



JUNE
2021

Stella Maris

SUPPORTING SEAFARERS AND FISHERS AROUND THE WORLD

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with Fr Pio Idowu

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Stella Maris is a Catholic charity supporting seafarers worldwide.

We provide practical and pastoral care to all seafarers, regardless of nationality, belief or race. Our port chaplains and volunteer ship visitors welcome seafarers, offer welfare services and advice, practical help, care and friendship.

Stella Maris is the largest ship visiting network in the world, working in 332 ports with 227 port chaplains around the world. We also run 53 seafarers' centres all over the world.

We are only able to continue our work through the generous donations of our supporters and volunteers.

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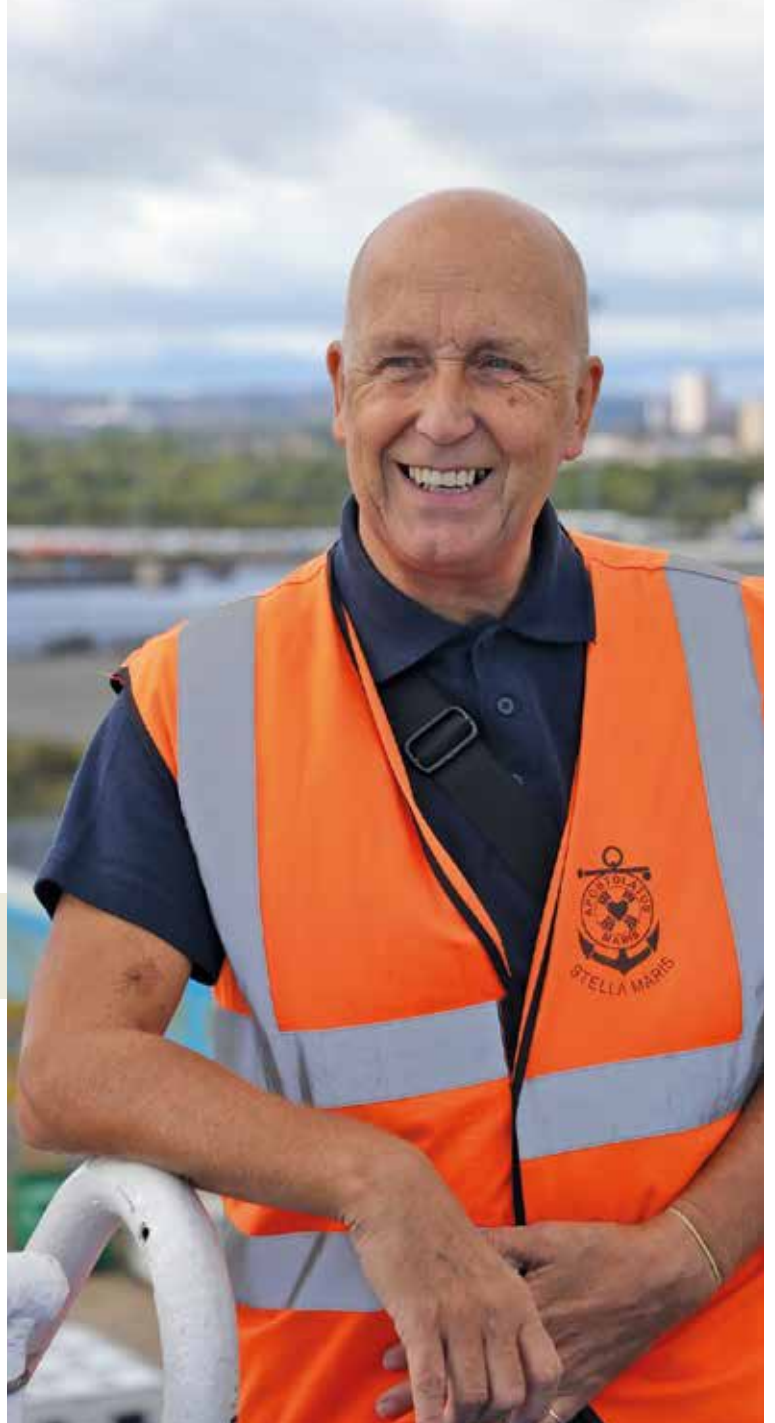
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Stella Maris
provides seafarers
with practical
support, information
and a listening ear



#SolidaritywithSeafarers

What does Pope Francis say about maritime workers?

