

Set Sail - Grace

Introduction

A ship is safest in port, but that's not what ships were made for -
Paulo Coehlo

(SIR FRANCIS DRAKE PRAYER) said together

Disturb us, Lord, when
We are too well pleased with ourselves,
When our dreams have come true
Because we have dreamed too little,
When we arrived safely
Because we sailed too close to the shore.

Disturb us, Lord, when
With the abundance of things we possess
We have lost our thirst
For the waters of life;
Having fallen in love with life,
We have ceased to dream of eternity
And in our efforts to build a new earth,
We have allowed our vision
Of the new Heaven to dim.

Disturb us, Lord, to dare more boldly,
To venture on wider seas
Where storms will show your mastery;
Where losing sight of land,
We shall find the stars.
We ask You to push back
The horizons of our hopes;
And to push into the future
In strength, courage, hope, and love.

(ST BRENDAN MEDITATION)

Deep calls to deep,
in the roar of your waterfalls;
all your waves and breakers have swept over me.
By day the LORD directs his love,
at night his song is with me—
a prayer to the God of my life.

St Brendan of Clonfert - who is more well know as St Brendan the Navigator set sail with a group of Monks from the Dingle peninsula in a Currach. or Coracle... they drifted free at the mercy of the wind and the whim of the waves - in the will of God. They are said to have visited the northern Isles of Scotland, The Faeroe islands, Iceland and eventually Newfoundland. There are many places in these countries named after Brendan and in the 1970's a National Geographic expedition proved not only was the voyage possible but they encountered many of the same things as Brendan adding credence to a story dismissed by modernity as myth. St Brendan returned to Ireland where he died in 578.

Picture yourself in the place of Brendan... staring across the ocean toward the horizon.. the edge of your known world... the unknown... maybe there are distant lands across the sea... maybe there is nothing... only God knows!

See yourself standing at the wooden jetty, in front of you a feeble looking boat, made of unseasoned wood and leather, smeared all over in animal grease to seal it from the waves... in the bottom of the craft there lies a roll of leather, there to patch the unavoidable leaks and tears. The boat continuously slams into the jetty bruising the leather as the swell of the great western ocean throws it around... who knows, maybe the waves themselves are returning from those far off shores.

Shores which at this time are simply a glimpse of the possible, a dream of what might be out there beyond the horizon.

Deep inside you hear a call - "SET SAIL", a secret voice heard only in your heart "SET SAIL INTO THE UNKNOWN"...a stirring on the edge of the wind "SET SAIL INTO THE UNKNOWN, STEP OFF THE EDGE OF YOUR WORLD"... an echo of stones dragged along the beach by the tide "SET SAIL INTO THE UNKNOWN, STEP OFF THE EDGE OF YOUR WORLD, COME WITH ME INTO MINE"

*Lord, open my ears to your call, make me attentive to you
Open my eyes to your presence, make me aware of you
Open my heart to your love, I surrender myself into your hands
Without reserve but with boundless confidence
I am ready for all, I accept all, I welcome all
Here I am Lord send me*

(ST BRENDAN'S PRAYER)

Shall I abandon, O King of mysteries, the soft comforts of home?
Shall I turn my back on my native land,
and turn my face towards the sea?

Shall I put myself wholly at your mercy,
without silver, without a horse,
without fame, without honour?
Shall I throw myself wholly upon You,
without sword and shield, without food and drink,
without a bed to lie on?
Shall I say farewell to my beautiful land, placing myself under Your yoke?

Shall I pour out my heart to You, confessing my manifold sins and
begging forgiveness,
tears streaming down my cheeks?
Shall I leave the prints of my knees on the sandy beach,
a record of my final prayer in my native land?

Shall I then suffer every kind of wound that the sea can inflict?
Shall I take my tiny boat across the wide sparkling ocean?
O King of the Glorious Heaven, shall I go of my own choice upon the sea?

O Christ, will You help me on the wild waves?

(RITUAL)

What are the moorings in your Mission... not the things about Church that frustrate you... but the things YOU hold on to! The comfort zones which you cling to... The insecurities which cloud your willingness to go into the unknown... to SET SAIL

What does it feel like to truly abandon the shore? To leave behind Models and Strategies... to ignore Maps and Guides... to cut oneself adrift from techniques and practices... to place yourself beyond the horizon... no turning back... no clutching to tried and tested solutions or the words of an expert... to put yourself solely in the hands of God... to SET SAIL

Brendan put himself at the mercy of the wind, at the whim of the waves in the will of God... what would it mean to drift in the *Missio Dei*? What would it mean to go beyond the horizon of your own knowledge, experience and ideas, to put your faith in the beckoning Christ?... to SET SAIL

There is nothing human left to do, the moment is here, ready or not... the time has come to SET SAIL, as Brendan left the imprint of his knee as a farewell to his land, so we invite you to make your mark in the sand, to accept God's journey...

MAKE A MARK IN THE SAND TO SIGNIFY YOUR READINESS AND WILLINGNESS TO SET SAIL WITH GOD (a sheet covered with sand is on the floor at the front of the building)

So, like St. Peter stepping tentatively out of the boat onto the waves... you step from the planking of the jetty into the boat... it flexes beneath your feet, it does not feel secure or strong enough to withstand the power of the ocean... But like St Brendan and a hundred other pioneers and pilgrims you SET SAIL.

(RESPONSARY PRAYER)

As I go I will not refuse any destination for:
Wild blows the wind of the spirit.

As I go I will embrace all that crosses my way, for:
Wild blows the wind of the spirit.

As I go I will open my heart to the good in all creation, despite my reservations for:
Wild blows the wind of the spirit.

As I go I will hold close to your Word and give all to you for
Wild blows the wind of the spirit.

As I go I will not be bound by my weaknesses nor limited by my strengths for:
Wild blows the wind of the spirit.

As I go I will see each struggle as a place of learning, and welcome any companion who wishes to journey with me, for:
Wild blows the wind of the spirit.

As I go I will not be tempted to predict or plan for outcomes, I will relish all of the surprises, for:
Wild blows the wind of the spirit.

As I go I will take the greatest risks possible, for:
Wild blows the wind of the spirit.

The Divine is not my destination on this journey, for the Christ travels with me, guides me, sustains me, lifts me. You, Lord, are the journey itself. Across the face of this planet...
Wild blows the wind of the spirit.

(CLOSING PRAYER)

Those whom God calls God sends...
Creator and sustainer God, in Christ we offer ourselves to you as a living sacrifice. Send us out in the power of the Spirit to live and work to your praise and glory.

Chaos calls to chaos,
to the tune of whitewater rapids.
Your breaking surf, your thundering breakers crash and crush me.
Then GOD promises to love me all day
sing songs all through the night!
My life is God's prayer.