

Fr. Martin's Reflection – August 13, 2023

Dear Brothers and Sisters,

In our gospel this week we get a great insight into the lessons of faith, doubt, and the power of Christ's presence. This story takes place immediately after the miraculous feeding of the five thousand, emphasizing the disciples' journey of spiritual growth and their encounter with Jesus' divine authority.

We find the disciples on a boat, battling against strong winds and turbulent waters. In the midst of their struggle, Jesus appears, walking on the water. His supernatural presence instills fear and doubt among the disciples who mistake him for a ghost. This initial reaction reflects the human tendency to question the extraordinary and unfamiliar. It highlights the significance of faith, as Jesus responds by reassuring them, saying, "Take courage! It is I. Do not be afraid."

Peter, impulsive and curious, seeks confirmation of Jesus' identity and asks to walk on water too. Jesus invites him to step out of the boat. Initially, Peter successfully walks on water, but as he becomes aware of the raging wind, fear creeps in, his faith falters, and he begins to sink. This moment captures the delicate interplay between faith and doubt. Peter's initial trust turns into doubt when he takes his eyes off Jesus, symbolizing the consequences of shifting our focus from the divine to the worldly challenges.

As Peter cries out for help Jesus extends his hand, rescuing him from the depths. This act demonstrates Jesus' unwavering love and ability to rescue us from our own doubts and weaknesses. It also emphasizes the importance of turning to Christ when our faith wavers, illustrating that he is always ready to extend his grace and support.

The passage culminates with Jesus and Peter rejoining the boat, and the winds ceasing. The disciples, witnessing this remarkable display of power, respond with awe and reverence, proclaiming, "Truly you are the Son of God." Their acknowledgement signifies a pivotal moment of spiritual growth, as they move from doubt and fear to a deeper understanding of Jesus' divine identity.

This Sunday's gospel encourages us to confront our doubts and fears with faith emphasizing the importance of keeping our focus on Christ amid life's challenges. The story highlights the transformative power of Jesus' presence, teaching us to trust in his guidance and to seek refuge in his grace when our faith wavers. Additionally, the gospel highlights the significance of community as the disciples' collective experience deepens their understanding of Christ's authority.

Through the disciples' journey on the stormy waters, we learn valuable lessons about trusting in Christ's unwavering presence, confronting doubt, and growing in our spiritual walk.

No matter how difficult the storms may be, always know Christ is with you.

Have a wonderful week, and may you always feel the love and presence of Christ.

Fr. Martin