- Without seafarers, the global economy would come to a stand still
- Without fishermen many parts of the world would starve
- We must listen to the spiritual and material concerns of seafarers and fishermen

Seafarers are key essential workers too!

#crewchange crisis
#SeafarersAreKeyWorkers
#NeptuneDeclaration
#NoShippingNoShopping



STELLA MARIS

Sunday at Sea with Fr Pio Idowu

CORPUS CHRISTI
6TH JUNE 2021

GOSPEL MARK 14:12-16,22-26

On the first day of Unleavened Bread, when they sacrificed the Passover lamb, his disciples said to Jesus, "Where will you have us go and prepare for you to eat the Passover?" And he sent two of his disciples, and said to them, "Go into the city, and a man carrying a jar of water will meet you; follow him, and wherever he enters, say to the householder, 'The Teacher says, Where is my guest room, where I am to eat the Passover with my disciples?' And he will show you a large upper room furnished and ready; there prepare for us." And the disciples set out and went to the city, and found it as he had told them; and they prepared the Passover. And as they were eating, he took bread, and blessed, and broke it, and gave it to them, and said, "Take; this is my body." And he took a chalice, and when he had given thanks he gave it to them, and they all drank of it. And he said to them, "This is my blood of the covenant, which is poured out for many. Truly, I say to you, I shall not drink again of the fruit of the vine until that day when I drink it new in the kingdom of God." And when they had sung a hymn, they went out to the Mount of Olives.

THE GOSPEL AND YOU

The Solemnity of the Most Holy Body and Blood of Christ, historically known by its Latin name, Corpus Christi, celebrates the Real Presence of Jesus Christ in the Holy Eucharist. Jesus is truly and really present in the Blessed Sacrament with His Body, Blood, Soul, and Divinity.

St Thomas Aquinas affirms that the Eucharist is "the culmination of the spiritual life and the goal of all the sacraments." It is important, therefore, that we very much appreciate and value the centrality of this sacrament for it is there that we obtain spiritual nourishment for our souls and the grace to combat the evils that afflict our society today.

Often, we hear the words that God is present everywhere and that he can be prayed to anywhere. But the Holy Eucharist is not just a symbol of the presence of Christ among us. It is His Real Presence. There in that little piece of consecrated bread is present the divinity itself. This is something difficult for the human intellect to grasp and requires an act of faith. Faith in the Real Presence is so central to Catholic belief that without it, we will be just like the Protestants, who say they have the Eucharist, but do not believe in the Real Presence.

Our faith in the Real Presence is manifested by our exterior comportment and our interior dispositions. Most importantly, the Church requires us to be in a state of grace when we receive. We are required to abstain from Holy Communion when we have sinned gravely and to go to Confession first before partaking of the Body and Blood of Christ.

May we learn to adore the Real Presence of Our Lord in the Holy Eucharist. May we learn to receive Jesus with a pure heart. And whenever we think ourselves unworthy to receive Him, let us pray with St Josemaria Escriva, asking for the grace to receive Holy Communion worthily: *I wish Lord, to receive you with the purity, humility and devotion with which your Most Holy Mother received you and with the spirit and fervour of the saints.*

11TH SUNDAY IN ORDINARY TIME

13TH JUNE 2021

GOSPEL MARK 4:26-34

At that time:

Jesus said to the crowds,
 "The kingdom of God is as if a man
 should scatter seed upon the ground,
 and should sleep and rise night and day,
 and the seed should sprout and grow, he knows not how.
 The earth produces of itself,
 first the blade, then the ear,
 then the full grain in the ear.
 But when the grain is ripe, at once he puts in the sickle,
 because the harvest has come."

And he said, "With what can we compare
 the kingdom of God,
 or what parable shall we use for it?

It is like a grain of mustard seed,
 which, when sown upon the ground,
 is the smallest of all the seeds on earth;
 yet when it is sown
 it grows up and becomes the greatest of all shrubs,
 and puts forth large branches,
 so that the birds of the air can make nests in its shade."

With many such parables he spoke the word to them,
 as they were able to hear it;
 he did not speak to them without a parable,
 but privately to his own disciples he explained everything.

THE GOSPEL AND YOU

Our Lord compares the kingdom of God to "a grain of mustard seed, which, when sown upon the ground, is the smallest of all the seeds on earth; yet when it is sown it grows up and becomes the greatest of all shrubs, and puts forth large branches, so that the birds of the air can make nests in its shade."

