



Daily Reflections

August 13, 2017

Scripture

Matthew 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."

Our Scripture Reflection

Poor Peter! He was so full of himself that night during the storm. Walking on water looked easy to him. After all, if Jesus could do it, why couldn't he do it, right? Well, he was doing ok until he made the almost fatal mistake of taking his eyes off of Jesus. There's a lesson here for each of us. Storms in life are inevitable. During those times we can feel overwhelmed and all alone. Today's Gospel reminds us that we are never alone. Jesus is always near because He cares. May we always keep our eyes focused on Him, especially when it's difficult to do so.

Food for your Journey

“Do not be afraid” means more than “rest easy.” It implies something like “take heart,” “have courage,” “be open and willing to receive what is coming,” “get ready for the new thing that God is about to do in your life.” It is an invitation to welcome rather than retreat from divine favor and the new future that goes with it. That is not always easy. Easier to stick with the tried and familiar. Easier to complain than to try a new remedy. Easier to live with known disappointments than to venture into unknown possibilities. Easier even to keep fighting the battles that we know than to undertake a whole different approach to living.

—Byron C. Bangert, “Meditation for Advent,” December 12, 1999, First Presbyterian Church Web Site, bloomington.in.us. Reprinted with permission of Byron C. Bangert, Minister-at-large, Presbytery of Ohio Valley, PCUSA.

“We live in sheer dread of giving up control and abandoning ourselves to God,” writes Larry Crabb in *Shattered Dreams*. “Only when we discover a desire for him that is stronger than our desire for relief from pain will we pay the price necessary to find him.”

A Prayer from the Heart

Dear Jesus, Please be with me when I am alone and afraid. When I am tempted to go it alone, may I keep my eyes focused on You. Amen.