

It's a gift, being a good sleeper. I'm the best sleeper I know. I can sleep almost anywhere, and very quickly. My parents loved to tell is how when I was 10 my friend Ricky Blake and I camped out in the back yard. A freak electric storm swept through the county about 2 AM. It scared everybody to death, and Ricky's mom came running to take us inside. But she couldn't wake me. She tried ... that's what she said. The next morning I woke up, the tent collapsed around me, all by myself.

Jesus was a great sleeper. Part was exhaustion. He must have put himself into ministry the way a 10 year old puts himself into playing with his best friend. But it was something else too. As a person he was serene and confident. He knew storms are vastly over-rated.

Wherever there are people there are storms. Personal storms --- jealousy, fear, panic, anger, ambivalence, guilt. Financial storms. I don't need to be telling you about those. Storms in a marriage, in a family. We could get some great stories up here if I asked 5 or 6 of you to share the biggest life storm you've been through.

Some people say they wish there were never storms. I don't know if I believe them. Maybe I do, but don't we know people who go around creating storms for the excitement. I wonder if most of us wouldn't be numbed and bored by the ordinariness of life, if there weren't a good storm or two. Storms focus us, mobilize. The first reading said the Lord addressed Job out of the storm.

It's probably a huge mistake to deny storms. You older folks can do kids a great favor by telling them some of the storms you've been through and survived. The kids will be more seasons.

On the other hand, if it's a mistake to deny storms, make too little of them ... it has to be a mistake to exaggerate how catastrophic they are. They're only storms, for heaven's sake. They pass. The worst they can do is kill you, which is far from the worst thing that can happen. You, I, the Church were made by God to survive everything, even death.

Here's something I hope no one here gives in too. Quote: "Look objectively at the Catholic Church. Twenty centuries have elapsed since Christ sent his apostles to preach the gospel to the whole world. Not only is the world not yet evangelized, but entire blocks of Christianity have crumbled. Countries in which for a long time churches flourished have become deserts. The prior sowing has failed. What chance is there for success!"

"Jesus, it was easy for you to nap. You knew how things would turn out. You could find your peace or make your peace with the storms, even the storm of the cross."

And He replies, "I knew things would turn out, because I knew God. The details I didn't always know, but I didn't need to. But you know God too. You know how things will turn out, are bound to turn out, just as well as I. So relax. For old things to pass away and new things to come there have to be storms. Trust. Don't panic. And for goodness sake ... nap when you need to!