

Lectionary readings: Job 38: 1-11; Psalm 107: 1-3, 23-32; 2 Corinthians 6: 1-13; Mark 4: 35-41

For reflection and prayer

- **Job 38:** This passage brings out how ignorant Job is - and we too - of the ways of God. We don't begin to understand Him - how could we? And yet, like Job and his friends, we think we do. And when God doesn't act in the way we think He should, we get angry or even turn away from God altogether. God doesn't give Job and his friends - and us - answers. He reminds us of His amazing power. We are invited to trust Him. The truth is that in the course of our daily lives we largely ignore God and only turn to Him when we are in dire straits - and then only as a last resort. Much to reflect on here.
- **Psalm 107:** v28-30: *'Lord, help!' they cried in their trouble, and he saved them from their distress. He calmed the storm to a whisper and stilled the waves. What a blessing was that stillness.'* (NLT) Have we known that stillness that the Lord gives us as we bring Him into our chaos, distress, trouble, pain, suffering? Have we learned how to still the inner turmoil as we seek the Lord within and find Him present with us in the storms of life?
- **2 Corinthians 6:** v1: *'...please don't squander one bit of this marvellous life God has given us.'* v11: *'I can't tell you how much I long for you to enter this wide-open, spacious life.'* v12: *'...you're living your lives in a small way.'* v13: *'Open up your lives. Live openly and expansively.'* (The Message) What a challenge this is. Not only is our god too small, but our lives too because

we won't allow God to be to us all He wants to be to us - now, this moment, whatever we are going through. What do you think it means to live your life *'openly and expansively'*? People are watching to see how we respond to different situations - when we're criticised, ignored, rejected, overlooked, up against it. Do we respond as Jesus did?

- **Mark 4:** How do we respond when we encounter the storms of life? Fear is a perfectly normal human response. But what do we do with our fear? Do we cry out to God who is within us and let the awareness of His presence turn our fear to faith as we remember His power? Let's remember God's constant presence with us this week and let the awareness of His presence help us to respond with trust, causing the inner turmoil to cease and give way to calm.

A prayer

'It matters not how distant, far away, I seem to you; how hidden, inaccessible, behind the turbulence of your thoughts, how much you doubt and question whether I am here.

I hold you still, my child. I hold you always in my hand.

So trust in the darkness; trust in the loneliness; trust in the fear; let go of your innate desire to fight each desperate battle on your own.

Let go into me; relax and let me help.'

(Pat Marsh)