



The Holy See

POPE FRANCIS

ANGELUS

Saint Peter's Square
Sunday, 13 August 2023

[[Multimedia](#)]

Dear brothers and sisters, *buongiorno!*

Today's Gospel recounts a particular prodigious deed of Jesus: He walks at night on the waters of the lake of Galilee toward his disciples who are crossing the lake in a boat (cf. *Mt* 14:22-33). The question is: Why did Jesus do this? Like a show? No! But why? Maybe because of an urgent, unforeseeable need to help his disciples who were blocked by a headwind? No, because he himself had planned everything, he had made them depart that evening. The text even says he "made them" (cf. v. 22). Maybe he did it to give them a demonstration of his greatness and power? But this is not like him, who is such a humble person. So, why did he do it? Why did he want to walk on the waters?

Behind the walking on water there is a message that is not evident, a message we need to grasp. In fact, at that time, great expanses of water were held to be the haunts of evil powers that man was not able to master. Particularly when storms made them turbulent, these abysses were symbols of chaos and recalled the darkness of the underworld. Now, the disciples found themselves in the middle of the lake when it was dark. They are afraid of sinking, of being sucked in by evil. And here comes Jesus who walks on the water, that is, over the powers of evil. He walks over the forces of evil and says to his disciples: "Take heart, it is I; have no fear" (v. 27). This is the message Jesus gives us. This is the meaning of the sign: the powers of evil that frighten us, that we cannot master, immediately take on smaller proportions with Jesus. By walking on the waters, He wants to say, "Do not be afraid. I put your enemies under my feet" — a beautiful

message — I put your enemies under my feet — not people! — not that type of enemy, but death, sin, the devil. These are the enemies of the people, our enemies. And Jesus tramples on these enemies for us.

Today, Christ repeats to each of us, “*Take heart, it is I; have no fear!*” Take heart because I am here, because you are no longer alone on the turbulent waters of life. And so, what should we do when we find ourselves on the open sea at the mercy of headwinds? What should we do when we face the fear of the open sea, when we see only darkness and we feel we are going under? We need to do two things that the disciples do in the Gospel. What do the disciples do? They *call on* and *welcome* Jesus. At the worst moments, in the darkest of storms, call on Jesus and welcome Jesus.

The disciples *call on* Jesus: Peter walks a little on the waters towards Jesus, but then gets frightened. He sinks and then cries out: “Lord, save me!” (v. 30). Invoke Jesus, call on Jesus. This prayer is beautiful. It expresses the certainty that the Lord can save us, that he conquers our evil and our fears. I invite you to repeat it now all together. Three times together: *Lord, save me! Lord, save me! Lord, save me!*

And then the disciples *welcome*. First they call on, then they welcome Jesus into the boat. The text says that as soon as he got into the boat, “the wind ceased” (v. 32). The Lord knows that the boat of our life, as well as the boat of the Church, is threatened by headwinds, and that the sea on which we sail is often turbulent. He does not spare us the hard work of sailing; rather — the Gospel emphasizes — he pushes his disciples to depart. He invites us to face difficulties so they too might become *salvific places*, so Jesus can conquer them, so they become opportunities to meet him. In fact, in our moments of darkness, he comes to meet us, asking to be welcomed like that night on the lake.

So, let us ask ourselves: How do I react when I am afraid, in difficulties? Do I go ahead alone, with my own strength, or do I call on the Lord with trust? And what is my faith like? Do I believe that Christ is stronger than the adversarial waves and winds? But above all: Am I sailing with him? Do I welcome him? Do I make room for him in the boat of my life — never alone, always with Jesus? Do I hand the helm over to Jesus?

In the dark crossings, may Mary, the mother of Jesus, Star of the Sea, help us to seek the light of Jesus.

After the Angelus, the Pope continued:

Dear brothers and sisters,

Another tragic shipwreck happened a few days ago in the Mediterranean — 41 people lost their lives. I have prayed for them. And sadly and shamefully we must say that from the beginning of this year, almost two thousand men, women and children have already died trying to reach Europe. This is an open wound for humanity. I encourage the political and diplomatic efforts that are trying to heal this [suffering] in a spirit of solidarity and fraternity, as well as the dedication of all those who are working to prevent shipwrecks and rescue migrants.

Tomorrow, on the eve of the feast of Mary Most Holy, Assumed into Heaven, a peace pilgrimage will take place in Bafoussam in Cameroon, a country still afflicted by violence and war. Let us join in prayer to our brothers and sisters of Cameroon so that, through the intercession of the Virgin Mary, God may sustain the hope of the people who have been suffering for years, and open paths of dialogue so that peace and harmony may be achieved.

And let us pray for the people of Ukraine who are suffering so much because of this war.

I also want to assure my prayers for the victims of the fires that have devastated the Hawaiian Island of Maui.

I now extend my greetings to all of you, people from Rome and pilgrims from various countries. In particular, I greet several groups who participated in World Youth Day in Lisbon — and there are many! I see flags — Poland, Mexico, Argentina, Italy, many, El Salvador, many ... the priests and young people from El Salvador who are so loud; the students from Universidad Iberoamericana, Puebla, Mexico; and the young people from Taiwan. Enjoy your trip!

And I wish all of you a good Sunday. Please, do not forget to pray for me. Enjoy your lunch and *arrivederci!*