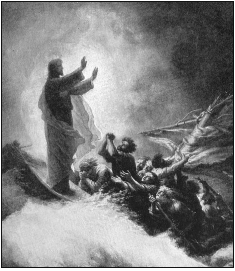


EPIPHANY 4

THE COLLECT



O GOD, who knowest us to be set in the midst of so many and great dangers, that by reason of the frailty of our nature we cannot always stand upright; Grant to us such strength and protection, as may support us in all dangers, and carry us through all temptations; through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.

1. Why are we not always able to stand upright in the midst of so many and great dangers?
 - a. By reason of the _____ of our nature (Galatians 5:17)
2. What do we pray God to grant unto us?
 - a. His _____ and _____ (Ephesians 6:10)
3. What will his protection support us in?
 - a. All d _____ (2 Timothy 4:17-18)
4. What will it carry us through?
 - a. All t _____ (2 Peter 2:9)

INTRODUCTION. Read: St. Mark 4:35-5:20, and St. Luke 8:22-40

In our passages today there are two miracles in which our Lord delivered people from danger. Who were they? The disciples and the demoniacs. He did what the Collect prays— supported them in danger and carried them through the trials. He gave them strength and protection.

I. DIFFERENCES.

1. **What the disciples said in the storm.** The three Evangelists give us three different sayings. Which is right? Why all of course. How many men were there? Twelve. Do you think they all cried the same words in their danger? No. One disciple said one thing, and another said something else, and each Evangelist tells us what one said. People don't all utter the same cry in a shipwreck.
2. **St Matthew says there were two demoniacs and St. Mark and St. Luke only tell us of one.** But, as the old writer says, "If there were two there was one." St. Mark and St. Luke tell us, perhaps, of the one best known or most afflicted.

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II. THE DISCIPLES.

1. **Their Danger.**— From the storm. Christ was in the ship with the disciples, but asleep and seeming to take no notice. So there is danger, illness, and trouble in life, and sometimes it seems as if Jesus takes no notice and forgets; but it is not so.
2. **Their Defense.** a. By Christ's presence. He was in the ship, no harm could happen to it. He is still in His Church and with it (St. Matt.28:19-20) so it cannot be destroyed, and He is also with each one of His people in every danger. (Acts 18:9-10, 2 Tim 4:17)
b. By Christ's power. He attended to His disciples' cry. The rushing wind and rolling waves did not wake Him, but His disciples' prayer did. And then He put forth His power, for He Who made the winds and waves could control them.

III. THE DEMONIACS

1. **Their Danger.**— From Satan. When the disciples got to shore they found another danger—two madmen, made so by Satan, hurting all who came near. Jesus was with them, so they were safe. These poor men lived in the caves by the sea shore, where sometimes people had buried their dead. It shows what a dreadful thing it is to be in Satan's power. How cruel he is! And when we give way to sin we give him power over us. There are people whose souls are in bondage to Satan. They do harm to others who come near them. We are all in danger from the temptations of Satan. He tries to hurt our souls, and make us hurt the souls of others. How shall we be saved?
2. **Their Useless Defense:** Their friends tried force. They bound them with fetters and chains. But this was no use. The force of any material thing such as chains or even pledges made in our own minds of flesh, will not keep us from sin.
3. **True Defense:** Christ came to the demoniacs. *He first* made them see that He cared for them by getting them to tell Him of their condition. *He then* put forth His power and drove out the evil spirits. *Then* He let the men see, as the devils entered into the swine, how great their deliverance was, and that they really were free. *And then* He sent the men to bear witness for Him and to tell the great things Jesus had done for them. *Now this is how He defends us still.* He makes us see that He cares for us. He wants us to tell Him about the things that harm us, our besetting sins such as temper, greediness, or deceit. He will subdue the evils and cast them out. We sometimes don't see how bad things are in ourselves, but when we see them in others we see how bad they are and we are thankful to God for delivering us. We shall only be really safe from sin when we are with Christ.



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