

Jesus Walks on Water Saying, “Fear Not!” (Matthew 14:22-33)

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Guidelines: Protect confidentiality and follow the leader’s prompts.

Ignatian Meditation Process: Ignatius chose this Gospel reading for Week 2 of *The Spiritual Exercises*. Read the introduction and then “ask for the grace.” Then quietly read the passage by using your imagination to enter into the story, sensing and feeling what’s going on. Don’t analyze the passage or seek insights — *experience yourself as a character in the story*. After the second reading have a “colloquy” (short, personal conversation) with the Lord. You can use the prompts and questions at the bottom to guide your prayer time and journaling (and sharing with others).

Introduction: Jesus has just fed five thousand people with a few loaves and fishes and this put the crowd in a Messianic fever such that they tried to force Jesus to be King of Israel and to use his power to overthrow Roman tyranny (John 6:15). Jesus gets out of there immediately and withdraws to a mountain to be alone with his Father for an all night prayer vigil. Another furious storm whips up. The disciples wear themselves out rowing harder but Jesus keeps praying and then he walks on the water to cross the lake! Matthew indicates that if the disciples weren’t convinced Jesus was the Son of God from his previous miracles this one did it! What an incredible blessing that in the storms of life the Lord Jesus walks on water to us, assuring, “Fear not. I’m here and I love you.”

Ask For the Grace: Lord Jesus, I ask for the grace I desire: to know you more intimately, to love you more intensely, and to follow you more closely.

Imagine Yourself in the Gospel: Matthew 14 (MSG)

22-23 As soon as the meal was finished, [Jesus] insisted that the disciples get in the boat and go on ahead to the other side while he dismissed the people. With the crowd dispersed, he climbed the mountain so he could be by himself and pray. He stayed there alone, late into the night.

24-26 Meanwhile, the boat was far out to sea when the wind came up against them and they were battered by the waves. At about four o’clock in the morning, Jesus came toward them walking on the water. They were scared out of their wits. “A ghost!” they said, crying out in terror.

27 But Jesus was quick to comfort them. “Courage, it’s me. Don’t be afraid.”

28 Peter, suddenly bold, said, “Master, if it’s really you, call me to come to you on the water.”

29-30 He said, “Come ahead.”

Jumping out of the boat, Peter walked on the water to Jesus. But when he looked down at the waves churning beneath his feet, he lost his nerve and started to sink. He cried, “Master, save me!”

31 Jesus didn’t hesitate. He reached down and grabbed his hand. Then he said, “Faint-heart, what got into you?”

32-33 The two of them climbed into the boat, and the wind died down. The disciples in the boat, having watched the whole thing, worshiped Jesus, saying, “This is it! You are God’s Son for sure!”

34-36 On return, they beached the boat at Gennesaret. When the people got wind that he was back, they sent out word through the neighborhood and rounded up all the sick, who asked for permission to touch the edge of his coat. And whoever touched him was healed.

1st Reading: Visualize yourself in the Gospel story. Don’t seek intellectual insights — stay with the imagery. Use your senses to see, touch, feel, and hear. What part of the story are you drawn to? Which character do you identify with? Or are you a bystander?

2nd Reading: Experience the story in the role of the character God led you to. Then talk with the Lord. What do you feel? How does this relate to something in your life today? What is God saying to you?