

SERMON on Peter Walking on the Water, Matthew 14:22-34

Sometimes our life seems very precarious and uncertain. Sometimes it seems that we are walking on water. Logic tells us that this is impossible and that we should sink. Yet life is not always logical and often we venture into situations and events that come our way that are no different than Peter walking on water today. When we trust in the Lord, when we put our trust and faith in him, we walk easily upon the water. Putting our faith in the Lord is not merely saying that we believe in Christ. It means most of all that we are sincerely asking the Lord to order our footsteps. We ask the Lord that only those things which are good for us and for our salvation should captivate our hearts and thoughts. We ask the Lord, even if it may contradict our desires, to deliver us from anything that may confuse us, lead us off of the strait and narrow path of salvation, and harm our souls. We ask the Lord for His help because we are weak and we know our passionate inclinations. That is why only God's mercy and power, if we sincerely ask for it, can deliver us and overcome the sinful inclinations that we cannot control in our human weakness. It is the same with the apostle Peter today. He looks at the storm clouds, he feels the strong winds in the frightful night, and his resolve and courage grows weak. He grows fainthearted, and it is only then that he begins to sink. However, because Peter had asked the Lord for His help in his weakness, the Lord is nearby, stretches out his arm, grasps Peter's hand and prevents Peter from perishing in the waves of the sea. We don't always know and understand what is best for us. However, the Lord always knows what is good for us. St. John of Kronstadt says that the enemy (Satan) always disturbs our soul with doubt and lack of faith, in order that we would not have peace. In this life we are never free of passions, temptations and seductions. We must understand that this is why we must never let down our guard but must always be attentive, alert and watchful of ourselves. During the moments of temptation we are like a person floating in the wind—where will the wind carry us? The enemy will try to pull us straight down into the abyss of perdition, but an angel and our very own conscience will hold us up and keep us from falling. At that moment we should arm ourselves with the fear of God and remember the horror of the torments of hell. It is necessary that we connect ourselves with the secret prayer of the heart, because without God's help we are not strong enough to struggle with temptations. The Lord knows our weaknesses. He is prepared to forgive us everything, if we repent and ask for forgiveness. As soon as the thoughts of sin enter into our mind, we must immediately at that moment repent, remembering God's mercy, which will beget not alarm and absent-mindedness, but instead a broken spirit and a contrite heart which God will not despise (Psalm 50:19). To repeat, whoever lives the spiritual life and is zealous for salvation, must attentively watch every movement of our heart and mind. The Devil is always present and seeking to captivate our heart and mind. That is why we must always be attentive and watchful. It only takes a moment of inattentiveness for the Devil to begin to reign in our heart and to cause us harm. As we walk on the waters of life, brothers and sisters, and the storms clouds and winds of doubt and temptation surround us, have faith and hope, always be attentive to yourself (your thoughts and the inclinations of your heart and soul), always pray without ceasing in the secret depth of your heart, and "Hold fast what you have, that no one may take your crown" (Revelation 3:11). Amen!