

Genesis 2: 4b-9; 15-25; Revelation 4: Luke 8: 22-25

If you're looking for a common thread between our three readings today, then I think it's this: Who's in charge? When the world seems chaotic, or your own life, when the storms rage and you feel like your little boat is sinking, who's in charge?

Often you could be forgiven for thinking that no-one's in charge. There's no captain on the bridge, there's no engineer in the engine room. I'm just being tossed about by the next wave that's going to hit me, and maybe the next one will just completely overwhelm me and take me under.

We're most prone to have feelings like that when we feel like we're on our own. And we may indeed be on our own at least to some extent or in some way. But never completely and that's because we're, each and all of us, part of a much bigger story in which we matter. We're not footnotes in history, or minor characters or sort of rent-a-crowd extras. We belong in these stories we've heard this morning, like they were written for us, and they were.

Genesis gives us the first chapter, where you make your first appearance and God breathes into your nostrils and mine the breath of life; Revelation gives us a vision – a bizarre vision it has to be said – of the end of all things. The God who made all things in the beginning, at the end holds all things in this incredible vision of majesty, creativity, power and love. There is for us a holy garden in the beginning, and a holy city at the end.

And the dream is of God putting humanity into a relationship of perfect unity and harmony with everything. It sounds too good to be true, doesn't it? But it is because, poor banished children of Eve that we are, like that old Catholic prayer says, that dream is planted in our DNA; it's a memory we never lose and we're always searching for. It's why, when things go wrong, when we get hurt or we hurt other people, when people are cruel to animals or when the natural world is abused, the child of God in us instinctively knows the God vision that we're missing. We are searching endlessly for a lost home not because that home is a fantasy, but because God has planted that yearning in our hearts until the day comes when finally we're reunited with God – when all tears are wiped away, when we see, as Paul says, no longer in a mirror dimly, but face to face, and, as C.S. Lewis puts it: we wake up in another country and we say "Ah, this is how it is! This is how it was all along!"

So those readings from Genesis and Revelation are a reminder of where we can find an answer when we question whether anyone's in charge around here, whether it's in this chaotic world or in my chaotic life. I am not a cork bobbing on a wild ocean with nobody either noticing or caring. You, me, we're loved creatures and God has purposely, uniquely, deliberately breathed into your nostrils the breath of life, and gifted you with creativity to live well in this world and tend the world and the other people in it in his name, until we find our place in that sublime place where, like the hymn says, the songs of all the sinless sweep across that crystal sea, and all our questions and our doubts and our turmoil are just, as the same hymn says, lost in wonder, love and praise.

In the meantime, when you do find yourself tossed about on life's wild, restless sea, our Gospel story gives us hope. The disciples are actually with Jesus. They've already seen him perform wonders. They're fishermen and they'll have seen storms before. But still they're afraid. So they call on him. The theological meaning for Luke is that here we see Jesus proving that he, as in our other two readings, he God with us/God among us, is in charge. Even the wind and waves obey him. Just as at the very beginning when with a word God spoke them into being, now, with a word, they cease, and all is quiet and calm.

Spiritually, the lesson for us, is that we can call on Jesus too. He doesn't need to be wakened up, but call on him we can and we must. We know this story so well and we can take our part in it. When I'm scared, when I think I'm sinking and my faith and my trust are weak because in some way or another life's just been too much, then I can call on him. What a friend we have in Jesus... like another hymn says. It's an old song, but it's an enduring truth. We can call on him and trust that in the depths of our own tumultuous hearts he will speak his word of peace and the quieten the storm. There's a composer called Margaret Rizza and she's written a lovely chant based on this story. "Calm me, Lord, as you calmed the storm, still me, Lord; keep me from harm. Let all the tumult within me cease. Enfold me, Lord, in your peace." Whenever we call upon him, may we know his word of peace.

Calm me, Lord

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ZE0qGVzpz7M>