

NOVEMBER 06, 2022, SUNDAY DEVOTIONAL

SCRIPTURE FOCUS: MARK 4

35 That day when evening came, he said to his disciples, "Let us go over to the other side." 36 Leaving the crowd behind, they took him along, just as he was, in the boat. There were also other boats with him. 37 A furious squall came up, and the waves broke over the boat, so that it was nearly swamped. 38 Jesus was in the stern, sleeping on a cushion. The disciples woke him and said to him, "Teacher, don't you care if we drown?"

39 He got up, rebuked the wind and said to the waves, "Quiet! Be still!" Then the wind died down and it was completely calm.

40 He said to his disciples, "Why are you so afraid? Do you still have no faith?"

41 They were terrified and asked each other, "Who is this? Even the wind and the waves obey him!"

BLESSED THOUGHTS: "GOD'S SCHOOL BUS"

Everyone my age or younger who grew up in a small town or country school district, as well as any city kid who ever went on a school field trip or played inter-school sports, knows what it's like to ride on a black and yellow school bus. Maybe you even have heard of the School bus Driver's Prayer? "I asked you, Lord, for patience, and you made me a school bus driver."

I rode a school bus every school day while I was in High School (no one even thought about buying me a car for that trip!) In addition to happy memories of favorite teachers and coaches, a lot of kids have great memories of their bus driver, including my old buddy, Will DeWildt, who always pulled his Agassiz Division bus into the local Dairy Bar to buy his kids ice cream cones on the last day of school. My school friends who grew up on farms always sat with their friends, to and from school, while their younger brothers and sisters sat with their friends. What a great way to start the school day!

Now, obviously, in Jesus' day, there were no school buses: students and teachers either walked from place to place or took small boats to visit around the Lake. It was on one of those trips that the big storm blew up. Like the whacko couple in Florida who thought they could "ride out" Hurricane Ian on their yacht, reality set in quite quickly when it looked like the boat would go down with all hands! The Gospel story shows us three things: (1) We all need to learn how to face our fears. (2) Good teachers are still all about getting their kids where they need to get, despite the teenage storms that can overwhelm almost any young person. And (3) we all need to figure out what kind of Person Jesus really is—for us! Personally, I am still working on all three of those homework assignments!

I know there are so many images in the New Testament for what the Church is supposed to be. In 1976 Cardinal Avery Dulles wrote a book called "Models of the Church" which sums up his learned scholarship on that question. I could never hope to compete with his writing, but let me add another Model of my own, "The Church as School Bus."

Our churches and ministries do gather up all sorts of people, and we deliver them to the Great Teacher, Jesus Christ, who shows us how to live the life God has given us. Just as important, we, his church, then take people back to their homes and daily life so they can do just that, live in such a way that helps God win back his lost and suffering world. I like to think of

myself as a sort of School Bus Driver, whose life work for over fifty years, was to bring folks to Christ and then help them return to their homes and workplaces and recreational activities where “their service” to their God really would make so much difference in people’s lives. Even today, both my wife and I drive our grandchildren to and from their schools, every school day, not in a big boxy school bus, but in our Rav 4s. Nana and Grandpa are their “School Bus Drivers,” and it’s a sacred assignment.

So, maybe say a prayer that God will keep safe all our School Bus Drivers as they carry that most precious cargo, our youngsters, and say another prayer of gratitude for the pastors and chaplains who perform a similar role in the Church of Jesus Christ, for there, too, is precious cargo, the souls for whom Christ died!

And, no, I am not so old that I rode to school on a black and yellow dinosaur!

–written on the last School day before the Thanksgiving break