

## Caritas Fellowship

### Miracles 3—Walking on Water

20 October 2011

#### Matthew 14.22-33

Then he made the disciples get into the boat and go before him to the other side, while he dismissed the crowds. 23 And after he had dismissed the crowds, he went up on the mountain by himself to pray. When evening came, he was there alone, 24 but the boat by this time was many furlongs distant from the land, beaten by the waves; for the wind was against them. 25 And in the fourth watch of the night he came to them, walking on the sea. 26 But when the disciples saw him walking on the sea, they were terrified, saying, "It is a ghost!" And they cried out for fear. 27 But immediately he spoke to them, saying, "Take heart, it is I; have no fear." 28 And Peter answered him, "Lord, if it is you, bid me come to you on the water." 29 He said, "Come." So Peter got out of the boat and walked on the water and came to Jesus; 30 but when he saw the wind, he was afraid, and beginning to sink he cried out, "Lord, save me." 31 Jesus immediately reached out his hand and caught him, saying to him, "O man of little faith, why did you doubt?" 32 And when they got into the boat, the wind ceased. 33 And those in the boat worshiped him, saying, "Truly you are the Son of God."



#### Mark 6.45-52

Immediately he made his disciples get into the boat and go before him to the other side, to Beth-sa'ida, while he dismissed the crowd. 46 And after he had taken leave of them, he went up on the mountain to pray. 47 And when evening came, the boat was out on the sea, and he was alone on the land. 48 And he saw that they were making headway painfully, for the wind was against them. And about the fourth watch of the night he came to them, walking on the sea. He meant to pass by them, 49 but when they saw him walking on the sea they thought it was a ghost, and cried out; 50 for they all saw him, and were terrified. But immediately he spoke to them and said, "Take heart, it is I; have no fear." 51 And he got into the boat with them and the wind ceased. And they were utterly astounded, 52 for they did not understand about the loaves, but their hearts were hardened.

#### John 6.15-21

Perceiving then that they were about to come and take him by force to make him king, Jesus withdrew again to the mountain by himself. 16 When evening came, his disciples went down to the sea, 17 got into a boat, and started across the sea to Caper'na-um. It was now dark, and Jesus had not yet come to them. 18 The sea rose because a strong wind was blowing. 19 When they had rowed about three or four miles, they saw Jesus walking on the sea and drawing near to the boat. They were frightened, 20 but he said to them, "It is I; do not be afraid." 21 Then they were glad to take him into the boat, and immediately the boat was at the land to which they were going.

#### Isaiah 41.10

Fear not, for I am with you, be not dismayed, for I am your God; I will strengthen you, I will help you, I will uphold you with my victorious right hand.

#### Job 9.8-10

who alone stretched out the heavens and trampled the waves of the sea; 9 who made the Bear and Orion, the Pleiades and the chambers of the south; 10 who does great things beyond searching out, and marvelous things beyond number.

#### Sirach 24.4-5

I dwell in high places, and my throne was in a pillar of cloud.

5 Alone I have made the circuit of the vault of heaven and have walked in the depths of the abyss.

#### **Psalm 77.19**

Thy way was through the sea, thy path through the great waters; yet thy footprints were unseen.

#### **1 Kings 19.9-13**

And there he came to a cave, and lodged there; and behold, the word of the LORD came to him, and he said to him, "What are you doing here, Eli'jah?" 10 He said, "I have been very jealous for the LORD, the God of hosts; for the people of Israel have forsaken thy covenant, thrown down thy altars, and slain thy prophets with the sword; and I, even I only, am left; and they seek my life, to take it away." 11 And he said, "Go forth, and stand upon the mount before the LORD." And behold, the LORD passed by, and a great and strong wind rent the mountains, and broke in pieces the rocks before the LORD, but the LORD was not in the wind; and after the wind an earthquake, but the LORD was not in the earthquake; 12 and after the earthquake a fire, but the LORD was not in the fire; and after the fire a still small voice. 13 And when Eli'jah heard it, he wrapped his face in his mantle and went out and stood at the entrance of the cave. And behold, there came a voice to him, and said, "What are you doing here, Eli'jah?"



#### **St. Jerome**

“Moreover he is left to temptation for a short season, that his faith may be increased, and that he may understand that he is saved not by his ability to ask, but by the power of the Lord. For faith burned at his heart, but human frailty drew him into the deep.

#### **St. John Chrysostom**

See how great his warmth, how great his faith. He said not, Pray and entreat for me; but ‘Bid me;’ he believes not only that Christ can Himself walk on the sea, but that He can lead others also thereon; also he wishes to come to Him speedily, and this, so great a thing, he asks not from ostentation, but from love. For he said not, Bid me walk upon the waters, but, ‘Bid me come unto thee.’ And it seems that having shown in the first miracle that He has power over the sea, He now leads them to a more powerful sign; ‘He said unto him, Come. And Peter, going forth of the boat, walked on the sea, that he might go to Jesus.

#### **Benedict XVI**

...If we let our gaze be captivated by the tendency of the moment, by the wind that is blowing around our ears, then really our faith can only sink out of sight...If we do that, then we have already lost our true anchor, which consists in depending on our relationship to the One who can overcome brute force, the brute force of death, brute force of history and its impossibilities. Faith means resisting the brute force that would otherwise pull us under. Faith means fellowship with him who has the other kind of power, one that draws us up, that holds us fast, that carries us safely over the elements of death...

...Faith is a perishing of the mere self and precisely a resurrection of the true self. To believe is to become oneself through liberation from the mere self, a liberation that brings us into communion with God mediated by communion with Christ.

#### **N.T. Wright**

We are like the disciples in the boat. They had seen so much of Jesus’ power. They had heard his teaching and prayed his prayer. But now they were stuck. Professional fishermen, they were struggling with the oars, unable to make headway against the wind. We too, in our world have discovered so much, learned so much, invented so much, and

yet are still without power to do many of the things that really matter. We have invented wonderful machines for making war, and yet nobody has found one that will make peace. We can put a man on the moon, but we can't put food into hungry stomachs. We can listen to the songs of the whales on the ocean floor, but we can't hear them crying of human souls in the next street.

And there, shimmering on the water, is a strange figure, walking toward us...

...One man alone against the elements. That's what it often feels like when you try to bring God's love and healing power into the wild night of the world. That's when we need to hear, once more, Jesus' words—a combination, as so often, of rebuke and encouragement: 'Is that really how much faith you have? Why all this doubt?' The moment when we are most strongly tempted to give up is probably the moment when help, if we only knew it, is just a step away.

**Flannery O'Connor, "Good Country People"**

"Give me my leg!" she screeched. He jumped up so quickly that she barely saw him sweep the cards and the blue box back into the Bible and throw the Bible into the valise. She saw him grab the leg and then she saw it for an instant slanted forlornly across the inside of the suitcase with a Bible at either side of its opposite ends. He slammed the lid shut and snatched up the valise and swung it down the hole and then stepped through himself. When all of him had passed but his head, he turned and regarded her with a look that no longer had any admiration in it. "I've gotten a lot of interesting things," he said. "One time I got a woman's glass eye this way. And you needn't to think you'll catch me because Pointer ain't really my name. I use a different name at every house I call at and don't stay nowhere long. And I'll tell you another thing, Hulga," he said, using the name as if he didn't think much of it, "you ain't so smart. I been believing in nothing ever since I was born!" and then the toast-colored hat disappeared down the hole and the girl was left, sitting on the straw in the dusty sunlight. When she turned her churning face toward the opening, she saw his blue figure struggling successfully over the green speckled lake.