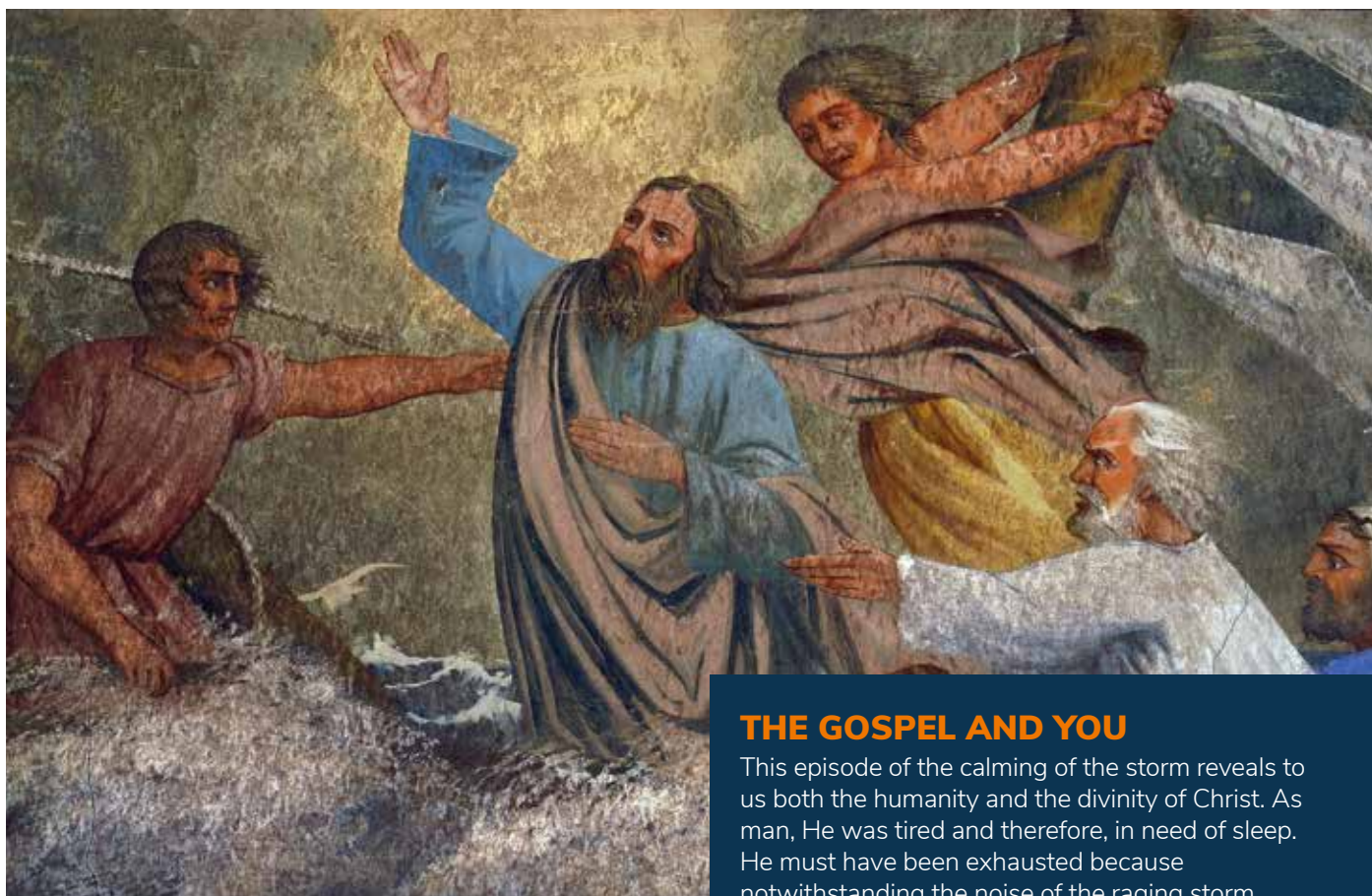
The Church is the kingdom of God here on earth and it began with a few unlettered fishermen who were chosen to preach the Gospel to all nations. Yet, in spite of its very humble beginnings, it has grown to become the largest religion in the whole world. Christians make up about 32% of the world's population. Just like the mustard seed which is the smallest of all the seeds, yet when it is sown, it grows to become the greatest tree of all.

