



*But when he saw how strong the wind was he became frightened;  
and, beginning to sink, he cried out, "Lord, save me!"  
Immediately Jesus stretched out his hand and caught Peter,  
and said to him, "O you of little faith, why did you doubt?"*

Last Saturday night, I went with some friends to a Brooklyn Cyclone game. I like minor league baseball since the tickets are cheaper, the players more energetic, and I do not care too much who wins or loses. Additionally, it was *Seinfeld Night* and there were appearances by the actors who played the *Soup Nazi* and Jackie Childs . Sad to say, I was too late to get a Bobblehead of these characters.

The stadium, located near the Coney Island Boardwalk, is beautiful facility and you can glimpse the Atlantic Ocean in the background of the field. However, I did find it very hard to focus on the game. Right behind the left field wall is a roller coaster called the Thunderbolt. As a kid, I remember the Thunderbolt and Steeplechase, but this a rather new modern coaster. Although it does not have the name or fame of the famous Coney Island Cyclone Roller Coaster, as I watched this coaster going up and down very steep hills, with the passengers being turned upside down several times during the ride, I was so frightened that I could only eat three Nathan's hot dogs!

I used to love riding roller coasters, but a few years ago, after a ride on a rather tame coaster in Farmingdale's Adventure Park with my nephew, my aching back informed me that would be my last ride. I am not sure now if I even want to try the Carousel. We human beings are funny people. The Coney Island Thunderbolt cost ten dollars. So, we pay this fee to get the heck scared out of us as we scream at every turn and twist. We pay to get ourselves terrified.

But I am terrified of many things in life that I do not have to pay for to experience. And, unlike a roller coaster, I am not always sure that I will arrive at the end of the ride laughing and begging for another a trip. I am very frightened of a man named Kim Jon-

il, the dictator who rules North Korea and is threatening to begin a nuclear war. Having lived through the Cold War and the Cuban Missile Crisis, and years of the threat of terrorism, this present age seems to be growing increasingly fearsome. The world is as dangerous as it has ever been.

But despite such a major threat, there is a litany of issues and concerns that can fill us with fear. Words like cancer, biopsy, and malignant can turn an ordinary day into a devastating nightmare. Phone calls in the middle of the night often bring rushed trips to emergency rooms. Our health concerns not only for ourselves but for our loved ones paralyze us with fear. We know a booming stock market can turn overnight and drain our retirement funds, and job security never seems guaranteed.

Those of you who are parents have your own concerns for your children. You love them so much but you can protect them from every danger and problem that lurk in the world arounds us. We are reading regularly about the opioid crisis in Long Island. When our children are young, we worry how they will do in school, do they have good friends. When they become teens, we wonder what is going on in their lives. The teen years with all the challenges of the internet, peer pressure, sexual concerns make these years a time of confusion for the teen and a time of worry for the parent. When our children get married, we worry if they have chosen the right spouse. Will they be happy. Yes, the roller of coaster of life can be a frightening ride. No life, however good or happy, ever completely avoids the twisting turns and the 90 degree drops.

I have a friend who often says, getting older is not for the faint-hearted. The so called Golden ages can be wonderful, but they can also be filled with health and financial concerns, and wondering will there be anyone to take care of me when if I am unable to care for myself. We smile about senior moments of forgetfulness but they worry us. Let me add one more concern to this list. What will happen to me when I die? Will God invite me into his kingdom? Do I really believe there is life after death or is this life all these is? Is my faith alive or it is just something that I do like brushing my teeth or shaving in the morning?

In today's Gospel, we see the apostles, not on a roller coaster, but in a boat, that is being tossed and turned about in the stormy sea of Galilee. Jesus is not with them and they are terrified. Adding to their fear is the sight of a kind of ghostly figure approaching them on the rolling waves. They come to see that it is Jesus. However, much faith they have in Jesus, watching a man walking on water is as frightening to them as they water splashing into their boat. *"It is a ghost,"* they said, and they cried out in fear.

At once Jesus spoke to them, *"Take courage, it is I; do not be afraid."*

Peter said to him in reply, *"Lord, if it is you, command me to come to you on the water."*

He said, *"Come."* Impulsive Peter decides to test the Lord. He gets out of the water and becomes the first and only human being to walk on water. He is looking at Jesus and no doubt smiling in delight and wonder at this most awesome adventure. Then, Peter takes his eyes of Jesus and looks down at the water. What they heck am I doing on the water. Am I crazy? Suddenly, he slips under the waves and has the horrible sensation of

drowning. The Gospel describes the moment this way: But when he saw how strong the wind was he became frightened; and, beginning to sink, he cried out, "*Lord, save me!*"

Have not everyone of us cried out the same prayer in a time of physical, emotional, or spiritual drowning, when the troubles of life left us with those same words of Peter: Lord Save me. Even Jesus, fully divine, but fully also fully human cries out from the cross to his Father: *My, My God, why have you abandoned me.*

Our faith, our prayers, our good works never promise a life free of fear, struggles and anxiety. None of us can go through life without sometimes, struggling to breathe under the waves. We have our doubts and worries; we question God and wonder if he is truly there. Yet, when we look back at those all too frequent moments of chaos and confusion, we can see God was with us in ways that we could not see then but know them now. I am sure I will get knocked under the waves again. But listen to the last verse of this Gospel: Immediately Jesus stretched out his hand and caught Peter, and said to him, "*O you of little faith, why did you doubt?*" After they got into the boat, the wind died down. Those who were in the boat did him homage, saying, "*Truly, you are the Son of God.*"