

- We read today that Jesus “made” the disciples get into a boat and precede him to the other side. And then he went up upon the mountain to pray.
- Ever wonder Jesus prays? Isn’t he God? Isn’t he one with the Father? Why does he pray?
- Well, according to Thomas Aquinas, Jesus prays for two reasons:
 - First, that He might show Himself to be from the Father; as when He says (John 11:42): “*Because of the people who stand about I have said it*” (i.e. the words of the prayer) “*that they may believe that Thou hast sent Me.*”
 - And secondly, He gives to US an example of prayer....an example to follow.
- And the Gospel says that He went by Himself to pray, and that “*he was there alone*”...showing that we need not only community prayer such as in the Mass, but also personal time with God so that He may speak to our hearts.
- Now in our Gospel...imagine being in that boat with the apostles... all night long—tossed about, bailing water—twelve guys tossed against each other...grumbling and elbowing each other as patience wears thin.
- And then they see Jesus—walking toward them—heedless of wind or waves.
- Of course they’re terrified. A mere man can’t walk on water or do the impossible!
- But what does Jesus say? “*Take courage, it IS I; do not be afraid.*”
- Now the original Greek says: “*Take courage. I AM.*”...the name of God which God gave to Moses.
- And...faithful, impulsive Peter calls out: “*If it IS you, command me to come to you on the water.*”
- And Jesus says: “*Come*”...and then Peter, too, does the impossible...while he has trust and faith.

- But...he soon begins to be overwhelmed at what was against him...and he begins to think of his own human limitations. He takes his eyes off of Christ.
- That is when Peter begins to sink...knowing that his own strength and abilities fall far short of being able to do the impossible.
- And he cries out...he prays: “*Lord, save me!*”
- And Jesus immediately stretches out his hand, and catches him.
- “*O ye of little faith, why did you doubt.*”
 - “*Did you not begin to walk on the water?*”
 - *Did you not see me walking on the water?*
 - *Did you not see me healing the sick...feeding thousands... raising the dead?*
 - *Why did you doubt?”*
- And to show decisively that I AM...he calms the storm as they get into the boat.
- Thus Jesus uses this event to teach us, and to assure us...that despite wind and storm against us, I AM always there. You need only have faith.

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- Now you young people are going back to school this week (I know...moan, groan...)
 - But consider the words of scripture...from the book of Sirach:
 - *My son, from your youth choose instruction, and until you are old you will keep finding wisdom.*
 - *Come to her like one who plows and sows, and wait for her good harvest. For in her service you will toil a little while, and soon you will eat of her produce.*
 - *For at last you will find the rest she gives, and she will be changed into joy for you.*
 - *If you are willing, my son, you will be taught, and if you apply yourself you will become clever.*
 - *If you love to listen you will gain knowledge, and if you incline your ear you will become wise. (Sir 6:18-33)*

- *To a senseless man education is fetters on his feet, and like shackles on his right hand.*
- *[But] ...To a sensible man education is a golden ornament, and like a bracelet on the right arm. (Sir 21:19-21)*

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- Remember these things...and also that, no matter how bleak things appear at times, Jesus is always there to catch you.
- And don't despair at life's ups and downs; no one's life goes perfectly. It's all part of the great adventure.
- But the merit is not in surrendering, but rather in continuing the race with courage and grace—knowing that God is always there, and that eternal life with Him is the goal beyond any other goal.

- There are few greater longings, I would think, than to be deeply in love and to be engaged to be married...but living at a distance from your beloved during that engagement.
- Yes, the aching longing borne each day...but also the joyful anticipation of union...soon to be together endlessly.
- Likewise, the faithful disciple of Christ is “engaged” to God...and while there is that longing for greater union, there is also the comfort of knowing that that union is closer each day...when unmatched joy will be yours forever.
- This is why the Jesus is called the bridegroom, and the Church the bride. This is why the Christian should be joyful, and not dour.
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- Yes, young ones...always strive to the utmost of your ability in whatever you do...but neither be disheartened by setbacks...whether it be in grades, or for you who are a little older, in budding relationships.
- As Garth Brook wrote, some of God's greatest gifts are unanswered prayers.
- Two examples in my own life...probably which many could echo in one way or another.

