

## Reflection for the 19<sup>th</sup> Sunday in Ordinary Time

*“Lord, if it is you, command me to come to you on the water.”*

In our Gospel reading this Sunday we hear of the disciples in the boat during the fourth watch of the night. They have left Jesus at the shore after the miracle of the “Multiplication of the Loafs,” the feeding of the five thousand. Jesus sent the disciples off in the boat, dismissing the crowd and heading up the mountain to pray.

The boating trip that the disciples take starts in the evening which would be around 5:00 PM to 6:00 PM. It was in the fourth watch of the night, 3:00 AM to 6:00 AM, when disciples were a few miles from the shore, Jesus came to them walking on the water. It was also in the fourth watch of the night that the boat was encountering wind and waves that was causing the boat to be tossed about. It was in this storm that Jesus came walking to them on the water. As Jesus came closer to His disciples in the boat, they saw His figure on the water and determined it was a ghost and became very much afraid.

We all have times in our lives that we are over-come by the situation we are in and become afraid. Today with all that is happening with the Pandemic and the uncertainty that surrounds our world and community it is understandable that people would be afraid. Turning to our Gospel reading this Sunday can help us feel better about ourselves if we are feeling afraid or it can help us better understand why others might be feeling afraid. This is not the only time in scriptures that the closest followers Jesus were afraid, and it is not the only time that Jesus reassures them.

Once the disciples express their fear Jesus tells them *“Take courage, it is I; do not be afraid.”* This message from Jesus is truly comforting for in this three-fold message, Jesus, provides the solution to the problem, affirms he is there for them and acknowledges their fear. It is amazing that in nine simple words Jesus provides a way forward for His disciples. At the end of the night in the early hours of the morning after a very long and amazing day, the disciples who were just seeking rest encounter not only a storm but a presence that they cannot explain. It is at this moment that the Disciples just lose hope and give way to despair and fear.

It is at this critical and challenging moment that Jesus the Savior of the world steps forward and reassures them that all will be right with the world. The actions and words for Jesus have a profound impact on the disciples, but the impact might be the greatest on Peter. After Jesus comes forward walking on the water, Peter proclaims to Jesus, *“Lord, if it is you, command me to come to you on the water.”* This statement by Peter acknowledges that the words and actions of Jesus have changed the situation, Peter no longer has the fear he was feeling and if the Lord is truly present he too is willing to walk out in the storm. So Jesus responding to Peter’s new found courage and peace invites Peter to come to Him.

If our Gospel reading this Sunday just ended with Jesus’ invitation for Peter to come to Him on the water there is plenty for us to reflect on and ponder. But the reading does not end with Jesus’ invitation, rather the reading ends with Peter walking on water, faltering and pleading for Jesus to save him. Jesus of course reaches out instantly to save Peter, our Lord also challenges Peter to stay strong in faith and not doubt. Those in the boat take in all that happens and once Peter and Jesus are in the boat they state that Jesus is truly the Son of God. The final seven words of our Gospel reading this Sunday, *Truly, you are the Son of God*”, provides us with the reminder of why Jesus came into the world, and that is as the Son of God, He came into the world for our salvation. The miracle of the multiplication of loaves, and the miracle of Jesus walking on water took place two thousand years ago so that the people of that time and our time would know that Jesus is Lord, and He is the Savior of the world.