In this time of much turbulence and turmoil in our Catholic Church, I find myself reflecting more deeply on the conflict that the 12 Apostles must have felt in the time after the crucifixion of Jesus. A primary question I have contemplated is how would the world as we know it today be different if the Apostles had chosen to run away from their faith in Jesus and His teachings when faced with the turmoil of the first century. Certainly, walking away from their faith and just going on with their lives would have been the easiest thing to do at that point in our Church’s history.

Thank God they chose not to abandon each other and run from their faith! Imagine how different the world would be today if they did not have the courage and resolve to continue to spread the message of Jesus, even through tumultuous times in the early history of the Church. Because of their faith, fortitude, integrity, and courage, the history of mankind was changed forever for the better!

Today is not the first time of turbulence and stormy weather for our Church, nor will it be the last. I can’t help but think of the mighty oak tree, which can withstand severe storms and still stand strong. Heavy winds might blow away some of the leaves and weaker branches, but the oak tree remains standing because of the deep root system as its foundation. Like the mighty oak, if we keep our roots planted firmly in the teachings of Jesus as our foundation, we too will withstand this storm! Let us not be like leaves or weak branches that are not attached firmly to our faith and are easily broken off and blown away. May we instead be rooted deeply in our Catholic beliefs and stand strong during the storm our Church is currently enduring.

Finally, over the years much strength has been gained by the unity of Catholic communities across the globe. Especially in difficult times, families pull together to love and support one another. That’s what Catholic families do. May we be mindful of the human hand. When the hand is open and fingers are spread, the palm is exposed and each of the fingers, individually, are weak. However, when each of the fingers come together and close tightly into a fist, the hand becomes much stronger and forges a formidable weapon.

Perhaps, these are the “weapons” we need to endure these tumultuous times for the Catholic Church. Relying on our family roots in our Catholic faith will help shield us against the current storm we are facing. Likewise, instead of separating ourselves from other members of the faith by spreading our “fingers” in different directions and exposing a vulnerable palm of the hand, let us all close in together and join one another as a strong and mighty fist... One Fist, One Family, One Faith!

May God bless each of us and our Catholic Church as we weather this ensuing storm!