Humanly speaking, it is impossible to explain how it is that these twelve fishermen were able to establish a Church which today has grown into a worldwide religion. But this miracle reminds us that God chose what is weak in the world to shame the strong.

Most definitely, the apostles faced a lot of difficulties in carrying out the mission entrusted to them by Our Lord. They travelled far and wide, they faced persecution and rejection, they were put in prison and treated like the scum of the earth. All of them gave up their lives for Christ. Yet, in all their endeavours, they were not discouraged but trusted in the Lord who sustained them.

As members of the Church, we too have a special mission to carry out in this world. We too have been called to preach the Gospel to all nations, beginning with those whom God has placed at our side. We are weak and full of defects, but we must never allow this to discourage us. We have no special talents or abilities for the mission entrusted to us, but with God we can do all things.





12TH SUNDAY IN ORDINARY TIME
20TH JUNE 2021

GOSPEL MARK 4:35-41

On that day, when evening had come,
Jesus said to his disciples,
“Let us go across to the other side.”
And leaving the crowd,
they took him with them, just as he was, in the boat.
And other boats were with him.
And a great storm of wind arose,
and the waves beat into the boat,
so that the boat was already filling.
But he was in the stern, asleep on the cushion;
and they woke him and said to him,
“Teacher, do you not care if we perish?”
And he awoke and rebuked the wind,
and said to the sea, “Peace! Be still!”
And the wind ceased, and there was a great calm.
He said to them, “Why are you afraid? Have you no faith?”
And they were filled with awe, and said to one another,
“Who then is this, that even wind and sea obey him?”

“We also have a powerful advocate in the Blessed Virgin Mary”

THE GOSPEL AND YOU

This episode of the calming of the storm reveals to us both the humanity and the divinity of Christ. As man, He was tired and therefore, in need of sleep. He must have been exhausted because notwithstanding the noise of the raging storm, He slept peacefully and profoundly.

As God, He commanded the storm with authority: “Peace! Be Still!” And immediately “...the wind ceased, and there was a great calm.” His disciples, seeing this were filled with awe and said to one another: “Who then is this, that even wind and sea obey him?”

By working this miracle, Christ wished to increase and strengthen the faith of His apostles and their successors. The boat is the Catholic Church, the signifies the world and the great storm and waves represent the trials and tribulations which the Church and Christians in general will have to undergo.

Sometimes, the Lord may seem to be asleep and we may feel abandoned in our troubles. But even then, like the apostles, let us draw nearer to Jesus and awaken him with our prayers saying: “Teacher, do you not care if we perish?” Had Jesus been awake, the apostles would not have felt the need of His assistance. But feeling themselves left alone, they turned to Him with urgent prayer.

Thus we see that tribulations and trials are in themselves a blessing from God, prompting us to draw even more closer to Him in our time of need. St Augustine advises that “we should keep our eyes always turned to God, who alone can deliver us from the many dangers to which we are exposed”.

We also have a powerful advocate in the Blessed Virgin Mary. She is the Stella Maris, the sinless and beautiful Star of the Sea. When we are tossed about upon the stormy waves of this life and losing ourselves, let us look to Mary, the Star of the Sea, and She will guide us safely to the harbour of eternal life.

13TH SUNDAY IN ORDINARY TIME

27TH JUNE 2021

GOSPEL MARK 5:21-43

At that time:

When Jesus had crossed in the boat to the other side of the Sea of Galilee, a great crowd gathered about him; and he was beside the sea. Then came one of the rulers of the synagogue, Jairus by name; and seeing him, he fell at his feet, and begged him, saying, "My little daughter is at the point of death. Come and lay your hands on her, so that she may be made well, and live." And he went with him. And a great crowd followed him and thronged about him. And there was a woman who had had a flow of blood for twelve years, and who had suffered much under many physicians, and had spent all that she had, and was no better but rather grew worse.

She had heard reports about Jesus, and came up behind him in the crowd and touched his garment. For she said, "If I touch even his garments, I shall be made well."

And immediately the haemorrhage ceased; and she felt in her body that she was healed of her disease.

And Jesus, perceiving in himself that power had gone forth from him, immediately turned about in the crowd, and said, "Who touched my garments?"

