

Homily based on the readings from June 30, 2026 (Amos 3.1-8, 4.11-12; Matthew 8.23-27)

*What sort of man is this, whom even the winds and the sea obey?* For Jesus' disciples – being battered by the storm and the waves – this was hardly a rhetorical question. They wanted to know – they *needed* to know – the identity of this remarkable man, who wielded *unfathomable* power over the forces of nature. For the sake of context, at this point in Matthew's Gospel, most of Christ's followers would only have witnessed his Sermon on the Mount – and perhaps a handful of subsequent healings. He had not yet commissioned his twelve Apostles, or spoken publicly about his upcoming Crucifixion, or performed *any* of his most amazing miracles. From their perspective, Jesus could *just* have been a truly extraordinary human being.

With the benefit of 2000 years of hindsight – and the infallible teachings of the Church – we have a much clearer view of the situation. Jesus was, of course, a truly extraordinary human being – but besides being

completely and totally *human*, he is also completely and totally *divine*. He is, in fact, the “Only Begotten Son of God, born of the Father before all ages ... begotten, not made, consubstantial with the Father – through *him* all things were made.” Not only does he possess the ability to control the wind and the sea, but he participated in their *creation* at the dawn of the world. In other words, Christ’s dominion over nature is not the result of forcible *conquest* – but of grateful *dependence*, as a child obeying a loving parent.

Although it was not unreasonable for the disciples to react with wonder, the appropriate response was actually *imitation* – emulating the example of the weather itself. The point of this episode is not really Christ’s inconceivable *power*, but our fundamental duty of *obedience*. As Jesus himself explained somewhat later, at the Last Supper:

- *If you love me, you will keep my commandments. And I will ask the Father, and he will give you another Advocate to be with you always.*

- *Whoever loves me will keep my word, and my Father will love him, and we will come to him and make our dwelling with him.*
- *If you keep my commandments, you will remain in my love, just as I have kept my Father's commandments and remain in his love.*

All of these statements begin with a requirement of total *obedience*, and conclude with the promise of eternal *reward*. Just as “all creation is groaning in labor pains,” humanity itself is *desperately* waiting to be fashioned anew – to be *washed* through and through from our wickedness, to be *cleansed* by the blood of the Lamb. The *first* step in this process is our joyful and willing submission – to the *commandments* of Holy Scripture, to the *authority* of the Holy Catholic Church, and to the *person* of Jesus Christ, our Risen Lord and Savior.