

19th SUNDAY IN ORDINARY TIME—CYCLE A
Christ the King • August 9-10, 2008

I love Peter. He is so real, so human, someone I can relate to. He is as quick to stick his foot in his mouth, as he is to say something deeply profound. Today, we have another familiar Peter story: Peter's short walk on water. Let's look again at the story. It is late at night, a storm is raging, the disciple's boat is being tossed. Then they see something, or someone. What or who is it? In fear, they cry out, it is a ghost. No, it is Jesus.

Peter calls out, "if it is you, Jesus, call me to you." "Come," Jesus invites. And with audacious faith, Peter leaps out the boat. He defies gravity and common sense and walks on water. It is a great moment of faith for the apostle, but then he starts thinking about the waves and wind. Those common sense whispers come to mind and he begins to sink like a rock.

Have you ever had a moment like that? You are speaking in front of a crowd, and suddenly you hear a whisper in your mind, "*What are you doing up here in front of all these people? What if you bore them, or mix up your words?*" Or you are trying to raise a child, start a new job, begin a new school year, and the whisper says, "*You don't know what you are doing! This will never work! What were you thinking?*" And as you consider the whisper, suddenly you begin to sink like a rock.

We all face defeat and failure in life. The momentum of victory evaporates, the applause changes to jeers, and the glowing success fades into the dark shadow of defeat. We begin to question ourselves; we may even feel abandoned by everyone, including God.

It is in these moments that God comes.

With a gentle stillness, as with Elijah or with an outstretched hand, as with Peter, God comes to us in our sinking moments and helps us back to the surface. God defies the gravity of our own doubts and fears and failures and calls us trust, try again and find new life.