

First Saturday of Advent, December 4

November 18 2021

MATTHEW 14:22-33

Then he advised the disciples to get into the boat and proceeded them to the other side while he dismissed the crowds. Alone he walked up on to a mountain to pray in the evening moonlight. Meanwhile the boat he had led his disciples was a few miles offshore being tossed about by forceful waves and furious wind blowing against the boat and their journey. During the fourth watch of the night, there came Jesus toward them walking on the same sea that had caused much trouble. The disciples with their own eyes had witnessed him walking on water through the sea. Terrified fearing unknowingly of this man walking through the sea "A ghost!" they cried out. The fearful man who walked through the sea then spoke "Take courage as it is I; don't be afraid" Peter said to him in reply and some doubt "Lord if it is you, command me to come to you on the water and accompany you. He then replied "Come Peter get out of the boat and begin to walk on the water towards Jesus" Peter obeyed his instructions but soon became frightful upon seeing how strong the wind was His fear had taken over him leading him to start sinking. He then cried out "Lord! Save me!" Immediately Jesus stretched out his hand catching him and saying to Peter "O You of little faith, why did you doubt me?" Getting back on to the boat the ferocious wind and waves that had planted so much fear died down. Those who witnessed this act of Jesus in praise and without a doubt said, "You are the Son of God".

Throughout my teenage years, it was hard for me to speak on my faith, God, his son Jesus and his teachings. I faced many difficulties when it came to that aspect in my life. Bringing myself to Church, much less a Sunday Mass with all of god's love and teachings. My broken faith covered my heart and eyes to Jesus, filling me with much doubt. Just as when Jesus instructed Peter to come, Peter came off the boat following his word, but doubt consumed causing him to sink in deep troubled waters. This resonates with me because in my years being a teenager I went through so many personal tribulations, I believe no one should ever go through. Now reflecting on the past, I realize there is so much comparison to Peter and the events in my life. My pain and past is my storm and the grief followed is the ocean. I was sinking, doubtful, scared and alone all at once, until the first week of April 2015.

The local church, that I had yet to enter, was holding a "Holy Thursday night". By the grace of God, I brought myself to attend. The church beautifully lit with many candles, had the Eucharist on display, and many in prayer. I decided to join them. Hands clasped together I sat speaking to God in desperation, asking him for his help. In regret, I asked him for forgiveness for my broken faith and losing him along the way. While praying, I looked up admiring the Eucharist, and in that moment, everything had changed. Admiring the Eucharist for a second, Jesus appeared inside in front my eye. In disbelief, a sense of comfort and happiness filled me, leaving me in tears. As I left the church walking back home this time it was not tears of sadness or being lost it was pure joy. I realize now through my own troubled water in life, Jesus pulled me back up from the ocean to the surface; he reignited my life with a restored faith, joy and love that burned so bright. I do not know how I went through life without Jesus. In my life, it was cold and lonely but now this love is nothing like I have ever felt before. Through my tribulations and triumphs without a doubt, I know he will be there when I call upon his name.

RCIA Candidate Ricardo Sanchez