And his disciples said to him, "You see the crowd pressing around you, and yet you say, 'Who touched me?'"

And he looked around to see who had done it. But the woman, knowing what had been done to her, came in fear and trembling and fell down before him, and told him the whole truth.

And he said to her, "Daughter, your faith has made you well; go in peace, and be healed of your disease."

While he was still speaking, there came from the ruler's house some who said, "Your daughter is dead. Why trouble the Teacher any further?"

But ignoring what they said, Jesus said to the ruler of the synagogue, "Do not fear, only believe."

And he allowed no one to follow him except Peter and James and John the brother of James. When they came to the house of the ruler of the synagogue, he saw a tumult, and people weeping and wailing loudly.

And when he had entered, he said to them, "Why do you make a tumult and weep? The child is not dead but sleeping." And they laughed at him.

But he put them all outside, and took the child's father and mother and those who were with him, and went in where the child was.

Taking her by the hand he said to her, "Talitha cumi"; which means, "Little girl, I say to you, arise." And immediately the girl got up and walked; for she was twelve years old. And immediately they were overcome with amazement. And he strictly charged them that no one should know this, and told them to give her something to eat.



THE GOSPEL AND YOU

Both Jairus and the woman with the flow of blood teach us the important lesson of faith in the power of Christ who alone could have raised Jairus' daughter from the dead and cured the lady who had done everything humanly possible to regain her health.

The woman, "who had had a flow of blood for twelve years, and who had suffered much under many physicians, and had spent all that she had, and was no better but rather grew worse," heard of Jesus and drew closer to Him saying with faith: "If I touch even his garments, I shall be made well." And she obtained healing as a reward for her faith.

Jairus, who was a prominent member of the community, one of the rulers of the synagogue, humbled himself and threw himself at the feet of Jesus imploring Him to restore health to his dying daughter. And even after he was told not to bother Jesus anymore since his daughter was already dead, Jairus put his faith in Jesus who said to him: "Do not fear, only believe". And for his faith, his daughter was restored to life.

Faith is most powerful when it is enriched by expressions of humility. Jairus was a religious leader but he did not hesitate to throw himself at the feet of Jesus, imploring his aid. The woman with the flow of blood was probably a rich and well-to-do woman, but she did not disdain to touch the hem of Jesus' garment.

In like manner, when we seek the Lord's favour, let us reach out to Him with humble expressions of faith. Let us reflect on our own humility before the Lord. Sometimes, we make demands of Jesus expecting that He answer our prayers according to our terms. But it is important that we learn to submit in humility to His judgements and to conform our wills accordingly. It is faith motivated by profound humility which pleases the Lord most and wins for the soul numerous blessings and graces.

