**The Revd Canon Maggie McLean, Canon Missioner at York Minster, reflects on Luke 8.22-25 for the Second Sunday before Lent, 23rd February.**

The Gospel reading from Luke chapter eight, verses 22 to 25, Jesus calms the storm. ‘One day, Jesus said to his disciples, “Let us go over to the other side of the lake.” So, they got into the boat and set out. As they sailed, he fell asleep. A squall came down on the lake so that the boat was being swamped, and they were in great danger.

The disciples went and woke him, saying, “Master, master, we're going to drown!” Jesus got up and rebuked the wind and the raging waters. The storm subsided and all was calm. “Where is your faith?” he asked his disciples. In fear and amazement, they asked one another, “Who is this? He commands even the winds and the water, and they obey him.”’

The gospels contain many moments when people suddenly realise who Jesus is. At the resurrection, it happens with Mary Magdalene in the garden, and a little later with two disciples on the road to Emmaus. But it also happens in a different way during the ministry of Jesus. In the gospel for today, when the raging waves have been calmed, the disciples are frightened and amazed and asked each other, “Who is this?”.

Many years ago, I worked for the Mission to Seafarers in Australia. The Christian charity exists to support those working on the long and lonely voyages, which bring us so many of the things we take for granted each day. Not only might people feel isolated, but the oceans can be frightening, dangerous and deadly places. Through the care that the Mission to Seafarers offers, there were those who came to ask, “Why do you do this?” Or occasionally, “Who is it that inspires a charity like this?” The Church exists to provoke this kind of question, which lies at the beginning of every journey of faith. There are times when we all feel that we are living through a storm, times when more water comes over the sides than we can possibly get out. It's understandable to be afraid.

In Luke's Gospel, Jesus calmed the tumult of the storm. The poor disciples who were afraid of the wind and the waves are now afraid because of who Jesus might be. They are astonished at his ability to still the sea and keep them safe. Placing our faith and trust in God can bring a peace that the world can't give. Maybe it won't be as dramatic as we hear in Luke, but the peace of Christ will always be bigger than the worst storm we can imagine. Because faith places all our troubles into a much greater story - a story where even in our darkest days, God's love will always bring us safely home.

Let us pray. Lord Jesus Christ, when we feel overwhelmed and are filled with fear, speak your peace into our hearts. And by your grace, may our lives be lived as a faithful reply to the question, “Who is this?” We ask this in the name of Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.