

Calming the Storm *by Fr. Randy*

*He said to them, "Why are you fearful? Do you still have no faith?"* Mark 4:40

A leader *must* be calm in the storm.

Turbulent times are sure to come, and when they do, it is imperative for a leader to be a calming, steadying influence. Many appear impressive when everyone is cheering, but a storm is always the true test of leadership mettle. The many times unstated truth of life is...*be ready for the storm...it will come*. Be ready to calm those around you in its midst.

I can imagine what is being tossed around your mind right now. *"Why should I be concerned about this leadership stuff...I am not a leader!"* Well, let me remind you. You may not be a military officer or a captain of industry, but you are a leader nonetheless. Think about it...you may be a teacher, or a parent, or a grandparent or a shirt-tail relative. You may be a neighbor, a friend, a support or mentor, a coworker or fellow student, or possibly even a trusted companion. In nearly every relationship in life, at one time or another, you will assume the mantle of leadership—especially in times of trial or significant challenges.

Being calm at the center of a storm does not mean being detached or unrealistic. It does mean moving deliberately and positively to handle the situation, instilling faith, and driving out unwarranted fear. It is important to have a grasp on your mission, and re-state it to those following you, so that they know that what you are trying to do is both worthwhile and doable. Reciting past successes often helps: *"Remember when the big bad wolf was pounding on our door, and what we did to get through it?"* This is the kind of reminder that can rally the troops. Calm, capable, and compassionate attention is the telltale sign that the right person has assumed a leadership role.

Even the most experienced leaders may sometimes falter under pressure. Many of the disciples who were caught in the raging storm with Jesus (Mark 4:35-40) were seasoned fishermen who had been in this situation many times before. Yet they panicked.

Just as Jesus calmed both the physical storm and the storms walloping in their hearts, leadership today requires the same kind of effort. We can never control nature in the way Jesus did, and we can never speak words of assurance with the

kind of authority he commanded. But we do need to emulate his methods to the extent that we can, so that we're ready when the storm hits, even the unexpected one.

We need to control our fears and repress any impulse to panic. We need to speak words of reassurance in a calming tone, addressing the problem in a deliberate, measured, effective way. We need to lead on through the circumstances, not be overcome by them. We must focus on what we can control, and leave the rest to God.

Nothing will raise a leader in the eyes of his followers more than when he or she effectively handles a crisis. Calm, effective leadership in the midst of a storm will do more to establish a leader than most any situation.

It is certainly no accident that Jesus was out on the lake with his disciples when a storm arose. None of us should be glad that we are now in the depths of a dangerous and deepening COVID-19 health crisis. But, we can be thankful for all of you who step up into leadership roles when a crisis of this magnitude impacts us. As James 1:2 says, *"Whenever you face trials of any kind, consider it nothing but joy."* In the same way that the awestruck disciples wondered about Jesus' identity after he miraculously calmed the winds and the waves, our followers will speak of you with respect and gratefulness after you have led them through a storm.

May God richly bless you as a holy leader, with wisdom and strength, courage and compassion, faithful resilience and above all the boundless love of Jesus.

Peace and all good.

*Randy+*