

In the late summer of 1999, while on deployment in Southeast Asia, at an early morning pre-flight brief; we were informed of the presence of a large tropical storm that was pretty much right where we needed to fly our mission.

Naval reconnaissance missions are tricky business - in essence you need to stay over the ocean ... and you need to stay out of a country's territorial waters.

In a particularly narrow part of the ocean, right where we needed to fly ... sat this enormous tropical storm.

After some heated debate over whether we should fly or cancel the mission - it was decided to go ahead. The thought being that the storm would either move, dissipate, or worst-case scenario - stay right where it was. The argument was that we had a two out of three chance of being able to dodge the storm and complete the mission.

So we headed out to the flight line, and began pre-flight. Soon enough we were in the air. As we got closer to the storm, things got a bit bouncy ... well, bouncy sounds almost fun. Let's say things got rocky ... very rocky.

After a while, things got extremely rocky ... and when we asked what was going on on the flight deck, we were told that the storm had stayed put - but that the mission commander had decided we would fly over the storm.

The plane was already being tossed around like a toy, so I opted to strap in. Much to the amusement of my colleagues - who laughed at me. What? Was I afraid of a little weather?

Several minutes later, there was a loud noise; and the sound of something hitting the outside of the plane. We would later find out that was pieces of one of the engines.

Immediately we lost about a quarter mile of altitude. We were ordered to strap in and secure our gear. And in a few minutes, power was cut to the second of four engines.

We dropped another quarter mile of altitude.

Then something strange happened. Everything got very quiet. We were a lot closer to the ocean than I'd ever been in a plane before; but the tossing and rocking and bouncing stopped.

We were in the eye of the storm. And everything was perfectly calm, quiet, and seemingly - safe.

Needless to say, we ended up turning around, and limping our way back with half of our engines destroyed ... bouncing and rocking back through the storm and eventually landing where we started.

Ten years later, at a rather stormy part of my seminary training, my spiritual director was helping me get a grip on things ... when he offered as a visual that no matter how stormy things seemed - that Jesus was always there with me in the middle of things - in the eye of the hurricane.

And I HAD A VERY GRAPHIC VISUAL OF WHAT HE WAS TALKING ABOUT.

In today's Gospel, Jesus tells us "not [to] worry about [our lives.]" He tells us that God knows what we need.

And he goes on in great detail to explain that God takes care of EVERYTHING - plants and animals - tending and feeding them - and they don't worry. They don't store up food or buy clothes or plan meals.

In the First Reading, we hear the accusation against God that He has forsaken the people of Zion. To which God replies:

*Can a mother forget her infant,
be without tenderness for the child of her womb?
Even should she forget,
I will never forget you.*

And in the Psalm we hear: *Rest in God alone, my soul.*

Yet we struggle to take charge of things and remain in control. And sometimes we do well, and other times we fail at it.

Where is our FAITH? Jesus challenges us to REALLY put our FAITH in God's providence; The prophet Isaiah assures us that God will NEVER forget us; and the Psalmist tells us to rest in God - to hang onto Him - to hope - to trust - to not be disturbed.

We are children of God our loving FATHER. But often we act like orphans on the street. We seem to forget ... BUT God will never forget us.

Jesus' final admonition is that we should FIRST be seeking the Kingdom of God - and THEN that "*all ... things ... ALL THINGS ... will be given [us] besides*" ...

Today as we approach this altar to receive the Sacred Body and Blood, Soul and Divinity of Jesus Christ - let us recognize that JESUS is at the eye of the storms we experience in our life. We need to remember that ... We need to realize that in a very tangible way.

Let us pray for an increase of FAITH ... so that we may let God be God ... so that we might LET GO, AND LET GOD ... and allow our Heavenly FATHER to provide for us anywhere we might be lacking ... wherever we have a need.

And let us pray for the grace to put God's Kingdom FIRST ... and our own kingdom ... or any other kingdom after His.

Let us REST IN GOD ... let us stay with Jesus Christ ... let us cling to Him ... in the eye of the storm ... let us experience His PEACE ... let us experience His JOY ... let us experience His LOVE ... Let us TRUST IN JESUS, EVEN MORE ...

*"Do not worry about tomorrow; tomorrow will take care of itself.
Sufficient for a day is its own evil."*