Spirituality
Pencil Preaching





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"Lord, if it is you, command me to come to you on the water" (Matt 14:30).

Jer 30:1-2, 12-15, 18-22; *Matt 14:22-36*

The dramatic story of Peter being invited by Jesus to walk on water is clearly about more than a single miracle. When Matthew composed his gospel for a largely Jewish-Christian audience in Antioch of Syria toward the end of the first century, the church was experiencing both pressure from without and dissension from within. Its survival was a test of faith in God and in the presence of the risen Christ with the community.

Peter has emerged in the gospels as the leader of the church, so his hesitancy and courage in demonstrating his faith by stepping out of the boat to walk to Jesus was an important model for all believers. By their baptisms they had already experienced this baptismal walk with Jesus through death to new life, the Christian exodus from sin to freedom. Peter's characteristic mix of doubt and faith fit the community at Antioch a generation later. Every believer had to take this next, difficult step, trusting that Jesus would be there to grasp and save them if they faltered.

We admire those in the past who have faced crises and been faithful. Yet our own immediate crises can seem so different, so insurmountable because now it is happening to us. We face a divided country and a cultural shift that is challenging all our institutions. We witness global conflicts that threaten economic security. We face an unprecedented challenge to our common home. There are prophets campaigning for every direction and outcome.

It is our turn to show that we trust God to help us face the storm and come through with courage. A cloud of witnesses surrounds us now, affirming the words of Jesus: "Take courage, it is I; do not be afraid."

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