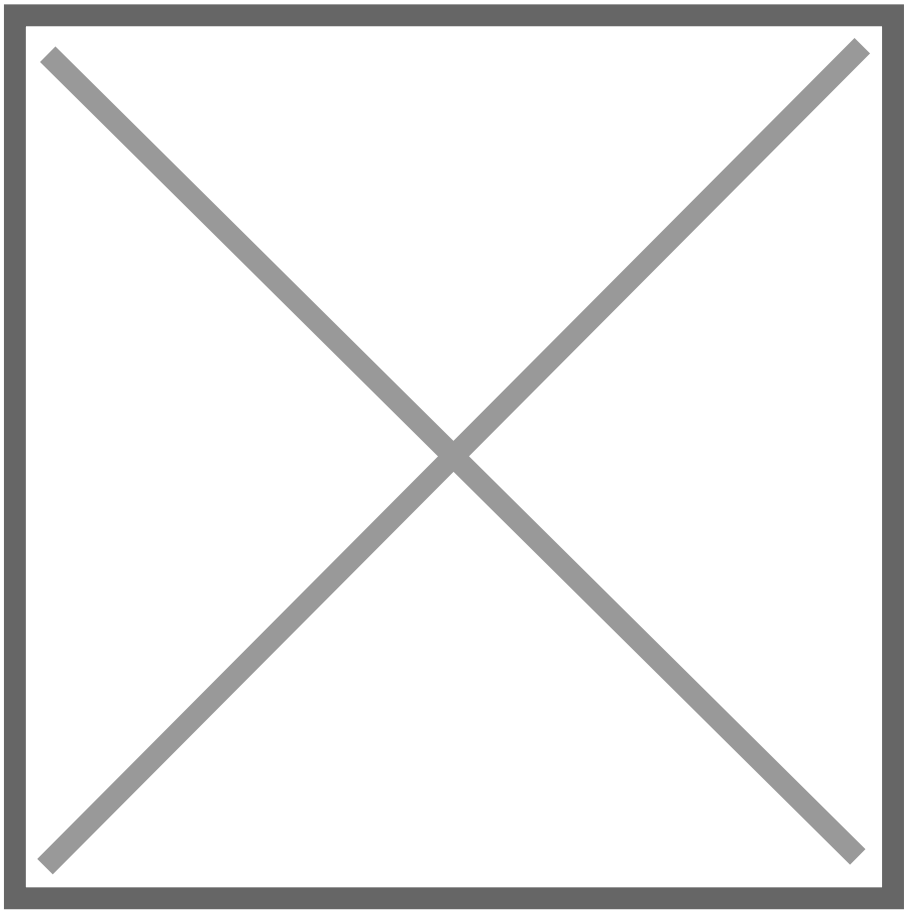
Vatican

Francis, the comic strip



Pope Francis speaks as he leads the Angelus from the window of his studio overlooking St. Peter's Square at the Vatican Aug. 9, 2020. The pope said calling out to God for help is key during periods of doubt and fear. (CNS/Vatican Media)

