

Trinity 9. Do not be afraid . St .Matthew Ch14 v27 .

The churchyard of Chivelstone church is the final resting place for many a seafarer whose ship has been lost near Prawle Point. Sailors and fishermen, both past and present, can identify with the words of the Psalmist who wrote, "The waves of the sea are mighty and rage horribly." However, he continues, "Yet the Lord who dwelleth on high is mightier. "

People can be caught out by a sudden change in the sea state. So it was for the disciples. The calm of the lake was changing rapidly. One of the freak storms occasioned by the geographical position of the lake, began to break over them. Their fear was compounded when they saw Jesus, thinking that they had seen a ghost. However, our Lord Jesus Christ said; "Take heart. It is I; Do not be afraid."

Those words could be addressed to each one of us, as we face the storms of life. We all know fear at some time, eg., fear of the future in a fast changing world; but to live life at all we have to face the storms of life, as well as its beauty and its joys. Sometimes the storms will be stilled for us, but not always. We have to go through them, committing ourselves into Gods Hands, being upheld by His presence and grace. I can recall Marie, who was in her 80s. Marie had mobility issues, but remained an active member of our church pastoral team, and was diligent in her visiting in the parish.

Whatever " storms " we face, we are not alone. The main part of the church is called the "Nave "from the Latin for a "ship" . So our parish church is like a ship, which gathers us in and carries us through the storms and events of life. Our Lord is in our boat, whatever storms seem to point to the contrary. Our Lord never said that we would be immune from the storms of life. His words to the disciples, "Take heart. It is I. Do be afraid," He addresses to us also; ie, "I will be with you to uphold you and to guide you, for I am with you even to the close of the age."

Storms will come as they do at sea; but then comes the calm. Likewise, whatever we face we know " the Lord is my light and my salvation; whom then shall I fear? The Lord is the strength of my life; of whom then shall I be afraid?" (Psalm 27 v1)