

Saints Peter & Paul
Byzantine Catholic Church
107 South Fourth Street
Minersville, PA 17954

St. Mary's (Dormition of the Mother of God)
Byzantine Catholic Church
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Saint Clair, PA 17970

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Served by: Very Reverend Gregory J. Noga, Pastor

SS. Peter & Paul Cantor: Mr. Paul Konkus St. Mary Cantor: Dr. Peter Yasenchak

CONFESSIONS: Sts. Peter & Paul: Saturday 2:45-3:30 PM

St. Mary's: Saturday 1:00 – 1:30 PM

SICK CALLS: As scheduled, or anytime in case of an emergency. If anyone is homebound or hospitalized, please call the rectory (544-2074)

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Mark J. Mahal – Funeral Director

Christ and Fear

For what purpose does He go up into the mountain? To teach us, that loneliness and retirement is good, when we are to pray to God. With this view, you see, He is continually withdrawing into the wilderness, and there often spends the whole night in prayer, teaching us earnestly to seek such quietness in our prayers, as the time and place may confer. For the wilderness is the mother of quiet; it is a calm and a harbor, delivering us from all turmoils.

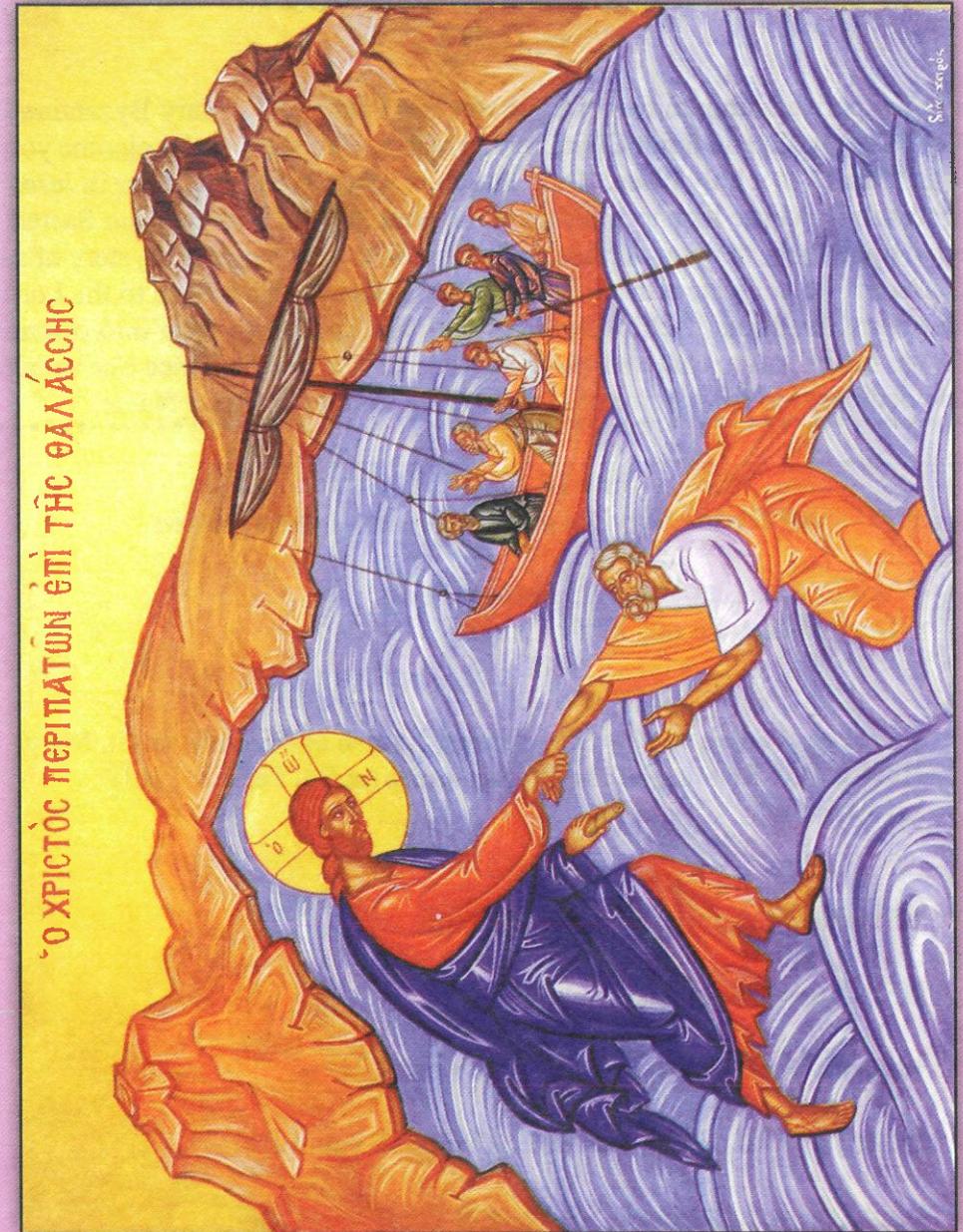
He Himself then went up there with this object, but the disciples are tossed with the waves again, and undergo a storm, equal even to the former. But whereas before they had Him in the ship when this befell them, now they were alone by themselves. Thus gently and by degrees He excites and urges them on for the better, even to the bearing all no-