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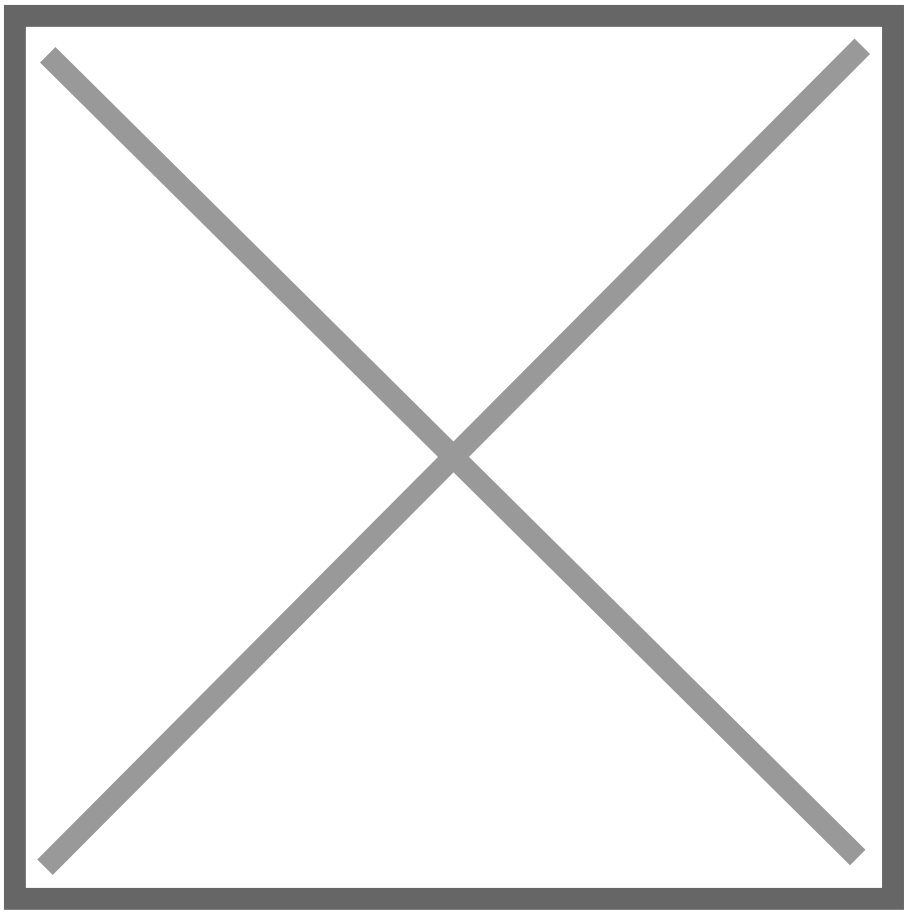
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Pope Francis speaks as he leads the Angelus from the window of his studio overlooking St. Peter's Square at the Vatican Aug. 9, 2020. The pope said calling out to God for help is key during periods of doubt and fear. (CNS/Vatican Media)

Everyone, including the pope, experiences trials that can shake his or her faith; the key to survival is to call out to the Lord for help, Pope Francis said.

"When we have strong feelings of doubt and fear and we seem to be sinking, (and) in life's difficult moments when everything becomes dark, we must not be ashamed

to cry out like Peter, 'Lord, save me,'" the pope said Aug. 9, commenting on the day's Gospel story in his Angelus address.

In the passage, Matthew 14:22-33, Jesus walks on the water of the stormy lake, but the disciples think they are seeing a ghost. Jesus reassures them that it is he, but Peter wants proof. Jesus calls him to walk on the water as well, but Peter gets frightened and starts sinking.

Peter cries out, "Lord, save me," and Jesus takes him by the hand.

"This Gospel narrative is an invitation to abandon ourselves trustingly to God in every moment of our life, especially in times of trial and turmoil," Francis said.

Like Peter, he said, believers must learn "to knock on God's heart, on Jesus' heart."

"Lord, save me" is "a beautiful prayer. We can repeat it many times," the pope said.

And believers also should reflect on how Jesus responded: immediately reaching out and taking Peter's hand, showing that God "never abandons us."

"Having faith means keeping your heart turned to God, to his love, to his fatherly tenderness amid the storm," the pope told his visitors.

"In dark moments, in sad moments, he is well aware that our faith is weak; all of us are people of little faith -- all of us, myself included," the pope said. "Our faith is weak; our journey can be troubled, hindered by adverse forces," but the Lord is "present beside us lifting us back up after our falls, helping us grow in faith."

Francis also said the disciples' boat on the stormy sea is a symbol of the church, "which in every age encounters headwinds, very harsh trials at times: we recall certain long and ferocious persecutions of the last century, and even today in certain places."

"In situations like that," he said, the church "may be tempted to think that God has abandoned her. But, in reality, it is precisely in those moments that the witness of faith, the witness of love, the witness of hope shines the most."

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