

Gospel Reflection

Today's passage from Matthew's Gospel is loaded with many symbols and details. Our familiarity with the tale of the calming of the sea and Peter's rescue may lull us into overlooking them, or we may simply be unfamiliar with their meaning. Here are things to note: Jesus makes the disciples get into the boat, so there is distance between him and them; the boat, in the Gospels, is always a code word for the church; Jesus goes up a mountain to pray, the place of closeness to God (also the place, in Matthew's Gospel, where Jesus teaches the Beatitudes); the wind and stormy seas can be conquered only by God, as chaos was conquered at creation; Jesus, in prayer to God, is able to know the trouble of his followers, his church, in the boat, even though he is separated from them by a great distance. Matthew packs all these details and symbols into a handful of sentences, yet they are all vital to our understanding of this passage and – more importantly – for our own growth in faith as a church.

Throughout the Gospels and all of the New Testament, Peter stands as an emblem for the whole church. He is a mixture of faith and fearfulness, expresses profound belief in yet also cruel denial of Christ. Peter is the saint and the sinner that every baptized member of the church is. Today he leaps forward in exuberant faith, but caves in to the tempest tossing him about. He musters enough faith to cry out his need for salvation, as we all must. And then Christ, who called him through the storm, identifies himself by saying (literally, in the Greek text), "I Am" – as God was revealed to Moses. Christ, divinely unfazed by the petty storms that terrify his church, always stands ready to reach out to those he has called when they cry for help. "Lord, save me!" was on Peter's lips that morning, as it has been on the lips of countless Christians throughout the centuries. And Christ still reaches out to us, his church being tossed about, to take us by the hand and reply, "Do not be afraid" (Matthew 14:27).

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KEEPING FAITH FIRST FAMILY FUN

Matthew 14:22-33

L W U Q W Z Q C D N Y D M
I K W W F W N P T B Y O T
T B O O A I U E E X A U P
T A N K S Y J R S T G B D
L Z K V I E Z O I L E T N
E S S E S W N H U F T R I
F K K U C O D S T A O B W
A O S N F O X E E R P F P
I D G G I P U S S S I C V
T X O I N S L R E S B S C
H D G H O S T V A C O A G
M G N I K L A W G G Y T Q
Y D W L F W N I N Z E M X

Find these words from the Gospel passage.

BOAT	DOUBT	GHOST
JESUS	LITTLE FAITH	PETER
TOSSED	SON OF GOD	SINK
SHORE	TAKE COURAGE	SEA
WAVES	WALKING	WIND

Disciple's Reflection & Questions of the Week

*Nineteenth Sunday in Ordinary Time
8/10/2008*

*Matthew 14:22-33
Faith-Sharing
Questions of the Week*



Our Lady of the Assumption

435 Berkeley Ave.
Claremont, CA
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Call to Prayer

We begin by calling upon God:

**In the Name of the Father,
and of the Son, and of the
Holy Spirit, Amen.**

*We then pause for a moment to listen with
our hearts to this week's Gospel passage...*

The Word of God: *Matthew 14:22-33*

The Gospel according to Matthew

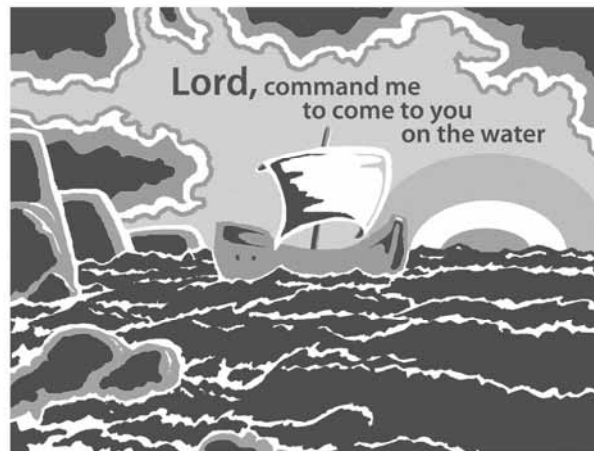
After he had fed the people, Jesus made the disciples get into a boat and precede him to the other side, while he dismissed the crowds. After doing so, he went up on the mountain by himself to pray. When it was evening he was already there alone.

Meanwhile, the boat, already a few miles offshore, was being tossed about by the waves for the wind was against it. During the **fourth watch** of the night, he came toward them walking on the sea. When the disciples saw him walking on the sea they were terrified. "It's a ghost," they said, and they cried out in fear.

At once Jesus spoke to them, "Take courage, **it is I**; do not be afraid." Peter said to him in reply, "Lord, if it is you, command me to come to you on the water." He said, "Come." Peter got out of the boat and began to walk on the water toward Jesus. But when he saw how strong the wind was he became frightened; and, beginning to sink, he cried out, "Lord, save me!"

Immediately Jesus stretched out his hand and caught Peter, and said to him, "O you of little faith, why did you doubt?" After they got into the boat, the wind died down. Those who were in the boat did him homage, saying "**Truly, you are the son of God.**"

The Gospel of the Lord



Gospel Glossary

fourth watch: The Romans divided the hours between 6 pm and 6 am into four three-hour "watches." The fourth watch would have been 3 am to 6 am.

It is I: Literally, "I am", this statement echoes God's identification of Himself as "I am who am" in Exodus.

"Truly, you are the son of God": This confession of faith will be made again by the centurion at the foot of the cross

Faith Sharing

Questions of the Week

- When have I, like Peter, been "of little faith"?
- When has Jesus stretched out his hand to save me?
- What mighty deeds lead me to worship Jesus as the Son of God?

Closing Prayer

Father,

We come, reborn in the Spirit, to celebrate your unending love for us, your children. Touch our hearts and help them grow towards the life you have promised. Touch our lives and make them signs of your love for all people. We ask all this through Christ, our Lord.

Amen.

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