bly. Accordingly we see, that when they were first near that danger, He was present, though asleep, so as readily to give them relief; but now leading them to a greater degree of endurance, He does not even this, but departs, and in mid sea permits the storm to arise, so that they might not so much as look for a hope of preservation from any quarter; and He lets them be tempest-tossed all the night, thoroughly to awaken, as I suppose, their hardened heart.

For such is the nature of the fear, which the time concurs with the rough weather in producing. And together with the compunction, He cast them also into a greater longing for Himself, and a continual remembrance of Him.

Saint John Chrysostom

NINTH SUNDAY AFTER PENTECOST



Icon of Christ Walking on the Water

Ninth Sunday after Pentecost
Tone 8

Welcome to the parish communities of SS. Peter and Paul and St. Mary Byzantine Catholic Churches of Minersville and Saint Clair, Pennsylvania. We greet and welcome you to our Church. Our Church is a holy place. Our Church is where we get together in Jesus' Name. It is holy because we come here to worship, to be nourished in faith through Sacred Scripture and preaching, to open our hearts and minds to celebrate the mystery of salvation in Jesus Christ and to dedicate ourselves to a life of holiness and service to the Lord and others. The church building itself reflects this faith and calls us to enter into communion with God. We invite you to share our faith in Jesus Christ, to experience our worship and to live a life dedicated to the service of God and one another in Jesus' Name.

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July 25 – July 31, 2021

All Divine Services are livestreamed where noted

Saturday Vigil Divine Liturgy (at SS Peter & Paul)
4:00 p.m. + **Donald Batyko** req. by Fr. Gregory

Sunday
8:00 a.m. +**George Kanish** req. by MM Samuel Kanish and Family (at St. Mary)
10:00 am **Health and Blessing of the Parishioners** (at SS. Peter & Paul)
Livestreamed

Tuesday
8:00 a.m. +**Charles Sinko** req. by Anna Chesonis

Wednesday
8:00 a.m. **H&B Steve Samargis** req. by Family

Thursday
8:00 a.m. +**Joseph Postick** req. by MM John Weachock

Friday
8:00 a.m. **Irene Pavelko** req. by Harrison Mitchell & Family

Saturday Vigil Divine Liturgy (at SS. Peter & Paul)
4:00 p.m. +**Rev. Paul Waselus** req. by MM Paul Hashin

Epistle Readers 7/24 – Dolores Kramer; 7/25 – Ellen Sinkovich; 7/31 – Angela Frank; 8/1 – Jennifer Keer.

Special Note: On August 15, 2021, the Divine Liturgy at St. Mary Parish, Saint Clair, is transferred to 10:00 a.m. at SS. Peter & Paul, Minersville for that Sunday Only. Kindly mark your calendars. Father Joseph Loya will be the celebrant of that Divine Liturgy. I will be away that Sunday.

Please Note: We will soon begin preparations for the Ham and Holupki Dinner. Kindly sign the workers sign up sheet, if you haven't already done so. We appreciate your help.

Also, please mark your calendar for the August 21st Steak & Shrimp cocktail Dinner accompanied with Baked Potato, Salad and Dessert.

