

AUGUST 7, 2011

NINETEENTH SUNDAY IN ORDINARY TIME

MATTHEW 14:22-33

In this scripture reading, four lines struck me:

- "When [Peter] noticed the strong wind, he was afraid and started to sink."
- "Lord, if it is truly you, order me to come out on the water to you."
- "What little faith you have ... Why did you doubt?"
- "Truly you are the Son of God."

In the second line the words "noticed" and "strong wind" stand out. I think "wind" in the metaphor represents the tests I've dealt with throughout my life in situation calling for trust in someone other than myself. "Noticed" speaks to me of awareness or of becoming conscious of what was previously taken for granted and acted upon spontaneously.

Because of the circumstances of my early life, I learned not to count on others to help me. I trusted myself to figure out the "why" questions, and I never asked for help. As a result, I developed great self-confidence in my ability to control my life, or, at least, to adjust to new circumstances. I was, by nature, adventuresome, and was usually unaware of impending danger. I pretty much lived in my own inner world. Social awareness was not my long suit. This stance sustained me until I resigned from my last mission in 1996. Within one month, I began to experience numerous health problems and partial physical difficulties. These new experiences challenged my habitual self-reliance in unexpected ways:

- I began to doubt my ability to cope with change with my customary alacrity;
- I began to fear venturing into uncharted water.

Like Peter I became afraid of "walking on water" and I doubted I could do it myself. I began to realize that much of my past had been largely ego-driven and, that I was being called to rely on a power other than myself. I became conscious of fear hidden deep within me. And yet I was being "ordered" to live more consciously in faith and trust in God.

The admonishment given to the first daughters of Moye, often repeated to us in our novitiate days, "You must be willing to die behind a hedgerow" came to my mind. I now was able to connect these words consciously for the first time with our great charism: in Providence we trust. I realized I was being invited to live in greater awareness and trust the all-encompassing and unconditional love of the Son of God.

For reflection:

- ▲ Reflect on one life experience which has deepened your understanding of "In Providence I trust."
- ▲ What circumstances in life are preparing me for future boundary stretching?
- ▲ What do I do when doubts and fears paralyze me and keep me from responding to Jesus' invitation to move beyond my familiar and safe boundaries?

[We regret that we do not have an author's name on this reflection in the original 2002 booklet.]