hatred has overwhelmed forgiveness... sinfulness has had its way.

*Tekkun olam?* The world is not healed.

*The boat sank in the storm.*

But wait... evil's victory is short lived.

Only three days of celebration and jubilation for the Powers of Evil and Darkness.

God turned the tables on Satan.

Satan's goal, Jesus' ugly death, becomes the means of God's victory over evil and sin.

The tragedy of Golgotha becomes *Good Friday*.

The Lamb defeats the Beast by shedding his own blood.

We believe that God raises Jesus from the dead.

*The boat didn't sink... it was merely submerged for awhile.*

## **Refrain... Have Mercy O Lord, Have Mercy on Us**

### **IV No Longer Victims**

Jesus' story does not end there. Now it's our turn.

*We are not victims.*

Jesus challenges us to follow in his footsteps...

to be people of compassion and forgiveness,

people of peacefulness and healing...

forgoing violence and revenge, jealousy and arrogance.

*We are not victims.*

Jesus promised to help us,

to send us his very own Spirit,

to face the evil of our own times...

the evil and sin around us,

and the evil and sin within each of us.

God's victory over evil and darkness and sin is still working it's way to completion,

and we are invited and challenged to be part of that victory.

*We are not victims.*

We can choose to struggle against the evil and sinfulness of our day, with the help of Jesus.

We can continue to be a part of his mission of *tekkun olam* – healing our world.

### **Refrain... Have Mercy O Lord, Have Mercy on Us**

#### **Conclusion...**

As we continue with this Mass let's ask Jesus to help us...

for at times our boat seems to be overwhelmed by the stormy seas around us.

Listen to Jesus' words in today's Gospel,

*Take courage, it is I, do not be afraid.*

*Woman, great is your faith.*

*Let it be done for you as you wish.*

In this very Eucharist we remember Jesus' victory over evil.

In this very Eucharist Jesus offers us his own Body and Blood to nourish us and give us strength as we follow in his footsteps.

In this very Eucharist Jesus gives us his own Spirit to increase our faith and protect us from the darkness in our world.

At the conclusion of this Mass we are challenged to now join the Mission of Jesus in bringing healing to darkness and evil in our world.

And with Peter in today's Gospel, let's exclaim,

*Truly, you are the Son of God.*

### **Refrain... Have Mercy O Lord, Have Mercy on Us**