Jesus Walks on the Sea

After feeding the crowds, Jesus sent the disciples back to the boat. He went up the mountain alone to pray. By evening the boat was far from land. The disciples struggled to sail against high waves and strong winds. At dawn Jesus came to them walking on the sea.

“It’s a ghost!” they cried out in fear.

“Take heart, it is I,” Jesus said. “Don’t be afraid.”

Peter answered, “Lord command me to walk on the water.”

He said, “Come.”

So Peter started walking on the water toward Jesus. But when Peter saw the wind he began to sink; Peter cried out, “Lord, save me.”

Instantly Jesus reached and caught him. “You have so little faith,” Jesus said. “Why did you doubt?” Back in the boat, the wind stopped.

“Truly you are the Son of God,” they said. And the disciples worshipped him.

When the boat came to land, the sick were brought to Jesus. “Just let us touch the edge of your cloak,” the people begged. All those who touched it were healed.

you have deliberately chosen to seek comfort rather than take the risk of what God always calls us to do?

Pray fervently to our heavenly Father to make your heart and mind open to what He wants to reveal to you through this study, fervently utilize the sacramental Mysteries to strengthen your resolve and to be blessed with the courage to face whatever issues come up in pursuing the fullness of your baptismal vocation.

IF YOU WANT TO
WALK ON WATER,
YOU'VE GOT TO
GET OUT
OF THE
BOAT

WATER - WALKING

If we wish to accomplish the salvation of our souls, if we wish to do something great for the glory of our God, we must seek heavenly grace, like that offered in the gospel narrative by our Lord to Peter, to get out of the boat and with him, walk on water.

The truth is we have all been invited to go for a walk. Scriptural evidence is plain enough. Our baptismal vocation is a sacred journey. God's revelation to us records many instances when our heavenly Father asked people to walk with him. And that is the essence of our Christian vocation. There was the hard walk Abraham took with his son Isaac on the road to Moriah. The liberating walk Moses and the Israelites took through the desert to the Red Sea, followed by the frustrating, forty year walk through the remaining desert. And do not forget the triumphant walk around Jericho led by Joshua. Or the disciples' illuminating walk to Emmaus. The list goes on and on and includes the innumerable and myriad walks we are daily invited to participate in by our Saviour to make his presence visible in our world here and now.

Perhaps the most unforgettable walk of all was Peter's walk when he stepped out of a boat one stormy night and walked on water. When Peter went treading on the waves, it would seem he was experiencing walking at its finest and most beneficially significant.

Peter's walk stands as an invitation to everyone who, like him, wants to step out in faith commitment and experience more of the power and presence of our awesome God. Water - walking is a picture of doing with God's help what we could never do on our own.

There is no question there is some aspect in each of our lives in which our heavenly Father is calling us to walk with and toward him. This occurs for believers almost incessantly, daily, regularly. And there are skills essential to water - walking: discerning God's call, transcending fear, risking faith, managing failure, and absolutely

isn't it? That is why so many people choose that path. But our heavenly Father is calling you, as He invites every baptized soul to show your faith in him and start getting out of your home - made boat a little more each day as you discover how closely, intimately and personally our God stands beside you in fulfilling every purpose of your vocation.

Set aside some quiet time to think about following through. What is important is that you take time to reflect on the same issues you have prayerfully read from God's revelation to us in Scripture and apply the circumstances to your own life and how you would have responded in these circumstances. Are these issues that make you uncomfortable or even angry, at yourself, even perhaps at our God, or someone else?

By their nature, some of the boats people create are pretty ugly and need secrecy. Remember, though, that our God loves you even with your limitations. Whenever you are willing to get out of the boat, He is surely ready to help you do the things you could never accomplish on your own. One of the first steps in the process of water - walking is assessing honestly where you are right now and where you want to be as a child and instrument of God. Remember He is going to call the shots and direct your activity, so you must be usable to our heavenly Father.

Quietly and closely look back on your life. When have you stepped up to the plate, to use a baseball analogy, and tried to hit the ball? When have you refused to be out of the dugout when your name was called? Why? How have those decisions influenced your life, for better or worse?

Are you excited about your relationship with God right now? Is it dynamic and growing, or pretty stale? Why? How might what you have learned about water - walking start making a difference in your relationship with God?

