Francis, the comic strip
Pope Francis greets the crowd as he leaves his general audience in the Paul VI hall at the Vat

Pope Francis greets the crowd as he leaves his general audience in the Paul VI hall at the Vatican Nov. 10, 2021. (CNS photo/Paul Haring)

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In times of trouble, Christians must be like the disciples in the boat on the stormy sea, calling out to Jesus and waking him up, Pope Francis said.

"We must rouse Christ in our hearts, and only then will we be able to contemplate things with his eyes, for he sees beyond the storm," the pope said Nov. 10 at his weekly general audience.

With an exhortation to trust Christ's presence and to learn how to invoke the aid of the Holy Spirit, Pope Francis said he was concluding his series of audience talks about St. Paul's Letter to the Galatians. The concluding talk was the 15th in a series that began in late June.

The Letter to the Galatians, he said, should generate enthusiasm in Christians for following "the way of freedom, to 'walk according to the Spirit.'"

Christian freedom has nothing to do with "debauchery" or a sense of being completely self-sufficient and not needing God's help, he said. Instead, St. Paul taught that freedom exists under "love's shadow" and is exercised in acts of charity and service.

Christian freedom is not freedom from the law, the pope said, but rather is the fulfillment of it.

But, he said, "the temptation always is to turn back. One definition of Christians in the Scriptures is that we Christians are not people who go backward, who turn back. It's a good definition. The temptation is to turn back to feel more secure, to turn to the law alone, disregarding the new life in the Spirit."

"This is what Paul teaches us: The true law finds its fullness in the life of the Spirit that Jesus gave us, and this life in the Spirit can be lived only in freedom, Christian freedom," Pope Francis said.

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In addition to calling on Jesus when in the midst of a storm, the pope encouraged Christians to invoke the aid of the Holy Spirit regularly.

"Someone may say, 'Father, how do you invoke the Holy Spirit, because I know how to pray to the Father, with the Our Father; I know how to pray to Our Lady with the Hail Mary; I know how to pray to Jesus with the Prayer to the Holy Wounds, but what about the Spirit? What is the prayer of the Holy Spirit?'"

"Prayer to the Holy Spirit is spontaneous; it must come from your heart. In moments of difficulty you must ask, 'Holy Spirit, come,'" he said. "You must say it in your own language, in your own words. 'Come, because I am in difficulty; come because I am in darkness, in the dark; come because I do not know what to do; come because I am about to fall.'"

"This prayer will help us walk in the Spirit, in freedom and in joy," the pope said, "because when the Holy Spirit comes, there is joy, true joy."