Nicholas Black Elk and the Storm

By Damien Costello

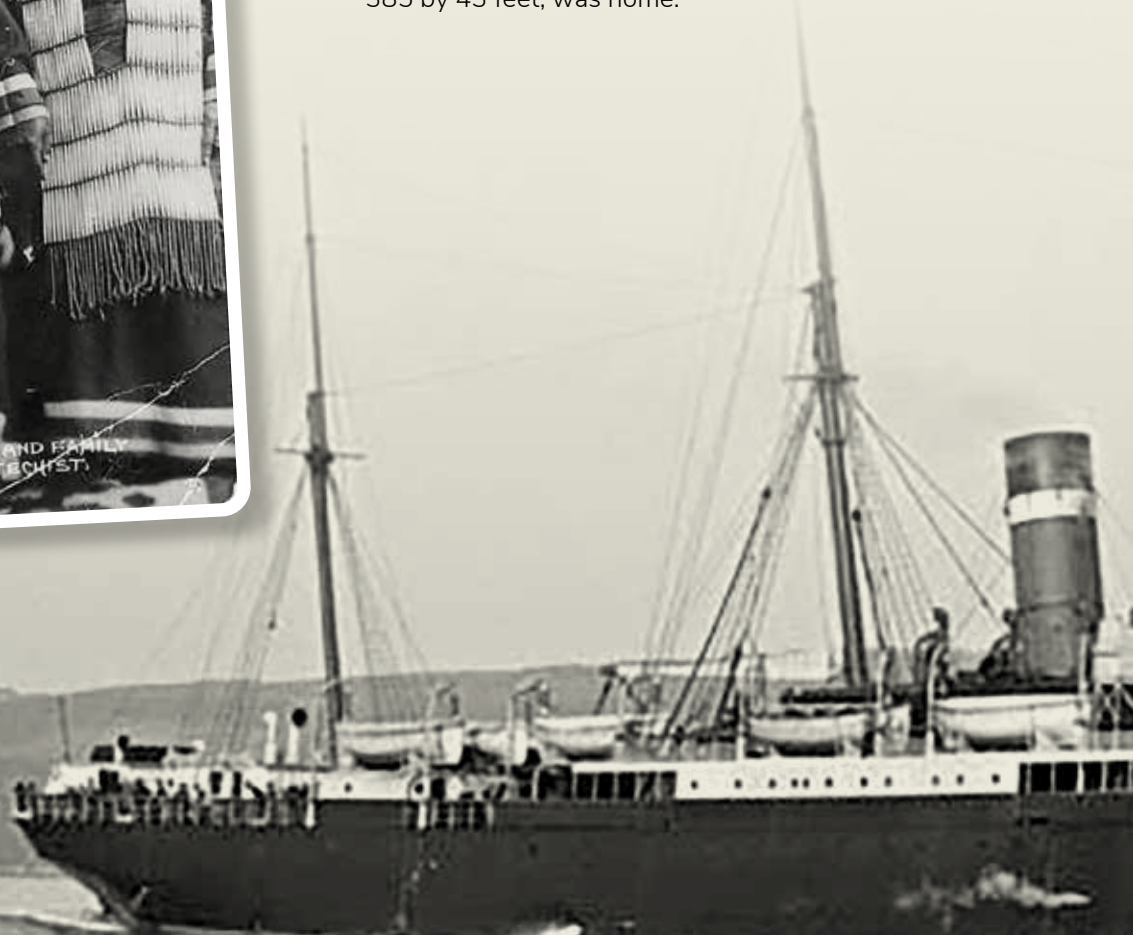
American Indians have captured the imagination of people across the globe. Who hasn't watched movies like *Dances with Wolves* and yearned to charge on horseback across the plains in pursuit of the buffalo?



Nicholas Black Elk of the Lakota Nation is perhaps one of the most well-known Indians. He was a second cousin of famous war chief Crazy Horse, given a great vision at the age of 9, and subject of the famous book *Black Elk Speaks*.

Black Elk was also Catholic. He was baptized in 1904 at the age of 41, and became a famous lay teacher credited with bringing 400 people into the church. Black Elk was known for his memorization of scripture, his devotion to the rosary, and deep spiritual humility.

Black Elk also knew the sea. After surrendering to the U.S. Army and settling on the Pine Ridge Indian Reservation, Black Elk joined Buffalo Bill Cody's Wild West Show at the age of 21. He spent three months performing in New York City, then left for Europe on March 31, 1887. He and 132 other Indians, along with buffalo, horse, and elk, boarded the S.S. State of Nebraska. For the next two weeks, the three-masted steamship, 3,986 gross tons and 385 by 43 feet, was home.



“It looked as though there would be an end where we would drop off somewhere.”

For people who had never crossed anything wider than a river, the experience was overwhelming. Despair, some singing their death song. “I could see nothing but water, water, water,” Black Elk remembered. “It looked as though there would be an end where we would drop off somewhere.”

Then the North Atlantic unleashed its full power. A great storm, turning the water into “big mountains.” Women and some of the men crying. The whites laughed at the Indians until the rudder broke and the ship drifted at the mercy of the storm. When some buffalo died, they were buried at sea. Black Elk watched sadly; it “looked as though they were throwing part of the power of the Indian overboard.” He put on his best clothes and sang his death song.

The S.S. State of Nebraska survived and the Atlantic crossing became part of Black Elk’s ministry. He wrote a letter in the Lakota Catholic newspaper about the sinking of the Titanic. Blindness and greed caused humanity to put its faith in a boat. Instead,

“Desire to be close to our Saviour. Desire to stay in our ship.” Jesus came for the poor and the sinful, Black Elk wrote, so let him be born in your heart. Jesus “is such that he has great strength.”

Great strength is not a concept we typically use when talking about Jesus, but it is particularly fitting for those with the strength to make the sea their home. Jesus had the strength to calm the storm and make his disciples marvel, “Who then is this whom even wind and sea obey?” (Mk 4:41). Strength to endure the soldiers’ whips and carry the cross to his execution. Strength to be reborn and transform the cosmos. Even, Black Elk taught, strength enough to transform you.

