

Keeping Our Eyes on Christ Amid the Storm



Dear Brothers and Sisters in Christ,

Grace and peace to you from God our Father and the Lord Jesus Christ. There are seasons in life when the storms seem relentless.

A parent lies awake at night worrying about a child who has drifted away from the faith. A husband or wife struggles to keep hope alive in a wounded marriage. A family wonders how they will pay the next bill. Someone hears words from a doctor that change everything. An elderly person sits alone, waiting for a visit, a phone call, or simply a reminder that they are not forgotten.

Many among us carry hidden burdens—grief, anxiety, disappointment, loneliness, and silent tears that only God can see. If this is your reality today, hear these words: **the Lord sees you.** He knows your struggles. He hears your prayers, even the ones that never reach your lips. He walks beside you, even when His presence seems hidden.

As I reflected on the words of Saint Boniface, bishop and martyr, I was struck by the image he gives us of the Church as a ship crossing the ocean of this world. The sea is not always calm. Winds rise unexpectedly. Waves crash against the vessel. At times the darkness seems overwhelming. Looking around our world today, we understand exactly what he means.

We see families under pressure. We see communities divided by anger and mistrust. We witness violence, loneliness, and uncertainty about the future. Many search for meaning while drifting farther from God. Young people struggle to find direction and purpose. The sick, the elderly, and the forgotten often carry burdens unnoticed by others.

We also remember our brothers and sisters in Haiti and throughout the Haitian diaspora. Many continue to suffer from violence, instability, poverty, displacement, and fear. Families remain separated by circumstances beyond their control. Parents worry about loved ones at home. Children dream of safety and opportunity.

Yet amid these painful realities, the faith of God's people continues to shine. Their perseverance reminds us that hope is not the absence of suffering. Hope is the certainty that God remains present within our suffering.

Saint Boniface lived in difficult times as well. He faced opposition, uncertainty, and danger. What is most remarkable is not simply his courage but the source of his courage. He did not trust in himself. He trusted in Christ.

He knew his weaknesses. He understood his fears. He recognized that the mission entrusted to him was greater than his own abilities. Yet he moved forward because he believed that the Lord who called him would also sustain him. That lesson remains just as important today.

Too often we try to carry our burdens alone. We rely on our own plans, our own resources, and our own understanding. When difficulties arise, we become discouraged and overwhelmed. But the Lord continually invites us to place our trust in Him.

The Book of Proverbs reminds us: *"Trust in the Lord with all your heart and do not rely on your own understanding."* These words are more than spiritual advice; they are a path to peace. Trust does not remove the storm, but it anchors us to the One who is greater than every storm. As members of Christ's Church, we are called not only to endure but also to witness.

Saint Boniface urged shepherds not to remain silent and not to abandon the flock when wolves appear. That call belongs not only to bishops and priests but to every baptized believer. Parents are shepherds in their homes. Grandparents are guardians of memory and faith. Teachers, catechists, ministry leaders, and all disciples are called to reflect the light of Christ in a world that often walks in darkness.

The world does not need more voices of fear, division, and despair. It needs men and women whose lives proclaim that Christ is alive. It needs Christians who forgive when it is easier to resent; who serves when it is easier to withdraw, who hopes when others surrender to discouragement, who remains faithful when the path becomes difficult.

My dear friends, now is not the time to abandon the ship. Now is not the time to grow weary in doing good. Now is not the time to remain silent about our faith. **Now is the time to pray more deeply. Now is the time to trust more completely. Now is the time to love more generously. Now is the time to stand more firmly with Christ and with one another.**

If you are struggling today, do not lose heart. If you feel forgotten, remember that God has not forgotten you. If you are carrying a heavy cross, remember that Christ carries it with you. If you are grieving, remember that the Resurrection has the final word. If you are discouraged, remember that God's grace is greater than every trial you face. For more than two thousand years, the Church has sailed through storms. She has endured persecution, division, suffering, scandal, and countless challenges. Yet she continues her journey because Jesus Christ remains at her helm.

The same Lord who calmed the storm on the Sea of Galilee still speaks to the storms of our lives today. The same Lord who conquered sin and death still walks beside His people. The same Lord who strengthened the martyrs still strengthens His Church. He has not abandoned us. He never will. Therefore, let us move forward with courage. Let us support one another in faith. Let us carry one another's burdens. Let us keep our eyes fixed on Christ, who is our refuge, our strength, and our hope. And when the winds grow strong and the waves rise high, may we remember this enduring truth: **The safest place is not where there are no storms. The safest place is where Christ is present.**

May the Lord bless you and your families. May He strengthen the weary, comfort the sorrowful, heal the sick, protect the vulnerable, bring peace to Haiti and to all troubled nations, and renew the faith of His people.

Entrusting each of you to the loving care of the Blessed Virgin Mary, Star of the Sea, I remain,

Yours in Christ,

Fr. Vilaire Philius

Pastor