

From the Deacon's Desk

Today's Gospel

Whenever we read or hear Sacred Scripture, we must remember it was written in what the biblical writers called the "Kairos Moment." Kairos is a Greek word meaning the "Now Time." In God's world there is no time. Our clocks, calendars, and linear notions of time are human constructs, but in God's world time doesn't exist. Therefore, the biblical writers had this notion in mind when they talked about God's interaction with people, and in their minds, it is always the "Now Time" or "Moment" when biblical stories are being retold, again and again. In other words, it happened long ago, and it's equally happening NOW.

So all of sacred scripture is not meant so much for the people of long ago, but for us right here and right now. Whenever we read or hear about what God or Jesus did for the people of long ago, we should try to understand how those events are still happening right here and right now, in our world and for us.

Today's Gospel is about Jesus' mastery over the sea, waves, and winds, and the fear of his disciples. It has some important relevance for us who experience that same story today in other ways.

A few years ago I happened upon a wonderful book by a pastor, John Ortberg, and his book titled: "**IF YOU WANT TO WALK ON WATER, YOU'VE GOT TO GET OUT OF THE BOAT.**" Since scripture is always about us, put yourself in the story.

I think the real question to ask is not how Jesus walked on water, but how did Peter do it! Jesus was God in the flesh, so whatever he was able to accomplish is no surprise to us who believe. But how did Peter do it!? Peter was a surly man, as human as you and I, so how he was able to walk on the water is the real question, and perhaps a better question in light of the fact that the story is always about us. How do you and I do what Peter did and walk on water!?

Picture how violent the storm must have been for these seasoned fishermen to have been so afraid. Imagine the size of the waves, the strength of the wind, and the darkness of the night. These were the conditions under which Peter was going to get out of the boat. Peter may have been the first one out of the boat, but Jesus' invitation to walk on water with him is for us too.

Walking on water means facing our fears and choosing not to let fear have the last word. Walking on water means discovering and embracing the unique calling of God in our life. Walking on water means experiencing the power of God doing something that we are not capable of doing on our own.

Expect a few waves to slap us in the face, and often failure comes with the territory—but so does the strong hand of Jesus, pulling us up when the bottom drops out. For Peter, the Lord invited him into the adventure of his life. Peter was scared to death, but he didn't remain in the safe, secure, comfortable surroundings of the boat. He dared to take a risk for what he believed Jesus wanted him to do.

We all have an experience of that "sinking feeling" don't we? The waters of life are rough, and the waves can be high. And if you get out of the boat—whatever your boat might happen to be—there's a good chance you

might sink. Still, it is an immutable law of nature, that if you never get out of the boat, there is a guaranteed certainty that you never will walk on water.

If you want to know what your boat is, your fear will tell you. Just ask yourself what is it that produces the most fear in you? That might be your boat. If you want to walk on water, you've got to get out of the boat. I think there is something—Someone—inside of us who tells us there is more to life than sitting in the boat. We were made for something more than merely avoiding failure. There is something inside of us that wants to walk on water—to leave the comfort of routine existence and abandon ourselves to the high adventures of following where God invites us to go.

We in the church are experiencing a lot of changes lately, but it is no different than in the early church. We each are called to put our faith in Jesus who promised to remain with us forever; who will never let us sink, and to step out into the wind and waters of change and growth.

Whatever the storms of life may be for you, and no matter what kind of boat you find yourself hiding in, let us not be afraid that the Lord Jesus is here with us to help us face it all.

Next Weekend: Mission Appeal

Each year the diocese assigns one mission group to preach directly to parishioners about their work. Next weekend Sr. Dianne Doughty and Sr. Laura Hammel who belong to the Sisters of St. Clare will be with us to share their ministry. Please see a detailed description of their work in the bulletin.

Sr. Dianne Doughty was born in Minneapolis, Minnesota. In 1963 she entered the Monastery of St. Clare in Minneapolis, and professed vows in 1966. Since moving to the Saginaw Diocese, her projects, in addition to her prayer ministry, have included working with the deaf, serving as accountant for the sisters' community, and managing written correspondence with supporters of the community.

Sr. Laura Hammel was born in St. Paul, Minnesota. In 1982 she entered the Monastery of St. Clare in Minneapolis. Since moving to the Saginaw Diocese, her projects, in addition to her prayer ministry, have included developing and maintaining the community's web site, making blessing oil for use in special prayer events and liturgies, and designing greeting cards for sale to the public.

Whole Community Catechesis:

Please look for the Whole Community Catechesis letter and brochure being sent to all registered parishioners.

Assumption of the Blessed Virgin Mary:

The Solemnity of the Assumption of the Blessed Virgin Mary will be celebrated on Tuesday August 15 and it is a Holy Day of Obligation. We will have Mass at St. Vincent de Paul Church at 9:30 am. The Diocese of Saginaw is dedicated to the Patroness of Our Lady of the Assumption, so let us all come together to ask the Blessed Mother to watch over each of us and the Diocese of Saginaw.

O God, who looked on the lowliness of the Blessed Virgin Mary, raised her to this grace, that your Only Begotten Son was born of her according to the flesh and that she was crowned with surpassing glory, grant through her prayers, that saved by the mystery of your redemption, we may merit to be exalted by you on high.