Do you think you are a risk - taker or a comfort - seeker? Do you like the idea of security in the values of the world? How does this affect your spiritual life? Write out some ways in which you have taken risks in your walk with God and ways

jump at the opportunity for growth increase and faith and eagerly respond to the Saviour's invitation to come out on the water and walk toward him So today we see Peter both succeed and fail. But he succeeded before he failed!

The competence of the pilot becomes very important to us when we alight an airplane to take a trip. The train engineer's competence is vital when we travel by rail like that of the bus driver who will get us to our destination. So it is most important for us to know the competence and trustworthiness of whoever pilots our lives.

So we cannot overlook the living reality and eternal truth that it is Jesus our Saviour, the Son of the living God who invites Peter to step out of the boat and walk with him, to do something Peter could not do on his own and Peter could not resist the opportunity. Jesus is still looking for people who love and trust him enough to step out of the boat. Jesus is still in charge when He asks us to walk on water with him, whether or not we lose faith, whether or not we lose nerve, whether or not we permit ourselves to be enveloped by the water under our feet! So let us ask ourselves, what do you find intriguing about stepping out of the comfort and so - called safety of the boat?

We must never forget that fear, failure has more to do with the way we view the outcome of an event than what actually does happen.

Let us take a closer look at what happened when Jesus revealed himself to his disciples as they sailed across the stormy Sea of Galilee, because that event matters a great deal to us today. We too have the opportunity to walk with Jesus in places we would not dream of going on our own. Like each of the disciples, we must choose how we will respond to our Creator. Will we sit in the boat, like the eleven disciples? Or will we, like Peter, leave the security of the boat and give God the opportunity to use us in extraordinary ways? If we wish him to be our God above us, we ought eagerly to be his devoted servants here below!

When Jesus told the disciples to sail to the other side of the Sea of Galilee without him, they immediately complied and obeyed. But what happened as they

The plusses of water - walking include realizing it is the only way to real spiritual growth. It is the way genuine faith develops when we trust alone in the ability of our God to lead us to victory as He promises. Certainly it is the alternative to boredom and stagnation in living faith. It is an important part of discovering and responding to the challenges of our baptismal vocation and it is the actual place where we find Jesus!

Fear of failure is one reason so many of us do not step out of the boat in addition to enjoying its so - called and perceived safety. Some people view Peter's walk on the water as a failure. But we must come to understand that there were eleven bigger failures in the boat. In what ways does our perception of failure affect our willingness to begin water - walking?

Failure is not an event, but rather a judgment about an event. Failure is not something that happens to us or a label we attach to things. It is a way we think about outcomes which is opposite the insight our God wishes to share with us.

How much of our perceived limited selves do we so often project on to the character of our God and Creator? How much does our view of our heavenly Father's competence influence the degree to which we are willing to trust him completely and unreservedly, and, in faith accept his calling and take risks for his sake? How much of a desire do we possess to enrich ourselves in faith and become eager and zealous disciples of the Lord?

Would you not agree that sometimes the "boats" we create give us an illusion of control and security, whatever or whomever, besides God, we are tempted to put our trust in when life is stormy, might actually be more dangerous than water - walking with Jesus?

If we fail in our choices not to step out of our boat, what happens to us? Do we not fall even into deeper intimidation by the power of the world? What happens to people around us? Are they cheated or benefited from our expression of faith response to God's first shown love? What happens to our relationship with God itself?

or at least fails while daring greatly. So that his place will never be with those cold timid souls who know neither victory nor defeat.”

The History of Water - Walking is exciting and rewarding. In the person of Abraham we note our God honored his faith and provided a ram for the sacrifice. (Genesis 22). In the case of Moses who was invited to lead the Israelites out of Egypt which meant crossing the Red Sea with the enemy army in hot pursuit. (Exodus 3: 7 - 10 and chapter 14). Our God parted the Red Sea, allowing the Israelites to cross on dry land, then drowned the audacious pursuing Egyptian army.

Joshua was invited to lead the Israelites across the flooded Jordan River with the Ark of the Covenant carried by priests at the front of the people. (Joshua 3). Just as soon as the priests' feet touched the water of the Jordan River, it stopped flowing and the people crossed on dry land.

