

12 B

It is a beautiful day in the Park, and a young father is pushing his screaming child in his pram. As the father wheels his infant son along the path, he keeps murmuring, "easy now, Donald. just keep calm, Donald". It's all right Donald. Just relax - it's going to be all right Donald'. A woman passes by and says to the young father, 'you certainly know how to talk to an upset child – quietly and gently'. The woman then leans over the pram and says: 'what seems to be the trouble, Donald' and the father says, 'Oh no, he's Henry. I'm Donald.

People of faith don't tend to lose their cool too easily. Even in the midst of pressure they're not so easily phased. Those with a gloomier outlook seem to come under the curse of Murphy's Law: '*whatever can go wrong will go wrong*'. Our happiness or unhappiness in life will often depend on how we perceive reality whether we see it as benign or hostile.

The apostles in today's Gospel seem very frightened even though Jesus was with them in the boat, albeit asleep. In a state of alarm and fright they have a go at him - 'do you not care, we are going down' Sometimes we lash out at people when fear and insecurities take over. However our friends often rightly remind us that 'things are not quite as black as we are making them out to be'.

When a person's faith in God is on the wane, a void is often created, providing ideal conditions for insecurities, whether real or imaginary, to rush in and fill the emptiness. Fear, of course is the opposite of faith. Last weekend we were encouraged to be prayed over for freedom from fear in all its forms. Jesus said to the apostles; 'how is it that you are so frightened, where is your faith'? But it's not just apprehension in the face of immediate physical dangers which should be our only concern. Some fears originate from a harmful experience people may have had in childhood and will re-emerge to torment them later

on in their lives. Last weekend many people were counselled and prayed over for the healing of their memories. These things can cast a long shadow over our day to day lives and keep us from living life to the full and being happy.

As the Lord rebuked the wind and the sea in today's gospel, why don't we ask him in today's Mass to rebuke whatever anxieties threaten us and send these demons on their way? It's not the will of God that our inner freedom be restricted in any way. **He** wants to be 'our bridge over troubled waters' or, as it says in the psalm, 'to lead us to restful waters where we find peace.'

The invitation of Jesus in today's gospel is clear: 'have faith in me and do not let your hearts be troubled or afraid' or as the hymn goes: 'Put your hand in the hand of the man who stills the waters, put your hand in the hand of the man who calms the sea'.