

# Connecting With the Sunday Readings

**Nineteenth Sunday**      **Gospel Word**  
**in Ordinary Time**      Matthew 14:22-33

This week we are given yet another wonderful account of an event in the life of Jesus. What more memorable image of Jesus is there than the one of him walking on the rough waters? And at the same time the disciples were panicking, and wondering whether they were going to survive on the Sea of Galilee, known for its sudden and often fatal storms. They may have asked, "Where is Jesus when we really need him?" Perhaps they were looking to shore to see how close they were, when suddenly they see the most unexpected sight: Jesus walking atop the waves, heading in their direction.

The always-impulsive Peter is suddenly overtaken with the idea that he, too, might try this. He asks Jesus if it's okay for him to do a little wave walking. Jesus says, "Come." (29) Peter slips over the side of the boat and onto the water, and for a few seconds, it appears that he can actually do it. He's probably thinking they will never believe this story back home. But then, the all too common fear surfaces and Peter begins to sink. Jesus reached out and caught Peter's hand and saved him.

*-by David Thomas, PhD, Co-Director, The Bethany Family Institute*

## Living the Word

What we have in Peter is a great example of human pride that makes him think he can do anything, and it is in conflict with the reality of his human limitations. Peter went beyond his limits and once he realized that, down he went. But there's something else: the saving-reach of Jesus. We will all have our moments of "sinking," but it is important to keep in mind that it is in that moment that Jesus wants to help us.

Storms can be taken as a metaphor for those times in our life when we, too, are afraid. We can become very fearful when times are hard. It could be an illness, an injury, a loss of employment, the breaking of an important relationship, or a hundred other events that cause us to be concerned for our survival. Stormy times are inevitable, and many of the stories of Jesus can help us weather storms. What's important to remember is that we are never alone in our dealing with difficulties. Jesus is there to assist us, as he helped Peter when Peter started to sink under the churning sea.

## Prayer

God of Trials and Wonder,  
We reach out to you during our times  
of difficulty. Help us like you helped  
Peter when he was getting in over his  
head. Amen.