In another instance, instead of going into battle, the Israelites led by Joshua were to march around the walled city of Jericho with the Ark of the Covenant for six days, then march around the city seven times on the seventh day and blow horns and shout when the trumpet sounded. (Joshua 6). Our heavenly Father made the walls of Jericho fall down so that the Israelites could overtake the city. This was the first key barrier to entering the Promised Land.

Concerning the twelve spies, the people were called upon to believe that despite the frightening obstacles in Canaan, our God would be faithful to give the Israelites the Promised Land and all of the goodness He promised. (Numbers 13 - 14). Ten of them refused to believe God and his promises and perished in the wilderness.

The rich young ruler approached the Son of God and was challenged to give up his material possessions and follow Jesus. (Matthew 19: 16 - 22). He refused and went away saddened. We do not know what took place in his life afterward.

be doing me a favor.’ The Egyptians likewise urged the people to hasten their departure from the land; they thought that otherwise they would all die. The people, therefore, took their dough before it even leavened in their kneading bowls wrapped in their cloaks on their shoulders. The Israelites did as Moses had commanded; they asked the Egyptians for articles of silver and gold and for clothing. The Lord indeed had made the Egyptians so well disposed toward the people that they let them have whatever they asked for” Exodus 12: 31 - 37.

What happened is that God's will was made manifest plainly for both the Egyptians and Israelites to witness. What God said would happen, readily occurred. All the people were asked to provide was faith response to God's first shown loving concern for their welfare.

In another dramatic instance we see in the case of Gideon where he was attempting to find comfort, security and safety when our heavenly Father approached him. “The Lord turned to him and said, “Go with the strength you have and save Israel from the power of Midian. It is I who send you” Judges 6: 14. Gideon is afraid to take the challenge and hesitates. The angel of the Lord presents to him an opportunity beyond his comprehension. He must go beyond his limitations and our heavenly Father responds to his fears. “My Lord,” Gideon said to him, ‘If the Lord is with us, why has all this happened to us? Where are his wondrous deeds of which our fathers told us when they said, ‘Did not the Lord bring us up from Egypt? For now the Lord has abandoned us and has delivered us into the power of Midian. The Lord turned to him and said, “Go with the strength you have and save Israel from the power of Midian. It is I who send you.” But he answered him, “Please my Lord how can I save Israel? My family is the meanest in Manaseh, and I am the most insignificant in my father's house.” “I shall be with you, the Lord said to him, and you will cut down Midian to the last man.” He answered him, “If I find favor with you, give me a sign that you are speaking with me. Do not depart from here, I pray you, until I come back to you and bring out my offering and set it before you.” He answered, “I will await your return” Judges 6: 12 - 18; “That night the Lord said to Gideon, Go descend on the camp, for I have delivered it up to you. If you are afraid to attack, go down to the camp with your aide, Purah. When you hear what they are saying, you will have the courage to descend on the camp.” So he went down with his aide, Purah to the outposts of the camp. The Midianites, Amalekites and all the Dedemites lay in the valley, as numerous as locusts.

affects us all. Meditate seriously and slowly to make it a reality in your own life. "I love you, O Lord my strength. O Lord, my Rock, my fortress, my deliverer. My God, my rock of refuge, my shield, the horn of my salvation, my stronghold. Praised be the Lord, I exclaim and I am safe from my enemies. The breakers of death surged around about me, the destroying floods overwhelmed me; the cords of the nether world enmeshed me, the snares of death overtook me. In my distress I called upon the Lord and cried out to my God; from his temple he heard my voice, and my cry to him reached his ears...He rescued me from my mighty enemy and from my foes, who were too powerful for me. They attacked me in the day of my calamity but the Lord came to my support. He set me free in the open and rescued me because he loves me" Psalms 18: 1 - 7; 18 - 20.

"Have pity on me, O God, for men trample upon me; all the day they press their attack against me. My adversaries trample upon me all the day, yes, many fight against me. O Most High, when I begin to fear, in you will I trust. In God whose promise I glory in, God I trust without fear; what can the flesh do against me...My wanderings you have counted; my tears are stored in your flask; are they not recorded in your book? I am bound, O God, by my vows to you; your thank offerings I will fulfill. For you have rescued me from death, my feet, too, from stumbling; that I may walk before God in the light of the living" Psalms 56: 3 - 4, 9, 13, 14.

