

"O you of little faith, why did you doubt?"

Are you like St. Peter? Most of us are! At times, we are enthused by the Lord Jesus—and then we get frightened when reality sets in. We want to walk with Christ and act as He does - and then when we find ourselves struggling, we think of our limitations and our faith fails.

The Gospel today opens us to the mystery of prayer and of presence. First, Jesus goes apart from others for the sake of prayer and of being present to His Father. We also must learn the necessity of going apart to pray, of being alone with God, of taking time for this longing and communion with the Father.

When the needs of others call out to us, however, we must try to be present to them and respond to their needs. Jesus sees the needs of His followers in their ordinary existence. We must meet our fellow brothers and sisters in their ordinary existence.

Yes, it can be scary for us too to step out into life, especially when all of life seems in turmoil. If you have the courage to obey his commands and become his follower, then you simply do not know what you will experience along the way. You will be molded and shaped by God and life.

We also see the profound need to act out of faith and not rely on our human strength alone. Throughout our lives we will be faced with decisions. And, in this decision time, we are required to have deep trust in the Lord. He invites us to come to the water, to not be afraid. There will be times in our life when we just don't know what the future will hold, perhaps an illness or a loss of a job. You won't know what will happen ahead of time, but a few things are guaranteed. Come, let us walk on the water in the storms of life because our feet are held fast in the way of Christ.

The challenge is to keep our eyes and our hearts fixed only on Jesus and not on what is happening around us. We are aware of what is happening around us always, we cannot pretend otherwise. But in the heart of our daily existence, we can keep our hearts set only on the Lord. In that choice, Christ can become our power and our strength. Christ is the power and strength of love and of concern for others.

The Lord commands us all to follow him. As individuals and as a Church we must enter into the world, not avoid it. We must walk on the water, not hide in the boat. We must show our faith to the world, and not keep it in walls of this church building. We must go out to meet the world, as our Pope Francis so often tells us, a world that seems to be tossing and turning and in such turmoil.

And, if you want to imitate Jesus when others have a storm in their lives, take note of how He treats Peter. He doesn't lecture, but He reaches out a hand! That's Jesus. He lifts Peter up.

Perhaps the Gospel's most important lesson, though, is that it reminds us that in the storms of our lives Jesus is always with us, and when we cry out to him in our need, he will respond to us.

There is a lot to be frightened about in today's world. Whether it is the recent heated rhetoric between the leaders of our nation and that of North Korea, or the horrible hatred and violence that we have seen in Charlottesville, Virginia yesterday. Storms are truly raging about us. I can tell you that I am frightened.

But, Jesus tells us "Do not be afraid." We must not shelter ourselves, but oppose the sins of hate, the sins of racism, the sins of harming others. We must stand up to the winds of these storms. The winds of war, the winds of racism and of hate.

And, Christ calls out in the middle of it all. He calls to us to be people of peace, to be people of life and justice, to be people of compassion and fidelity and love.

Go out on the water, always with faith, always with courage, always relying, as Peter did, on the Lord, praying, "Lord save me!"

Will you take a moment to indulge me? Shut your eyes for a moment. Imagine yourself in this scene on the water. The storms are raging and your boat is being tossed in the waters. See Jesus; see Jesus at a distance in the midst of a storm. See him motioning for you to come to

Him, to come to Him across a stretch of water that you have never walked on before. When you feel like you are sinking, drowning, and you are afraid, feel His grip, the carpenter's grasp, rough and strong hands saving you.

Whenever you are in the midst of a storm in your life, I encourage you to meditate on this Gospel. Feel His grip. Let Jesus save you.

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