

The sea is a rich source of food and a powerful source of energy. But, as King Canute demonstrated to his flatterers, it cannot be tamed or controlled by human beings.

The sea reminds us of all those things that we cannot control, and that sometimes threaten to overwhelm us.

- The disciples asked, “Who is this, that even wind and waves obey him?” What answer would you give to that question?
- What comfort or lesson can that give us when we face situations that are out of our control?

### **A Closing Prayer**

Eternal Father, strong to save,  
whose arm doth bind the mighty wave,  
who bidd’st the mighty ocean deep  
its own appointed limits keep.  
O hear us when we cry to thee  
for those in peril on the sea.  
**Amen.**

# Lent Reflections

## Lenten Landscapes

### Week 2: The Sea



- What is your most memorable experience of the sea?
- What emotions do you associate with that experience?

For many, the sea is the basis of their livelihood. But it is also a place of danger. A calm sea can turn into a terrifying landscape in a matter of moments when a storm blows up.

On that day, when evening had come, Jesus said to the disciples, "Let us go across to the other side." And leaving the crowd behind, they took him with them in the boat, just as he was. Other boats were with him. A great gale arose, and the waves beat into the boat, so that the boat was already being swamped. But he was in the stern, asleep on the cushion; and they woke him up and said to him, "Teacher, do you not care that we are perishing?" He woke up and rebuked the wind, and said to the sea, "Peace! Be still!" Then the wind ceased, and there was a dead calm. He said to them, "Why are you afraid? Have you still no faith?" And they were filled with great awe and said to one another, "Who then is this, that even the wind and the sea obey him?"

(Mark 4.35-41)

- What emotions do you think the disciples would have felt during this incident?
- What do you think they would have thought about Jesus, before and after the stilling of the storm?

Louise Lawrence, who lives and works in Devon, wrote a book called *The Word in Place*, about reading the Bible in different West Country communities and settings.

The following passage is from the chapter based in the Cornish fishing village of Newlyn.

The Bible reflects a world-view in which landscapes in general and 'seas and waters' in particular become evocative 'characters' within its narratives. The sea is at once a source of food, livelihood and, through its parting in the Exodus tradition, liberation. Baptismal theology likewise denotes water as a material symbolic of cleansing and rebirth in Christ. But seas and waters are not universally conceived positively in biblical texts, they also evoke the dangerous, demonic and deadly. Images of sea and storm are used symbolically within the biblical tradition and often represent the primeval sea of watery chaos.