

- 1 On this day in 1996 a replica of Shakespeare's Globe Theatre was opened in London on the south bank of the Thames, near where the original theatre was located 400 years before. The re-building of Shakespeare's octagonal open-air theatre was the vision of the American actor and film producer, Sam Wanamaker.
- 2 The new theatre is as exact a replica as possible of the original theatre of Shakespeare's day. Tudor building techniques have been followed, and the theatre is topped by the first thatched roof to be built in London since they were banned after the Great Fire of London in 1666.
- 3 No microphones or other electronic equipment are used in the new theatre, although floodlights are used at night to mimic daylight. The theatre remains open to the sky. People may sit in the three tiers of galleries that make the octagonal theatre, but many stand in front of the stage. As in the original building, members of the audience are free to move around during a production, and even eat and talk and heckle the actors. "Audience participation" is encouraged.
- 4 During the building work, it was said of the new theatre that it is *"built for the simple function of telling a story - we are all part of the story."*
- 5 In that same way of becoming part of the story, of participating, we are invited to participate in the Gospel by becoming part of whatever event we are reading. Let's reflect on the Gospel account of Jesus calming the storm.
- 6 I imagine myself in the boat with Jesus and other close friends of his, as a storm brews up on the inland Sea of Galilee.
- 7 The day has been warm. I can still smell the salt water as well as the lingering odour of fish that have lain in the boat. I hear the birds that are disturbed by the sudden storm, and I see them fly off to the security of the land. I can feel the wind in my hair and the rain on my face. I see the white-topped waves as the wind scurries down the valleys that surround the Lake. I feel the disturbed, unsettling motion of the boat as the storm begins to toss it around, and I hear the waves smash against the side of the wooden boat. The sail makes a loud noise as the strong circulating wind makes it flap back and forth.
- 8 Now the rain drives harder and I hear the large drops strike the inside of the boat. What is normally a still and peaceful lake has become very disturbed and agitated. This is beyond my normal experience, and I know only too well that I am a poor swimmer, and the water here is deep.
- 9 The storm around me reminds me of the storm within - the confusion and worries, the doubts and fears in my own life. As I look around, I see the faces of those who have become my friends. My fear is reflected in the anxiety shown in their wet and worried faces.
- 10 Then I am surprised when I see that another figure - it is Jesus - not only is not bothered by the storm, but is actually asleep in the turbulent boat - and he even has his head on a cushion! I lean over and shake him to wake him up. He gives me that usual smile of his and looks directly into my eyes. I am surprised - but I think I'm also angry, and I say to him: *"Master, don't you care that we might sink?"* But then I realise it was a stupid thing to say, because I have often seen

his personal care for individuals. Now I see him stretch out his hand and command the wind and the waves to be still - and so they become. I feel that tingling down my spine that I always feel whenever something extraordinary happens. I look around and see the same puzzled - and perhaps fearful - expression on the faces of my friends. Again, Jesus smiles and looks at each one in turn, and then he says: *"Don't be afraid. What do you want me to do for you?"* And I pause in silence for a while, thinking over those words he has just spoken: *"Don't be afraid. What do you want me to do for you?"*...
(pause...)



-  *Sam Wanamaker died in 1993, three years before the completion of his project, but it was carried on by his daughter, actor Zoe Wanamaker (who appeared in the 'Prime Suspect' series).*
-  *Many of the plays of William Shakespeare (1564-1616) were performed in the original Globe Theatre by Richard Burbage and his company who had built the theatre in 1599. William Shakespeare was one of the shareholders. The theatre's roof bore a globe (giving the building its name), reflecting the quotation (in Latin) that was carved into the wood over the front of the theatre, stating that "all the world's a stage" (which may have been a quote of Petronius, who died in AD65). These words are incorporated in Shakespeare's 'As You Like It' (Act 2, Scene 7, line 139), adding: "And all the men and women merely players." Another reference is to be found in 'The Merchant of Venice' (Act 1, Scene 1, line 77).*
-  *The theatre was accidentally burned down in 1613 by a cannon that was fired during a performance of Shakespeare's 'Henry VIII', setting light to the thatched roof. It was re-built the following year, but was destroyed by the Puritans in 1614. (See 26 February regarding the Great Fire of London of 1666).*
-  *The Sea of Galilee is variously called Lake Tiberius or the Lake of Gennesaret or the Sea of Chinneroth.*
-  *Although the meditation is based on the 'Calming of the Storm' in Mark 4³⁵⁻⁴¹, the final words in the meditation - "What do you want me to do for you?" - are not found in that passage, but in Mk 10⁵¹.*

 I will be with you ("stormy waters"); Walk with me, O my Lord ("just as you calmed the wind... conquer, my living Lord, the storms that threaten me" - verse 3)

This is an excerpt from the page of this date in
'Praying Each Day of the Year',
a 3-volume book
by Nicholas Hutchinson, FSC.

For details:

<http://www.matthew-james.co.uk/>

Could make use of a search engine
to research this topic further.

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the prayer and education website
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