

# STEP OUT IN FAITH

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Homily of Monday, 18<sup>th</sup> Week of the Year, August 1, 2011

Num. 11:4-15; Ps. 80; Matt. 14:22-36

“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?’” (Matt. 14:28-31).

Today Jesus walks on the waters of the sea and invites Peter to follow him, walking also on the waves. What can we learn from this? We can learn that Jesus wants us to follow him in a marvelous and extraordinary way, and that we will succeed if we have faith in him and do not doubt. He calls us to make disciples of all peoples (Matt. 28:19), to preach the gospel to every creature (Mark 16:15), to preach repentance and forgiveness of sins in his name to all peoples (Luke 24:47), and to be his “witnesses in Jerusalem, and in all Judea and Samaria and to the end of the earth” (Acts 1:8). But to do this is like walking on the waves of the sea. It is something great, difficult, and frightening, and requires great faith without doubting. If we doubt out of fear, we will begin to sink like Peter, and Jesus will say to us, “O man of little faith, why did you doubt?” (Matt. 14:31).

But we have to do more than just believe that we have this great commission. We have to personally accept it and set specific goals for ourselves to accomplish it. If I have an evangelistic website that gets about a thousand hits per day, I should set for myself the goal, for example, that in one year’s time I will get ten thousand hits per day. Then I have to plan realistic strategies to reach that goal. I have to pay for a daily advertisement on Google, for example, I have to send out email advertisements, and I have to put well-prepared sermons on the website to attract more and more regular readers. Doing all this is getting out of the boat at Jesus’ invitation and walking on the water with faith without doubting.

We see later how Peter fulfilled Jesus’ great commission. He boldly proclaimed before the council of the Jews, “There is salvation in no one else, for there is no other name under heaven given among men by which we must be saved” (Acts 4:12). He doubted when walking on the water, and again he denied Jesus three times (Matt. 26:69-75); but after Pentecost, his faith was firm, and he bore witness to Jesus Christ before all without fear. When the council told him not to preach any more in the name of Jesus, he said, “Whether it is right in the sight of God to listen to you rather than to God, you must judge; for we cannot but speak of what we have seen and heard” (Acts 4:19-20), and “We must obey God rather than men” (Acts 5:29).

We have to preach Jesus Christ as St. Peter preached him, as the only means of salvation given to man by God. We have to say, as St. Peter said, “God exalted him at his right hand as Leader and Savior, to give repentance to Israel and forgiveness of sins. And we are witnesses to these things” (Acts 5:31-32). We must proclaim from the housetops that Jesus Christ died for our sins to remove from us our guilt, which depresses us, suffering himself on the cross our punishment for our sins to free us from this

punishment if only we believe in him. This is the gospel of human liberation sent by God to man, and we are its witnesses. If we preach like this, we will fulfill our great commission (Matt. 28:19-20), and we will walk on the water without doubting.