

**19<sup>th</sup> Sunday in Ordinary Time**  
St. Vincent de Paul Church, Baltimore

A Gospel Reflection (*Mt. 14: 22-33*)

My first thought when reading this gospel was, “Would I have had the courage to step out of that boat in those raging waters and winds?” Peter obviously did, but then he had one of those moments of “Holy Moly, what have I just done?” I certainly have had those moments of asking myself what I have gotten myself into. We certainly have had numerous times recently to reflect on issues in our life over which we have little or no control, including the weather and the pandemic.

Why did Peter lose the faith that got him out of the boat? Why do we lose our resolve in a difficult, uncontrollable situation? He, the apostles, and we forget that it is not our skill or resolve that gets us through these circumstances. Only when Jesus offers his hand is Peter able to continue his journey and return safely to the boat.

It was interesting to me to see how today’s gospel and the beginning of our study of the epistle of James coincide so well. James’ letter begins this way, “My brothers and sisters, whenever you face trials of any kind, consider it nothing but joy, because you know that the testing of your faith produces endurance; and let endurance have its full effect, so that you may be mature and complete, lacking in nothing.”

The most difficult part of this is remembering it in the midst of a difficult trial, when we feel battered by forces out of our control. Would it have been easier for Peter had he kept his eyes on Jesus instead of noticing the raging waters under his feet? How comforting to know that, even though he doubted, Jesus offered him what he needed.

How can we fail with a God like this?

*Pat Ball*