"Blessed is the man who trusts in the Lord, whose hope is the Lord. He is like a tree planted beside the waters that stretch out its roots to the stream; He fears not the heat when it comes; its leaves stay green; in the year of drought it shows no distress, but still bears fruit. More torturous than all else is the human heart, beyond remedy; who can understand it? I, the Lord, alone probe the mind and test the heart, to reward everyone according to his ways, according to the merit of his deeds Jeremiah 17: 7 - 10.

Our God speaks to us over and again. He repeats himself so we will not in our limitation, forget the importance of his enduring message.

"The word of the Lord came to Abram in a vision: 'Fear not, Abram! I am your shield; I will make your reward very great'" Genesis 15: 1.

"What is the matter, Hagar? Do not be afraid, God has heard the boy's cry in this plight of his" Genesis 21: 17.

"The Lord then said to Joshua: 'Do not afraid or dismayed'" Joshua 8: 1.

"Fear not Daniel," he continued, "from the first day you made up your mind to acquire understanding and humble yourself before God, your prayer was heard"...Daniel 10: 12.

What happened when these people got out of their boats?

God's revelation to us in Scripture assures us and records so many stories of so many people who had to choose whether to trust God and step out in faith. We explore what happened to two men who, like Peter, decided to trust God and leave behind their worldly security, comfort and safety they so eagerly tried to provide for themselves.

What happened when Moses, the adopted son of the Pharaoh's daughter, took matters into his own hands when he saw an Israelite being mistreated by an Egyptian?

"...he saw an Egyptian striking a Hebrew, one of his own kinsmen. Looking about and seeing no one, he slew the Egyptian and hid him in the sand...Pharaoh heard of the affair and sought to put him to death, but Moses fled from him and stayed in the land of Midian Exodus 2: 11 - 15; "Moses was tending the flock of his father-in-law Jethro, the priest of Midian. Leading the flock across the desert he came to Horeb, the mountain of God. There an angel of the Lord appeared to him in a fire flaming out of a bush Exodus 3: 1.

Just as He approaches Moses, so He encounters us as well.

So how does Moses respond to the encounter with God? In an astounding burning bush, the Lord's voice bursts forward. "When the Lord saw him coming over to look at it more closely, God called out to him from the bush, "Moses, Moses!" He answered, "Here I am."...So indeed the cry of the Israelites has reached me, and I have truly noted that the Egyptians are oppressing them. Come, now I will send you to Pharaoh to lead my people, the Israelites, out of Egypt" Exodus 3: 4, 9, 10.

We easily see the reluctance of Moses when presented with an invitation to step out of the boat, to take seriously the invitation issued from the heights of heaven. "But Moses says to God, 'Who am I that I should go to Pharaoh and lead the Israelites out of Egypt?' He answered, "I will be with you; and this shall be your proof that it is I who have sent you: when you bring my people out of Egypt, you will worship God on this very mountain." "But" Moses says to God, "when I go to the Israelites and say to them, "the God of your fathers has sent me to you," if they ask me, 'what is his name?' what am I to tell them?" God replied, "I am who am." Then he added, "This is what you shall tell the Israelites, 'I am sent me to you.'" Exodus 3: 11 - 14. "Yet he insisted, "If you please, Lord, send someone else!" Then the Lord became angry with Moses and said, "Have you not your brother, Aaron, the Levite? I know that he is an eloquent speaker. Besides, he is on his way to meet you" Exodus 4: 13, 14.

Our Lord manifests all his glory and power in commissioning Moses for the job He wants him to accomplish. It is not because Moses is the best man for the job; it is precisely because everyone will know it is the power of God that is being manifested through the limited Moses and his brother!

Finally Moses takes the plunge and returns to Egypt to urge Pharaoh to let the Israelites go. What happened as a result of God's manifest power and his enduring glory being shown in the world at the court of the Egyptian ruler? What is made manifest for the world to witness as a result of the shepherd's water - walking obedience?

"During the night Pharaoh summoned Moses and Aaron and said, 'Leave my people at once, you and the Israelites with you! Go and worship the Lord as you said. Take your flocks too, and your herds, as you demanded and be gone; and you will

Where do we place our trust when we are afraid?

