

APRIL 18, 2026 FATHER FRANCIS SALASAR

There's a story of a man who bought a brand new boat. It was the first boat he had ever owned, and he was thrilled to try it out. So, one afternoon, he took it to the lake for its first ride.

Everything seemed perfect at first. The water was calm. The sky was clear. And the man felt proud as he guided his little boat across the lake. But suddenly, the weather changed. Dark clouds rolled in. The wind began to howl, and the waves started tossing the boat back and forth. The man was terrified.

Holding on tightly, he shouted, "Lord, if you save me from the storm, I promise, I promise I'll go to church every Sunday." And just like that, the wind died down. The clouds parted. The lake became perfectly calm again. The man looked up at the sky and said, "Never mind, Lord. I think I've got it under control."

It's a funny story, but it's obviously something very true about us. When life becomes stormy, we suddenly remember God. We pray more. We ask for help. But when that storm passes, it's easy to think that we managed everything ourselves.

Today's readings remind us that storms are part of life. Sometimes storms in our circumstances, and sometimes storms within our communities, families, but they also remind us that God is always guiding His people through those storms.

The first reading from the Acts of the Apostles shows the early Christian community growing quickly. At first glance, that sounds like wonderful news. And it is, but growth also brings challenges. Soon, a complaint arises. Some widows in the community feel they were being overlooked in the daily distribution of food. In other words, a sense of unfairness begins to grow. What started as a small concern could easily have

become a serious division within their own church. This was a kind of storm inside the community.

The apostles could have ignored it. They could have said, “We are too busy preaching to deal with this.” But instead, they respond with wisdom and humility. They gather the community and ask them to choose seven men who are filled with the Spirit and wisdom to take care of this ministry.

This was more than simply organizing volunteers. It was the birth of a new ministry in the church, a ministry of service. These men would later be known as the first deacons.

What is beautiful here is the Spirit behind their work. They are not chosen for status or authority, but for service. Their role is to make sure that no one in the community is forgotten, especially the most vulnerable.

The result is remarkable. The reading concludes by saying that the word of God continued to spread and the number of disciples increased greatly. When the church serves well, the church grows.

The gospel from the Gospel of John presents a very different storm. The disciples are crossing the Sea of Galilee at night. A strong wind begins to blow, and the waters grow rough. They’re rowing hard, struggling against the waves, and fear begins to take hold.

Many of these men were fishermen. They knew the sea well. But even experienced fishermen sometimes encounter storms that are beyond their control.

Then they see something astonishing: Jesus walking toward them on the water. Imagine what must have been going through their mind at that moment, in the darkness, in the middle of a storm. They see a figure

coming toward them across the waves. Naturally, they're frightened, but Jesus speaks words that immediately calm their hearts: "It is I. Do not be afraid." And when they welcome Him into the boat, the gospel tells us they reach the shore.

This story speaks deeply to our own lives. At times, we feel like those disciples rowing against strong winds. We try to manage everything ourselves, our responsibilities, our worries, our struggles, family issues, problems. Sometimes we feel tired, discouraged, or even a little lost. In those moments, we may wonder where God is. But the gospel reminds us that Jesus comes to us right in the middle of those storms. He does not always remove the storm immediately, but He comes to us within it. He walks toward us and says the same words He spoke to the disciples: "Do not be afraid. It is I."

When we allow Christ into our boat, into our lives, something changes. The situation around us may not disappear overnight. It may be the same situation, same problem, same people you deal with, but our fear begins to lose its power.

The first reading and the gospel together give us two simple but powerful reminders. First, faith calls us to serve. The early church faced a problem, but instead of letting it divide them, they responded with a generosity and a shared responsibility.

Second, faith calls us to trust. The disciples could not control the sea, but they could welcome Jesus into their boat.

And that is the heart of the message today. Every one of us here experience storms in life, family struggles, health concerns, uncertainty about the future, tensions in relationships, problems at workplace, problem of finance. We can add our own problems. Each of us could name more storms in our life.

But the good news of the Easter season is this: Christ is alive. The risen Lord is not distant or absent. He walks toward us, even across the rough waters of our lives.

Easter does not mean that storms disappear. It means that Christ is with us in the storm.

So, the question for us today is simple. When Jesus comes toward us, will we recognize Him? And will we welcome Him into our boat? Because when Christ is at the centre of our lives, something remarkable happens. The storm may still be there, but our hearts become calmer. Our direction becomes clearer. And like the early church, we discover that when Christ leads us, hope continues to grow.

May the risen Lord, who walked across the sea, also step into the boats of our lives today, calming our fears, strengthening our faith, and helping us move forward with trust.