



My dear brothers and sisters in Christ,

After feeding the Five Thousand, Jesus “...made the disciples get into the boat and go before him to the other side, while he dismissed the crowds” (Matthew 14:22). Christ left to pray, and by night, the small boat was in a storm. In this Sunday’s Gospel, St. Matthew tells us how “...he came to them, walking on the sea. But when the disciples saw him walking on the sea, they were terrified, saying, ‘It is a ghost!’... But immediately he spoke to them, saying, ‘Take heart, it is I; have no fear.’ And Peter answered him, ‘Lord, if it is you, bid me come to you on the water.’ He said, ‘Come.’ So Peter got out of the boat and walked on the water and came to Jesus; but when he saw the wind, he was afraid, and beginning to sink he cried out, ‘Lord, save me.’ Jesus immediately reached out his hand and caught him, saying to him, ‘O man of little faith, why did you doubt? And when they got into the boat, the wind ceased. And those in the boat worshiped him, saying, ‘Truly you are the Son of God’” (Matthew 14:25-32).

Why does the Lord send the Disciples across the Sea alone? While it is not right to say that God tested them, this is a beautiful symbol for our own lives in this age. Our Lord knew that there would be a time when He would not be there to walk with His Disciples and so He wanted to show them the need for faith. Like the Twelve, we are on a ship: our port is the Kingdom of Heaven, and the captain is also our Lord, who is not physically with us. When the Disciples see Christ walking on water, they are so full of fear that they can only see negativity, instead of a miracle. This is even more clear when Peter sinks. The Evangelist makes a point to say that Peter sank because “...he saw the wind...” Peter not only doubted, but he was distracted and lost his focus on Christ. Though Peter had seen many healings and the multiplication of the loaves and fish hours before, his faith was dissolved by the storm.

We too have experienced the storms of life, and we will continue to do so, whether we have the winds of loss, or the waves of sadness. As we begin this month of August and look forward to the Feast of the Dormition of the Theotokos, we have a model of a person who despite her own questions and doubts trusted in the Lord, and at the Annunciation, told the Archangel, “Behold, I am the handmaiden of the Lord; let it be with me according to your word” (Luke 1:38). Therefore, like the Mother of God, we should have more than a little faith in God’s will. Then, let us keep our eyes focused, not on the storms of life, but on Jesus Christ, who alone has the power to set the bounds of the waves, and to calm them.

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