Our heavenly Father knows how fearful we are and He sometimes uses uncomfortable, real - world challenges to cause us to choose where we will place our trust. The decision to grow spiritually always involves a choice between risk and comfort. This means that to be a follower of Jesus Christ, you must renounce comfort as the ultimate value of your life. Let us explore what God says about fear and choosing where to place our trust.

What happens when we place our trust in the safety boats of our own making instead of placing our trust in God? David provides important insight: "Hear this, all you people; hearken all who dwell in the world, of lowly birth or high degree, rich and poor alike. My mouth shall speak wisdom; prudence shall be the utterance of my heart. My ear is intent upon a proverb; I will set forth my riddle to the music of the harp. Why should I fear in evil days when my wicked ensnarers ring me round? They trust in their wealth; the abundance of their riches is their boast. Yet in no way can a man redeem himself or pay his own ransom to God; too high is the price to redeem one's life; he would never have enough to remain alive always and not see destruction. For he can see that wise men die, and likewise the senseless and the stupid pass away, leaving to others their wealth. Tombs are their homes forever, their dwelling through all generations, though they have called lands by their names. Thus man, for all his splendor, does not abide; he resembles the beasts that perish" Psalms 49: 1 - 13. The only thing we can depend on is what our God promises us.

What did David realize about finding security in God rather than in things? "The Lord answer you in time of distress; the name of the Lord God of Jacob defend you! May he send you help from the sanctuary, from Sion may he sustain you. May he remember all your offerings and graciously accept your holocaust. May he grant you what is in your heart and fulfill your every plan. May we shout for joy at your victory and raise the standards in the name of our God. The Lord grant all your requests!" Psalms 20: 6 - 7; "The Lord is with me; I will fear not; what can man do against me? The Lord is with me to help me, and I shall lookdown upon my foes. It is better to take refuge in the Lord than to trust in man. It is better to take refuge in the Lord than to trust in princes" Psalms 118: 6 - 9. David reveals so much about the relationship we have with our Creator God. Think about this revelation and how it

Nor would their camels be counted, for these were as many as the sands on the seashore.

When Gideon arrived, one man was telling another about a dream, "I had a dream," he said, "that a round loaf of barley bread was rolling into the camp of Midian. It came to our tent and struck it, and as it fell it turned the tent upside down." "This can only be the sword of the Israelite Gideon, son of Joash," The other replied. "God has delivered Midian all the camp; it is not his power." When Gideon heard the description and explanation of the dream, he prostrated himself. Then returning to the camp of Israel, he said, "Arise, for the Lord has delivered the camp of Midian into your power" Judges 7: 9 – 15.

So it is plainly visible how our heavenly Father can use this so - called insignificant farmer who finally decided to obey and trust him. "He divided the three hundred men into three companies and provided them all with horns and with empty jars and torches inside the jars. "Watch me and follow my lead," he told them. "I shall go to the edge of the camp, and as I do, you must also do. When I and those with me blow horns, you too must blow horns all around the camp and cry out, 'For the Lord and for Gideon!' So Gideon and the hundred men who were with him came to the end of the camp, just after the posting of the guards. They blew the horns and broke the jars they were holding. All three companies blew horns and broke their jars. They held the torches in their left hands and in their right the horns they were blowing and cried out, "...sword for the Lord and for Gideon!" They all remained standing in the place around the camp while the whole camp fell to running and shouting and fleeing. But here three hundred men kept blowing the horns and throughout the camp the Lord set the sword of one against another. The army fled as far as Bheweth-shittah in the direction of Zarethan, near the border of Abel-meholah at Tabbhath. The Israelites were called to arms from Naphtali, from Asher, and from all Menasseh, and they pursued Midian. Gideon also sent messengers throughout the mountain region to Ephraim to say, "Go down to confront Midian, and seize the water courses against them as far as Beth-barah, as well as to the Jordan." So all the Ephraimites were called to arms, and they seized the water courses as far as Beth-barah and the Jordan as well" Judges 7: 16 – 24.

sailed? "When He sent them away, He went up on the mountain to pray" Matthew 14: 22; "He went up on the mountain to pray" Mark 6: 46.

So what does the Lord say to them in the midst of this storm in their life? "Get a hold of yourselves! It is I. Do not be afraid!" Matthew 14: 27. Why is it significant today? Simply because our Lord does not change as He is immutable and just as concerned for us as He is for the disciples. This is an adventure in the dark for the disciples and He assures them of his loving concern.