Black Elk is on his way to sainthood. Pray for his journey and he will intercede for yours, especially in the storms of the sea and the storms of life, that you will have the strength to let Jesus be born in your heart.

Free documentary about Black Elk’s life, “Walking the Good Red Road- Nicholas Black Elk’s Journey to Sainthood,” available at: <https://vimeo.com/420363725>



THE SACRED HEART – ORIGINS AND IMPORTANCE OF THE DEVOTION

THE WOUNDING OF CHRIST'S HEART ON CALVARY

The origins of the devotion to the Sacred Heart of Jesus go back to the origins of Christianity, to Christ's sacrificial death on the cross. In Chapter 19 of St John's Gospel, we read of what happened after the crucifixion, after Jesus' garments had been divided, after he had given Mary his mother to St John, and St John to her, and after he had cried out "I thirst," and then drunk the vinegar presented to him, before offering up his spirit to the heavenly father.

Then, while his dead body was on the cross, one of the soldiers pierced his side – his heart – with a spear, and blood and water gushed from the wound. St John pointed to the prophetic significance of this act, saying that it fulfilled the words of Zechariah, "They shall look on him whom they have pierced" (Zc 12:10).

The implication of this act of the soldier is that it showed that the very last drops of Christ's blood were shed for mankind, as a sign of his infinite love.

THE IMPORTANCE OF DEVOTION TO CHRIST'S SACRED HEART

But even before this, during his public ministry, Christ had referred to this love of his for mankind, of his gentle and lowly heart, and invited all to share this love: "Come to me, all you who labour and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest. Take my yoke upon you and learn from me, for I am gentle and lowly in heart, and you will find rest for your souls. For my yoke is easy and my burden is light" (Mt 11:28-30).

While he was preaching, too, Christ had focused on the heart: "Blessed are the pure in heart, for they shall see God" (Mt 5:8). He also spoke of how for those who believed in him, his heart would become a fountain from which rivers of living water would flow (Jn 7:37-39). As St John goes on to point out, this was a reference to the Holy Spirit, who would be Christ's gift to his followers once he had been glorified.

Why did Christ focus in this way on the heart, both his own and

that of others? Surely because the heart is universally recognised as the seat of the emotions, of human love. Although Jesus is God he is also man, and since the Incarnation, since his taking human flesh in the womb of the Blessed Virgin at the Annunciation, he has had a real human body and a real human heart.

So in the devotion to Christ's Sacred Heart we have a way of expressing our particular love for him as a real person, and not just an abstract religious figure. And since he lives forever to intercede for us, he reciprocates our love in an infinite way.

SACRED HEART DEVOTION AND REPARATION

This devotion, then, is important in itself, but also because it exemplifies a theme, that of the need for repentance, for reparation, which has been central to the preaching of Christianity from the time of the apostles onwards: "Repent, for the kingdom of heaven is at hand" (Mt 3:2). The idea of making reparation, both for our own sins and, because of a common membership of the mystical body of Christ, for those of others, is only an extension of this basic Gospel message. As St Paul said: "Now I rejoice in my sufferings for your sake, and in my flesh I

complete what is lacking in Christ's afflictions for the sake of his body, that is, the church ..." (Col 1:24).

The Sacred Heart devotion is really a reiteration of two thousand years of Christian teaching on the nature of Christ as both God and man. It is a refocusing on this fundamental point – that it was by the Incarnation and all that flowed from it, and particularly through the death and resurrection of Christ, that God has communicated his love to us in a most wonderful way, and that the gap between the infinity and holiness of God and the mortality and sinfulness of mankind has been bridged. Because Christ had a truly human heart, he can sympathise with us and understands all our needs, worries and sufferings "from the inside", because he too had a human nature capable of suffering.



MORNING PRAYER TO THE SACRED HEART

June is the month dedicated to the Sacred Heart of Jesus



O Jesus, through the most pure heart of Mary,
I offer you all the prayers, works and sufferings
of this day for all the intentions of your divine Heart.
O most Sacred Heart of Jesus,
I place all my trust in thee (three times).
Amen.



STELLA MARIS

Stella Maris is the largest ship-visiting network in the world. We improve the lives of seafarers and fishers through our network of local chaplains and seafarer centres, expert information, advocacy, and spiritual support.



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