

...the boat was being tossed about by the waves...Gospel

This could well describe our current world situation.

In 1957 I was portaging with classmates through the Lake of the Woods in Canada. In many ways it was a Rite of Passage a year before ordination.

In the middle of a storm and the middle of a large lake, we sheared a pin on our canoe. The other canoe had to go to shore and unload before it came back to rescue us. So in the midst of lightning strikes, and overlapping waves, we bailed water frantically.

As we look at our world news, it seems all we can do is bail water and hope and pray for better days.

Among all the suffering people around the world, special prayers and concern should be had for the besieged Chaldean Catholics of Iraq.

They have kept the faith going all the way back almost to biblical times and now they face martyrdom

at the hands of ISIS fanatics.

Today in the Gospel, Jesus says to the storm tossed and terrified apostles:

"Take courage. It is I. Do not be afraid!"

May the Chaldeans hear these words.

May we heed them as well.

The terrorists' goal is to inject fear. When they do, they succeed. They do not care who they kill, so long as they inject terror, they succeed. So we all need to be delivered from fear to energized hope in the midst of waves of terror. The terrorists must not win.

However ISIS are more than terrorists; they plan to create a fundamentalist Islamic State on top of the ruins of a broken Syria, and on top of the mess our tax dollars and spilled blood has created in what was once Iraq.

Under Hussein, the Chaldean Catholics and other minorities were protected by the secular state!

The majority of Americans, Democrats and Republicans alike approved of our original attack to dislodge Hussein in Iraq. Now innocent people like the Chaldeans are reaping the whirlwind of our folly.

Not only should we be doing penance for our foolhardiness, we should be helping the Chaldean Catholics to survive, and the latest news seems to indicate we will.

This ought to be a time of sober reflection, and intense prayer. Our ultimate consolation is that today's Gospel reminds us that Jesus is with us in our boat, no matter how dark the night, nor how violent the storm.

Let us pray:

"As Americans, O Lord deliver us from the arrogance of "exceptionalism."

We unite our hearts and prayers with the suffering people of our world.

Today, we kithe our fervent prayers towards our sisters and brothers in the faith:

especially the Chaldeans of Iraq.

Jesus, be with them in their fragile boat.

Give them a path to shelter and to safety.

Come Holy Spirit!

Let it be. Let it be.

Amen"