

Sunday 9th August 2026

The Tenth Sunday after Trinity

Gospel Reading: Matthew 14.22-33

Immediately he made the disciples get into the boat and go on ahead to the other side, while he dismissed the crowds. And after he had dismissed the crowds, he went up the mountain by himself to pray. When evening came, he was there alone, but by this time the boat, battered by the waves, was far from the land, for the wind was against them. And early in the morning he came walking towards them on the lake.

But when the disciples saw him walking on the lake, they were terrified, saying, 'It is a ghost!' And they cried out in fear. But immediately Jesus spoke to them and said, 'Take heart, it is I; do not be afraid.' Peter answered him, 'Lord, if it is you, command me to come to you on the water.' He said, 'Come.' So Peter got out of the boat, started walking on the water, and came towards Jesus. But when he noticed the strong wind, he became frightened, and beginning to sink, he cried out, 'Lord, save me!'

Jesus immediately reached out his hand and caught him, saying to him, 'You of little faith, why did you doubt?' When they got into the boat, the wind ceased. And those in the boat worshipped him, saying, 'Truly you are the Son of God.'

Other readings: Genesis 37.1–4, 12–28, Psalm 105.1–6, 16–22, 45b [or 105.1–10] Romans 10.5–15

Homily

Today in our gospel we hear of a stormy night on the Sea of Galilee. Exactly what happens is lost in the mists of time, but we know that something remarkable happened. As the disciples' boat is buffeted by the wind, in the early hours of the morning the disciples see Jesus walking on the water towards them. 'He came towards them walking on the sea.' Human beings can perform many extraordinary feats in, on, and under water, but you can't walk on water. The disciples, most of whom were experienced fishermen, knew this too. Little wonder that they were terrified at what they saw and cried out in fear.

What is described may have been a miracle in which Jesus actually walked on the water. Or it may equally mean that the disciples' boat was driven by the wind to the northern shore of the lake, that Jesus came down from the mountain to help them when he saw them struggling, and that he came walking through the surf and the waves towards the boat, coming so suddenly upon them that they were terrified when they saw him. Both these explanations are thought to be equally valid. Whichever interpretation we choose the significance is clear. In the disciples' hour of need Jesus came to them. When the wind was contrary and life was a struggle, Jesus was there to help. No sooner had the need arisen than Jesus was there to save.

Of course, the message becomes immediately clear if we bring it into our own lives. We can then say that Jesus saves us from our struggling, and comes to us in our hour of need. At such times we need not be alone, for Jesus comes to us across the storms of life with his hand stretched out to save.

There are, perhaps, few passages in the New Testament which reveal the character of Peter more fully than this one. It identifies him as a man often given to acting on impulse, without thinking what he was doing or saying. Yet, that same impulsiveness could prompt profound insights, such as his confession of faith in Jesus, 'You are the Messiah, the Son of the living God.' (Matthew 16:16). Peter reminds us that in our lives of faith we must balance self-control with boldness.

Peter wasn't a failure in the faith, for he always sought to clutch at Christ. The wonderful thing about him is that every time he faltered or fell, he rose again, and surely we must believe that these events actually brought him closer to Jesus Christ. It has been well said that a saint is not someone who never fails; a saint is someone who gets up and goes on every time they fall. Peter's humanness only made him love Jesus Christ all the more.

In his inaugural sermon, the former Archbishop of Canterbury, Justin Welby, encouraged the church to be like Peter and to get out of the safety of the boat. "We are called to step out of the comfort of our own traditions and places, and go into the waves, reaching for the hand of Christ." So is this, then, the message that we take away from here today? Have faith in Jesus Christ and, no matter how far we fall, or how much we struggle, or what misfortunes come our way, Jesus Christ will be there to save. The difficulty for us is putting away our selfish natures, which often lay buried deep within, and having the courage to admit that we need to rely on another. As human beings, just like Peter and all the other disciples, we are so proud and so reliant on our own intelligence and our own resources that we miss the hand of God when it is extended towards us.

The popularity of miracles continues to ebb and flow, and there will always be a new interpretation around the corner to give us food for thought. But the real miracle of Jesus walking on the water is the learning we take from it – that ultimately, we cannot save ourselves but rather, that we must be willing to be humbly changed by the help offered each time we fall. Jesus came into this world for us to be changed, in ways far beyond anything we can ever invent or imagine.

Conversation Questions

1. How might a lack of self-control let you down when you're assessing the situations of your life? Does an impetuous nature sometimes hurry you into a decision, a comment, an action which has long term unintended consequences? How might adopting a more reflective approach to life and faith help?
2. How might you be bold for Christ? Could you invite someone you know to church or to a church event? Have you ever told a friend or family member why you go to

church, why you believe in God. If not, would it be helpful to find out how to start these missional conversations? Who might you ask for help in that?

3. Is there anything else from the passage not already discussed that speaks to you? What is it?
4. What will you do this week in your Monday-to-Saturday ministry in response to what you have heard today? #everydayfaith

Prayer

Spend some time in prayer, responding to what you have heard today and listening to what God might be saying to you.

Collect of the day

*Let your merciful ears, O Lord,
be open to the prayers of your humble servants;
and that they may obtain their petitions
make them to ask such things as shall please you;
through Jesus Christ your Son our Lord,
who is alive and reigns with you,
in the unity of the Holy Spirit,
one God, now and for ever.*

(Or)

*Lord of heaven and earth,
as Jesus taught his disciples to be persistent in prayer,
give us patience and courage never to lose hope,
but always to bring our prayers before you;
through Jesus Christ our Lord.*

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