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November 18: Dedication of the Basilicas of Saints Peter and Paul, Apostles.

Gospel for November 18th,
memorial of the Dedication of
the Basilicas of Saints Peter and
Paul, and commentary.

Gospel (*Mt 14:22-33*)

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, 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.”

Commentary

During his life on earth, Jesus always found time to pray. In the scene that we contemplate today, he orders the disciples to get into the boat and precede him, while he dismisses the crowd. But his true purpose was to be alone with his Father.

What follows that night, a scene in which Peter is the protagonist, shows us how strong our faith in Jesus needs to be.

The disciples were struggling against the fierce wind and rough seas. This is what happens to us when we distance ourselves from our Lord

and find ourselves buffeted by waves of uncertainty and discouragement.

God wants to use this experience to enable us to draw close to Him again: “Take heart, it is I; have no fear.” And Peter, with great faith, takes the bold initiative to go to the Master: “Bid me come to you on the water.”

He had heard our Lord say: “Truly, I say to you, whoever says to this mountain, ‘Be taken up and cast into the sea,’ and does not doubt in his heart, but believes that what he says will come to pass, it will be done for him” (*Mk 11:23*). And before the amazed eyes of his companions, Peter begins to walk on the water.

How happy Jesus was to see this act of deep faith from the prince of the apostles! A manifestation of real faith always deeply moves Jesus’ heart: “How great is your faith!” (*Mt 15:28*).

But Peter's faith wavers and he begins to sink. And he cries out: "Lord, save me!"

True faith is not the result of our own strength, but is a gift from God, if we beseech Him for it and abandon ourselves in Him. And "Jesus immediately reached out his hand and caught him." He reproaches Peter for being a "man of little faith." But the tone of his voice is encouraging: "Peter, I admired your act of great faith, but never forget that without me you can do nothing." And immediately the wind calmed down.

Today is a good day to thank God for making Peter the foundation of the Church, and guiding, through the Pope, the boat of the Church.

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