

Tenth Sunday after Pentecost, Year A  
Sermon from: Matthew 14: 22-33  
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St. John's, Olympia  
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The story goes...

That a young woman had taken ballet classes throughout her childhood, and the time had come when she felt ready to turn her hobby into a profession. She wanted to become a prima ballerina and wanted to see if she possessed the necessary qualities for that. So, when a large dance company arrived in her city, she went to the theater and spoke to the director:

"I would like to become a great dancer," said the young woman, "but I don't know if I have the necessary talent or why I need something else to be a prima ballerina."

Then the director said to her:

Give me a demo. But as soon as the young woman had danced a few seconds, he interrupted her, shaking his head in disapproval.

"No! You don't have the necessary talent," said the director.

The young woman, full of fear and hopelessness, came home with her heart torn by what the director had told her, she threw the dance shoes deep in her closet and never put them on again. Time passed and the young woman focused her life on creating a family, watching her children grow and starting a new path in another type of profession.

Years later, she attended a ballet performance and, on the way out, she met the old director of the company whom she had chosen years before to take her aptitude test. She greeted the director and reminded him of the talk they had had a few years before, showed him photos of her family and told him about her new profession, but at the end of the conversation, she asked the old director.

-How could you know so quickly that I had no conditions to be a dancer?

-Ahhh! Exclaimed the director, I hardly observed you when you danced in front of me, I simply told you what I always say to all dancers when I examine them, he replied.

-But that is unforgivable! the woman exclaimed, you ruined my life, I could have become the first dancer in your company!

- I don't think so, replied the old master. If you had the necessary faith in yourself and a true vocation to dance, you would not have paid any attention to my comment. Because

in life it does not matter if your faith is great or little, what matters is that you take it seriously in every challenge.

"Without a doubt, if we believe we are lost, we will be lost and if we believe that we cannot, we cannot. If we want to do something, but we believe it is impossible, I don't think we will ever succeed. "Because in life not only the brave or the swift triumphs, in the end the one who wins is the one who believes that it is possible"

Fear and lack of faith are part of human life, at an intimate, personal, family, professional, economic, political level and our state of health ... And, very clearly, we know, that during this time, when we have been living full of worries and deeply marked by uncertainties and specific risks. It is not necessary to list fear and worry, because they are a part of each of us, in one way or another, and with more or less intensity, the fear and anguish of each and every one of us, is present in the reality that our world lives today.

Today's biblical story follows that of the multiplication of the loaves and fishes in the Gospels of Matthew, Mark, and John, although with notable differences between the first and last two in terms of the attitude of the disciples. Matthew and Mark seem to want to indicate to us that Jesus sent the disciples to the other shore, while he dismissed the people; John prefers to tell us that the disciples abandoned him, perhaps because they rejected the enthusiasm of the people who wanted to make him king. Jesus continues to experience that the crowds are still bent on seeing in him a conquering and triumphant messiah.

These two signs - the multiplication of the loaves and Jesus walking on the water - performed near the Feast of Passover - according to the Gospel of John - complement each other. They anticipate the final Easter, the final victory. Jesus is always present among us (Mt 28:20), in a mysterious way, as food and as strength to make possible the happy arrival on the "other shore", the shore of the kingdom of God.

Matthew has shared the memory of a storm experienced by the disciples in the Sea of Galilee to invite his readers to listen, in the midst of the crisis and conflicts that we experience in our society, the urgent call of Jesus to trust him. The story graphically describes the situation. The boat is literally "tormented by the waves", in the middle of a closed night and far from land. Probably the worst is that "contrary wind" that prevents them from moving forward. There is something, however, more difficult: the disciples are alone; Jesus is not in the boat with them.

When Jesus approaches them walking on the water, the disciples do not recognize him and, terrified, they begin to scream full of fear. That is why the evangelist is careful to point out that his fear is not caused by the storm, but by his inability to discover the presence of Jesus in the middle of that horrible night.

As human beings we can go through very critical and dark situations throughout life, but fear and hopelessness begin to dominate us, when our heart is unable to recognize the

saving presence of Jesus in the midst of crisis, and to listen to his call. Be encouraged! it's me, don't be afraid!

But Peter's reaction is admirable: "If it is you Lord, send me to come to you walking on the water." The crisis is the privileged moment to open ourselves to the saving power of Jesus, it is the privileged time to sustain our faith, not on human traditions, but on total dependence on Jesus, the Son of God.

That is why the gospel summarizes Jesus's response in one word: "Come." Here we do not speak of the call to be disciples of Jesus, but rather of the call to "walk towards Jesus", without being frightened by "the contrary wind", and letting ourselves be guided by his Spirit.

Today's Gospel scene is more like an account of the appearance of the Risen Christ than a fact of Jesus' public life. This scene has a very clear meaning, and it gives us a very useful reflection: the boat is moving forward in the dark of the night, sometimes with difficulty, but the Lord is always close, even if it does not seem so.

Today's passage does not end with the disbelief of the disciples, but with the experience of a mature faith, acquired through the different situations that the disciples live with Jesus. Here we see expressed a strong and certain faith that recognizes the divinity and supremacy of Jesus over all the circumstances of human life.

So it would be worth asking ourselves today. Faced with the situations that concern us daily,

How many times do we find ourselves between faith and doubt?

What are the ghosts that scare us?

What are our fears?

Today we ask God, Lord, increase our faith, that we know how to discover and feel you, always, even when it seems that you are hiding more from us.

Today the gospel invites us not to forget the presence of Jesus in our lives whatever the situation we may be facing.

Faith can overcome any moment of sadness, loneliness or worry.

Come let's go together! Jesus tells us in his gospel, together as a Church and as a community that is determined to share the good news with everyone around us.

Let us put our gaze on Jesus and although the storm seems out of our control, God is in control of our boat. And he only asks us to have faith like that mustard seed in the gospel.

Why have you doubted? Jesus asks us.

The important thing here is to accept the mystery of God with an open heart. Our faith depends on the trust of our relationship with God. And we do not have to wait for our questions and doubts to be resolved, to truly live with that God of mercy.

Therefore, the important thing is to know how to shout like Peter: "Lord, save me." Knowing how to lift up our empty hands towards God, not only as a gesture of supplication but also of confident surrender.

Remembering the story of the beginning of our reflection:

"...if we believe we are lost, we will be lost and if we believe that we cannot, we cannot. If we want to do something, but we believe it is impossible, I don't think we will ever succeed. "Because in life not only the brave or the swift triumphs, in the end the one who wins is the one who believes that it is possible".

Let us not forget that faith is "walking on water", but with the possibility of always finding that hand that saves us from total collapse.

"Truly! Jesus, you are the Son of God." Amen.