

Turbulence Eighteenth Week in Ordinary Time Tuesday, August 7, 2018 8:15 AM
Jer 30:1-2, 12-15, 18-22; **Mt 14:22-36** (St. Sixtus II, pope and companions, martyrs; St. Cajetan) (When we are prayerful we will walk on the water, not literally, but really walk on the turbulence of the world.)

There are several different stories about the apostles being in a boat on the lake. In one Jesus is with them, but asleep. This one Jesus walks on the water toward them. In another he is right on the shore, and they come aground. What to make of these stories?

Well, first of all, **please do not take them literally**; you won't get anything out of that. We have to keep in mind that one of the basic images of the Church in the beginning, in the apostolic period, was a boat, a bark; **the bark of Peter means the Church**; it means literally the boat of Peter. Many of the disciples, not all of them, many of the chief disciples were fishermen, so they lived and worked in boats. It was their, so to speak, home environment.

But as an image of the Church now we see that **the boat is often turbulent**; in all three stories I mentioned the boat is turbulent. The waves are overcoming the boat. And this clearly is **an indication of the experience of the early Church**: life was very turbulent. And the waves of the world threatened the life of the inhabitants of the Church. **In every case the only solution was Christ.** In one case he had to be awakened because he was asleep. That is of course an image of what people think. People imagine Christ somehow to be unaware, so prayer is often a matter of trying to wake up God, trying to tell God what the problem is. This of course is very naive because God is not asleep; **we are asleep in a spiritual sense.** We are the ones who have to awaken; we don't have to awaken God; **we don't have to awaken Christ.**

In this case Jesus comes walking on the water and it is directly after he has been alone in prayer. This is an allusion to **the need the Church has for prayer**, for withdrawing from the surface of the water, withdrawing from the turbulence of life, **going up on the mountain by**

ourselves to pray. That is where we get tranquility, equanimity, serenity, peace of mind. It comes from prayer. And if we pray, we can return to the boat and we can bring a certain sort of peace. But with no prayer, there will be no peace.

So these teachings are given to us in a certain form, a form that appeals, appealed anyway, more to the ancient peoples, but we can still read them with meaning and hopefully get the meaning out of them that **we need to be a prayerful people.** And when we are prayerful we will walk on the water, not literally but really **walk on the turbulence of the world,** represented by the turbulence of the water, and bring peace to the Church **because we are anointed as the Christ; we are all sent to one another.**