

Tuesday's Gospel: Rising Above a Human Outlook

Gospel for Tuesday in the 18th
Week of Lent, and commentary.

Gospel (*Mt 14:22-36*)

Then Jesus made the disciples get into the boat and go before him to the other side, while he dismissed the crowds. And after he had dismissed the crowds, he went up on the mountain by himself to pray. When evening came, he was there alone, but the boat by this time was many furlongs distant from the land,^[a] beaten by the waves; for the wind was against them. And in the fourth

watch of the night he came to them, walking on the sea. But when the disciples saw him walking on the sea, they were terrified, saying, “It is a ghost!” and they cried out for fear. But immediately he spoke to them, saying, “Take heart, it is I; have no fear.”

And Peter answered him, “Lord, if it is you, bid me come to you on the water.” He said, “Come.” So Peter got out of the boat and walked on the water and came to Jesus; but when he saw the wind, he was afraid, and beginning to sink he cried out, “Lord, save me.” Jesus immediately reached out his hand and caught him, saying to him, “O man of little faith, why did you doubt?” And when they got into the boat, the wind ceased. And those in the boat worshiped him, saying, “Truly you are the Son of God.”

And when they had crossed over, they came to land at Gennesaret. And

when the men of that place recognized him, they sent round to all that region and brought to him all that were sick, and besought him that they might only touch the fringe of his garment; and as many as touched it were made well.

Commentary

Jesus works miracles, but he then tries to ensure that they are not misunderstood. Thus, as soon as he has worked the surprising miracle we saw yesterday, he sends the disciples back to their “ordinary life,” to the lake, where their daily struggle usually takes place. The lake thus symbolizes our ordinary life. And Jesus is there, even when we don’t see him. For he has not come into the world to make everything easier for us, but so that we can take hold of his

hand in our daily journey and, with his help, overcome the devil's enmity and find strength and hope amid our difficulties.

Why do we sometimes find it hard to recognize God's presence in our daily lives? We see Peter saying, "Lord, if it is you, bid me come to you on the water." In these words we sense both great trust in Jesus along with Peter's inability to fully recognize him. Only our Lord knew to what extent Peter's trust was still only human. But soon Peter will be able to exclaim: "You are the Christ, the Son of the living God" (*Mt 16:16*). We don't know exactly why Peter chose to do what he did on the lake. But seeing his example we can ask ourselves: how much do we rely on God in our daily lives? Are we truly striving to come close to Him and let Him enter into our lives?

Confronting the challenges in life requires more than a merely human outlook. For our life is a “race” whose goal is far beyond what is merely human. We think that we can walk securely in this life when we face undertakings that depend only on our own strength. But this is not the case with supernatural undertakings. And even when we think we can control everything, new challenges continually arise that surpass our strength. Today’s Gospel passage invites us not to trust excessively in ourselves and to open ourselves to the One who can truly heal and fill the human heart with true peace and trust: “Trust in the Lord with all your heart, and do not trust your own discernment” (*Prov 3:5*).

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