

Peter, why did you doubt? You of little faith!

Homily, 9th August 2020

Mat 14,22-33

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As soon as I finish my reflection, my homily, you will all be invited to proclaim and renew your faith in the Catholic Church; the *Credo* that we recite basically has the structure that the Church has elaborated to identify its disciples, its members.

The *Credo* is a list of notions, of truths and it is structured in this way for a very deep and important reason.

However, if we consider this passage from the Gospel, we realize that it is about faith under a different point of view, it tells us that faith is not simply about acquiring notions and knowledge, it is also a vital act that can modify some existential situations, but this is difficult to achieve.

The Evangelist Matthew also affirms that **faith is a process that needs to grow, because when Jesus talks to Saint Peter** – the first of the Apostles, he who will be assigned the mission of proclaiming and announcing the faith, the pillar, one of the foundations of the Catholic Church – **He reproaches him for his having little faith.**

Why?

We could say that this happened when the Church was moving its first steps, but this is not the point; the point is that, **if the path of following Jesus is a real path**, if our religious life is not a moralistic illusion, if our life of believers is not a useless ritualism, but a commitment to follow the Lord, **in that case our life of faith becomes difficult.**

You of little faith!

If Saint Peter receives such judgement, how dare we think we can be persons of big faith?

Today's Gospel tells us something more: Saint Matthew is the only one among the Evangelists that reports this episode about the audacity of Saint Peter, who wants to get off the boat, and challenges Jesus: *Lord, if it is you, command me to come to you on the water.* The Lord says: *Come.* And Peter gets on the water and walks.

I thought a lot about this detail: Peter got off and started walking, but at a certain moment – the Evangelist reports – *when he saw how strong the wind was, he became frightened.*

What does this mean?

That wind was there even when he got off the boat and started walking on the sea; I don't know if it got stronger later, but even if it got stronger, there shouldn't have been any problem, because Peter had started walking thanks to his faith in the Lord, and that faith shouldn't have decreased with the increase of the intensity of the wind.

Here is – in my opinion – the secret of this passage of the Gospel, what we need to learn today, especially those who wish to follow the Lord with all their heart.

When you want to follow the Lord with all your heart and to find the reign of God, only then it is possible for the Lord to help us purify our heart from all the “confusion” that lives within us, from all the misunderstandings and all the illusions.

If we want to go to *Heaven*, our heart must be pure, free, it must be capable to love God and our neighbor. You cannot go to Heaven easily, simply reciting the *Credo* at church, lighting some candles or attending some masses. This will not get us to *Heaven*, at its best it will get us to *Purgatory*.

Heaven is the place where you live in charity and you need to be able to love everyone.

It is easy to love our friends; to love our acquaintances, our relatives.... At least to a certain level. As soon as they start doing something we don't appreciate or that we find annoying, we then start “slowing down” and moving away; we often hear people saying: “I thought that person was a friend but then I discovered he was criticizing me”...

We cannot limit our love to our closest friends, but we must learn to love everyone!

I am a priest, a religious person, the Lord says to me: *love your neighbor as yourself*; but who is my neighbor? It is also you, all of you, and I should love you regardless of who you are, just for the fact of being Christian. And every time I happen to talk with any of you, I should love you and welcome you with this generosity of the heart.

You clearly understand that this is not only demanding, but also difficult. **But Jesus can help us with all the trails we encounter in our life, where we are obliged to love who we wouldn't want to love, to live peacefully with other people or to accept many painful, difficult or obscure situations.**

God is there, and when God is there, He is there also in the illness, in the bad luck, always.

When Peter realizes where he is and for the first time feels that he is at the total mercy of Jesus and of his faith – he is walking on the sea and knows that there is nothing he can do, that he has got nothing of his own – he then drowns; or maybe he doesn't really drown, because he asks for Jesus's help, but that is the moment when he receives the reproach of Jesus: *you of little faith*. **Even if he hasn't actually drowned, he has had the actual sensation of drowning.**

Therefore, we have to try and keep our faith, to keep it strong especially the most difficult, intricate, painful, contradictory, obscure situations.

Even if the difficulties of life seem bigger than what we can handle, and we feel like drowning in the dark, in the desolation, in the suffering, let's keep our faith alive and we will experiment His salvation.

Bless to you Lord Jesus Christ.