

I know a woman who quit her job because she couldn't stand it any longer. It was fairly ordinary work; she was a clerk in a department store. But the store had a policy she couldn't live with: If goods were damaged, even minimally, the store threw them out; she couldn't bear to see the waste. In addition, the employees were selfish. They took advantage of her, and if she was to progress with the company, she had to take advantage of them. So she quit; she couldn't reconcile this work with her Christian ideals. Finally she could hold her head up again until days went by, weeks went by, months went by, and she could not find another job. Every night now she knelt at her bed and prayed a demanding prayer. "Lord, doesn't it matter to you? Doesn't it matter that because I followed your will, now I must suffer for it?"

This is the situation of the disciples caught in a storm with Jesus in the boat. It wasn't their idea to cross to the other shore. They went at the request of Jesus. Now, not only has a storm arisen, but Jesus is asleep on a pillow. They address Jesus with the same prayer: "Doesn't it matter that because of your bright idea we're going to lose our lives?" It's like Oliver Hardy's persistent complaint to Stan Laurel, "Well, this is another fine mess you've gotten us into."

Living as Christians will very likely steer us into one fine mess after another. We generously give to a cause, and then find out we've been taken. We correct one another, and then people alienate us. We let our faith influence the way we vote, and people ridicule us for joining Church and State. The decision to follow Christ should bring peace of mind, but it can bring a dispute between us and Christ. "Lord, doesn't it matter?"

Christian living is a fine mess because like the apostles we are usually more caught up in the problem than we are with the solution. They noticed the storm and forgot that Christ was asleep in the boat. They recognized that Jesus was asleep, but not that it was **Jesus** the all-powerful one who was asleep. They woke him more to complain about the problem than to find a solution. They were surprised when he actually calmed the storm.

This is exactly the predicament when Jesus dies on the cross. Only on Calvary it's not sleep, it's death. And many doubted, many thought it was over. Many wondered, "Lord we gave up everything to follow you and is this where it ends? Why did you lead us here? Doesn't it matter that we followed you?" They focused on the storm, not on the sleep of Jesus.

My brothers and sisters, when we come on board the bark of Peter, the ship which is the Church, we steer our Christian life on stormy waters. We go into that boat because our heart says we must follow Christ, but when we hit the storm we will doubt. We'll doubt if our morals are right. We'll wonder if we're fools. We'll wonder did Christ bait us? Does it matter to him that he got us into this fine mess? It does matter. It matters so much that Jesus rides the waves with us. He trusts us so much that he sleeps in our boat. We have no fear of storms, for Jesus is asleep in our boat.