

Text of Homily given by Fr Jose Rubio on Sunday, June 20, 2021
Nine AM Mass, St Thomas Aquinas Church, Palo Alto, CA

Like the disciples we have all, at one time or another, had the feeling that we were sinking, especially, perhaps, during these times of the pandemic, and like the disciples, we may have thought that Jesus was asleep and did not care.

But he does care.

He rebuked the wind, and said to the sea, "Quiet! Be still!"
The wind ceased and there was great calm.
Then he asked them (he asks us) "Why are you terrified?
Do you not yet have faith?"

This week in our state we have been allowed to take off our masks and this is an apt metaphor for the storms that have been unmasked in our society and in our country by the pandemic.

And, what has been unmasked?

What are the winds and the storms that assail us today?

First, the plight of minorities.

a. African-American discrimination, unmasked by the death of George Floyd and the protests that followed and the entire Black Lives Matter movement.

b. anti-Asian sentiments, unmasked by the violent acts against Asian-Americans, even in the Bay Area and even against elderly people

c. prejudice and discrimination against Latinos
the results of which can be seen
in the high proportion of COVID19 cases and deaths,
and deaths at younger age,
often the wage earner of the family
and sometimes a single mother leaving teenage children
to fend for themselves

d. unmasked is who are the real indispensable workers:

healthcare workers who clean our hospitals and board
and care homes, delivery workers who deliver the food
that we eat, custodians who clean our buildings and
homes,
meat packers,
and farmworkers who pick our crops at their own risk
all underpaid, without medical insurance
and sometimes ineligible for unemployment benefits

e. unmasked were the winds of poverty that leads to
homelessness so we see so many homeless
encampments in our area

f. unmasked is the violence that pervades our society and
the need for gun control:
shootings, here, in Morgan Hill, the Gilroy Garlic Festival,
the VTA yard shootings last week in Austin, Texas,
Savannah, Georgia and Chicago, shootings all too often
in the East Bay

g. unmasked has been the deep division in the country and
so much anger. These are some of the storms have been
unmasked; now they need to be rebuked

Jesus first rebuked the wind. How do we rebuke?
To rebuke means to repel, to beat back, to disapprove

And, how do we do this? – we rebuke by truth

We admit the reality and address it

Yesterday, June 19th, was Juneteenth, in signing the declaration
that made it a national holiday, President Biden said,

“Great nations don't ignore their most painful moments.
We come to terms with the mistakes we made.
And in remembering those moments,
we begin to heal and grow stronger.”

We rebuke the storms with the truth

This is why the attempts to ban an accurate teaching of American history in this country and thwart the use of Critical Race Theory are so discouraging

The storms we have unmasked are rebuked by admitting them.
They are unmasked with truth.

It seems to me that ignoring or underplaying the sexual abuse scandal in the church only made the crisis worse and had our hierarchy been open and transparent from the beginning, had the truth been told from the beginning, the crisis would not have been as severe.

Families know this – it's the elephant in the room, the dead moose on the table when there is a problem in our families, ignoring it only makes it worse

We rebuke by truth

Jesus first rebuked the winds and then calmed the sea

And, we calm by compromise

I have never been married but I grew up in a family and I have talked with many married couples in forty years of priesthood and, it seems to me, that what is necessary for a marriage to succeed is the willingness to compromise

Today is Father's Day,

I remember my father as always being willing to compromise
My mother was a bit more intransigent but still willing at times to compromise in a marriage, it seems to me,
both need to be willing to compromise to be willing at times to give up positions that they see as important to calm the storms so endemic to family life

I don't know if it will work,
but that is why I admire so much the new Israeli government,

all the members of the new coalition had to sacrifice
a point of political principle: Ultra-orthodox conservative Israelis,
liberal secular Israelis and moderate Palestinians
have been willing to abandon a ferocious conviction
for the sake of a pragmatic compromise. It may not work, but . . .

we rebuke the winds with the truth
and calm the sea with compromise

Today is fathers' day. I have never been a father
but I imagine that it must be terrifying and frightening
for a new father to hold his newborn child for the first time
to see a life for which he is responsible to rear, to educate,
to clothe, to feed, to love . . .
I once talked to a man who had fathered a child as a teenager
he told me he was frightened and he walked away from his
responsibilities

We are in terrifying times; we walk by faith; we trust in God

We cannot think, like the apostles, that he is asleep,
and that he does not care that we are sinking;
he does care and he does not sleep.

He cares very much.

We need to have faith.