- High school: Head over heels over this girl. Sweet, but wouldn't give me the time of day as far as a relationship. And me?... *"I'll never care for anyone else!"*
- Then college: Head over heels over beautiful blond lifeguard. We were friends, but she never wanted to date. *"Now what was that high school girl's name again?"*
- And knowing myself better now, I look back at both of those...and others...and think: *"Dang...ol' Garth was right. Would have crashed and burned epic-ly in any of those relationships."*
- As far as school goes, I toyed with the idea of becoming an electrical engineer for a bit. Then I had my first circuits class. *"Okay...well, maybe not."*
- But...life goes on...God opens doors where others are shut, and Jesus is there to catch us if we ask Him in faith—**Always.** **Keeping. Proper. Perspective.**...on what is truly important. Very often this is the truest wisdom.

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- St. Francis de Sales was once at a village when he saw a young girl at a well bringing up water in a bucket.
 - With the water at the brim, she put a piece of wood in it before she walked away.
 - Curious, he asked her: *"Why the piece of wood in the bucket?"*
 - She looked surprised as if the answer was obvious: *"Why...to keep the water calm and from spilling on my journey home."*
 - Likewise... when we are distressed, the best thing is to put the cross in the center of our lives to keep things calm.
 - As Moses told the Israelites at the Red Sea: *"The LORD will fight for you; you have only to be still."* (Exo 14:14)...and likewise in Psalm 46: *"Be still, and know that I am God."* (Psa 46:10)
 - So...especially in those times when things look bleak and beyond help or solution...trust! Call out to Jesus, and He will catch you.
 - And cry out with the apostles today: *"I believe!... truly you are the Son of God."*

Reading 1

[1 Kgs 19:9a, 11-13a](#)

At the mountain of God, Horeb,
Elijah came to a cave where he took shelter.
Then the LORD said to him,
“Go outside and stand on the mountain before the LORD;
the LORD will be passing by.”
A strong and heavy wind was rending the mountains
and crushing rocks before the LORD—
but the LORD was not in the wind.
After the wind there was an earthquake—
but the LORD was not in the earthquake.
After the earthquake there was fire—
but the LORD was not in the fire.
After the fire there was a tiny whispering sound.
When he heard this,
Elijah hid his face in his cloak
and went and stood at the entrance of the cave.

Responsorial Psalm

[Ps 85:9, 10, 11-12, 13-14](#)

R. (8) Lord, let us see your kindness, and grant us your salvation.

I will hear what God proclaims;
the LORD — for he proclaims peace.
Near indeed is his salvation to those who fear him,
glory dwelling in our land.

R. Lord, let us see your kindness, and grant us your salvation.

Kindness and truth shall meet;
justice and peace shall kiss.
Truth shall spring out of the earth,
and justice shall look down from heaven.

R. Lord, let us see your kindness, and grant us your salvation.

The LORD himself will give his benefits;
our land shall yield its increase.
Justice shall walk before him,
and prepare the way of his steps.

R. Lord, let us see your kindness, and grant us your salvation.

Reading II

[Rom 9:1-5](#)

Brothers and sisters:

I speak the truth in Christ, I do not lie;
my conscience joins with the Holy Spirit in bearing me witness
that I have great sorrow and constant anguish in my heart.
For I could wish that I myself were accursed and cut off from Christ
for the sake of my own people,
my kindred according to the flesh.
They are Israelites;
theirs the adoption, the glory, the covenants,
the giving of the law, the worship, and the promises;
theirs the patriarchs, and from them,
according to the flesh, is the Christ,
who is over all, God blessed forever. Amen.

Gospel

[Mt 14:22-33](#)

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 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 is 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.”