

19A SML 2020
MT 14:22-33

Last Sunday's gospel of the multiplication of the five loaves and two fish is a prime example of what scripture scholars call "multiple attestation." The theory of "multiple attestation" says that the more times a story or saying of Jesus appears in the four gospel accounts, the greater the chance the story actually happened, or Jesus actually said it. The miracle of the multiplication of the loaves and fish appears in all four gospel accounts: Matthew, Mark, Luke and John, so you can be certain the miracle actually happened.

This evening's (morning's) gospel is the miracle of Our Lord walking on the water. In three of the four gospels, Matthew, Mark and John, Jesus multiplying the loaves and fish is followed back to back by Jesus walking on the water. For some reason, Luke's Gospel does not include this miracle story which baffles scripture scholars. And when these scripture scholars meet Peter who walked on the water why Luke doesn't include the walking on the water, Peter will say, "I'll tell you when you get back from purgatory!: 😊 Yet, multiple attestation would again confirm that the reason why three out of four gospel accounts record Jesus multiplying the loaves

and fish that day and walking on the water that night is because that's just the way it happened. So let's take a look at the details of Jesus walking on the water.

Now this was the second storm recorded by the Gospels which found the Apostles on the lake after having been called to be Fishers of Men. The first also incurred a miracle, popularly called the "stilling of the storm." where Our Blessed did not walk on water, but he rebuked the winds and the sea and there was a great calm. And the Apostles marveled, "What sort of man is this that even the winds and the sea obey him?"

Both storms occurred at night and both must have been particularly strong storms to have affected these men whose lives had been spent on the Sea of Galilee. The fourth watch occurred between three and six in the morning. As they were shivering, wet and weary in the boat, the violent storm arose.

And it was Peter who first saw Our Blessed Lord, and before he got into the boat, Peter asked if he could walk on the waters and come to Him. Our Blessed Lord told him to come, but after a few moments he began to sink, because:

he looked to the left and saw the waves,
looked to the right and saw the wakes,
and he doubted Our Blessed Lord.

Had he only kept his eyes centered on Jesus . . .

This was not the only time that Peter would doubt Our Blessed Lord. Peter who asked to walk on the waters was also the one who would later swear at the table of the Last Supper that he was ready to go to prison and even to death for Him, only to deny he ever knew Jesus that very same night:

Courageous in the boat, but timid in the waters;
bold at the table but cowardly in the courtyard,
Perhaps the episode on the seas was a rehearsal for the episode in the courtyard.

For the last 12 years of my granddad's life, the month of May was not his time of the year. The anniversary of my grandmother's death is May 6th, so every spring, my granddad would go into a funk. For me, the month of August is not my time of the year. In August of '96, I went into a deep depression, and every August after, I got kind of funky, not too bad anymore, although yesterday I did receive some news that put my waters at high tide. I'd give it an 8 out of 10. So while my seas are mildly turbulent right now, I remember a time when the seas in my life were very turbulent; and I have met with several people this week whose seas in life are just as turbulent:

- ✓ a couple whose marriage is sinking;
- ✓ an owner whose business is sinking;
- ✓ I'm sure each of us has our "this," whatever "this" is . . .

If St. Peter were preaching this homily, I suspect, after succumbing to the winds and the sea, he would say to each of them as he would to you and me, to keep your eyes centered on Christ.

- ✓ Don't just look to the left, to the past, and all the mistakes that were made in the marriage, or to the right and an uncertain future; get some counseling, let Christ back in your marriage, and all the while, keep your focus centered on Christ and do not be afraid
- ✓ Don't just look at all the bills you cannot pay; get a plan of action; talk to a debt consolidation counselor; and all the while, keep your focus on Christ and do not be afraid

It would be nothing short of a miracle if the storms of life stilled as quickly as the storm in today's gospel, because miracles are rare and unexpected. What is certain, always and everywhere, is grace: God's presence in you; and you get it most potently when you receive Holy Communion (God in your hand; God in your heart), to get you through your "this," whatever "this" is, whatever has you at high tide. It's God's grace that keeps you focused, not on the waves to your left, nor on the wakes to your right, but centered on Christ.