From Peter's perspective, recap in your mind what happened after Jesus identifies himself to the disciples. What is significant about Peter's response to Jesus? "Peter spoke and said, 'Lord if it is really you, tell me to come to you across the water.'" "Come," he said to Peter. So Peter got out of the boat and began to walk on the water, moving toward Jesus" Matthew 14: 28, 29.

"But when he perceived how strong the wind was, becoming frightened, he began to sink and cried out, "Lord, save me!" Jesus at once stretched out his hand and caught him. "How little faith you have", he exclaimed. "Why did you doubt and falter?" He was blessed by the Lord to walk on water. He did leave the boat and was in fact successfully walking above the waves. His eyes were fixed in faith on the Lord. But a strange thing happened and he began to sink. For just a brief moment, he doubted and lost faith. He took his eyes off the objective who is our Lord.

The response of the remaining disciples was great "Those who were in the boat showed him reverence, declaring, 'Beyond doubt you are the Son of God!'" Matthew 14: 35.

What impact do you think all this had on Peter? Theodore Roosevelt must have been thinking about this when he penned, "It is not the critic who counts; not the man who points out how the strong man stumbles, or where the doer of deeds could have done better. The credit belongs to the man who is actually in the arena...who, at best, knows in the end the triumph of great achievement and who, at worst, if he fails,

Is it strengthened and enriched? Does it atrophy because we fail to use the measure of grace afforded us from heaven?

Regardless who we might be, there is a particular aspect of our lives in which our Creator God is calling us to walk with him and that when we respond positively and say yes to his compelling calling, it sets in motion a divine dynamic far beyond merely human power. The believer is always eager that Eucharistic grace bring about positive results for the salvation of our soul.

Think about it seriously, in what ways might our God be calling you to get out of your boat and step out in faith as partner with him in enriching your spiritual life and saving your own soul and that of others?

Ordinarily, anyone who begins water - walking has to face some personal fear. What deep fears keep you from really walking with and obeying God fully and totally, from stepping out in faith and with his help, doing what you could never do on your own? Carefully list and consider the fears you bring to mind in attempting to be all our God expects and wants from you, all He sees you are capable of becoming!

Prayerfully consider what small or larger step you can begin taking immediately to get out of your little boat a little more each day.

Looking back at your life so far, when have you said no to God's call? When have you said yes? What has made the difference between the two decisions? What happened as a result of these choices?

Your personal journey

You have learned a few basics about water - walking and have been encouraged from the example of salvation history to think about your choice, your boats and the opportunity to water - walk. It is easy to seek and create comfort boats,

trusting God. And, of course, when we are through, our prayerful hope is that like Peter, we all accept God's invitation for a walk on the water, enrich ourselves in faith and to respond to the awesome confidence our Creator has in each one of us to do his will, no matter how difficult and forbidding it might appear.

There is something, the grace of heaven; Someone, our Saviour himself, inside us who tells us there is more to life, even so -called successful living, than sitting in the physical comfort of our boat. And this is primarily because in fact, we are made for something far more than we so many times in our limitations perceive. There is something inside us that wants to walk on water, to leave the comfort of our existence and abandon ourselves to the high adventure of following God wherever He leads. No wonder Peter in his own nature asks the Lord to be invited out of the boat!

So we must ask ourselves what kinds of things do we trust in, especially when life gets stormy, that help us feel comfortable and secure rather than fearful. Be honest with yourself and recognize your shortcomings that you may build a realistic faith commitment upon them!

Honestly explain why you do or do not believe our heavenly Father calls everyone who follows after him to step out in faith and so, do something extraordinary, that confirms your deep devotion and fulfills your faith, What does it mean that God uses you to accomplish his goals? What does stepping out in faith look like to you? And then think about what you think of "failure."

Thus far in life, what have been your experiences with failure? What has fear of failure kept you from doing? What has failure accomplished for you? Look what it did for Peter: caused him to sink into the depth of the stormy sea after he had been graced with the faith and strength to actually walk on water! Failure for him was losing trust in the Lord whom he so very much wanted to please and come closer to which only walking on water could accomplish!

In following Jesus we must choose between comfort and growth. We can safely sit within the boat and remain as we are, limited and unproductive. Or we can