

SERMON
On the Gospel Reading of the 9th Sunday of Matthew (Mt. 14:22-34)
(2 August 2026)

The event we hear about today, dear brothers and sisters, in the Gospel reading is the continuation of that astonishing miracle of the feeding of the five thousand, which the Church set before us last Sunday. It is significant that immediately after this miraculous intervention, the Lord hastens to send His disciples away, while He Himself goes up the mountain to pray. This was done to prevent the crowd from believing that Jesus was merely an earthly ruler who had come to satisfy the temporary material needs of the people. Christ's authority is of an entirely different order and nature. That is why the sacred text presents Him withdrawn in solitude, praying throughout the night.

Meanwhile, the disciples spend many hours in their boat, struggling with all their strength against the storm and barely managing to keep from sinking. Then, just as dawn begins to break, the Lord decides to approach them, walking upon the surface of the sea. As one would expect, this event, which defies every natural law, terrifies the disciples, who think they are seeing a ghost. They are still spiritually immature. They have not yet grasped the significance of the recent miracle of the feeding of the multitude, nor of the many miracles the Lord had already performed, all of which clearly reveal that Jesus has authority over the laws of nature and can suspend them.

In reality, the disciples themselves are wavering, just like their small boat. They struggle to remain afloat on the sea of faith and not sink into the depths of unbelief. Christ, who knows every human heart, is fully aware of this. He allows them to face danger so that they may reach the point of despair, and only then does He reveal Himself, so that they may understand that true salvation comes only from God. We often find ourselves in the same situation. The problems of daily life, the struggle to survive, family difficulties, and personal dead ends place us in the midst of a "storm," where no safe harbour seems to exist. We usually turn to uncertain solutions that more often than not lead us onto hidden reefs, while our only true salvation and hope is Christ. And Christ comes precisely when everything appears to be over. We must never forget this.

Yet our lack of faith does not allow us to move steadily toward Christ. Instead, like Peter, at the first sign of difficulty we begin to sink into the sea of despair. Peter, ever bold, realises that the One approaching is Christ. Encouraged by Jesus' words, "Take courage; it is I; do not be afraid," he steps out of the boat and begins walking on the waves. But soon, when he notices the violence of the storm, he begins to sink. It is Peter's faith that overcomes the natural law of gravity, and it is his lack of faith that becomes the obstacle to his salvation. Christ is there; He does not abandon him. He waits. What changes is Peter's attitude toward the Lord.

A tremendous struggle is taking place within the Apostle's soul. On the one hand, he sees the Lord standing upon the waves, in defiance of all logic and every

natural law. On the other hand, he is terrified by the fury of the storm. Yet at the decisive moment, recognising once again his own weakness and helplessness, he turns to the Lord and cries out, "Lord, save me!" Truly, how many times have we found ourselves, like Peter, in the sea of temptations, troubles, and sorrows, allowing ourselves to sink instead of turning with trust to the Lord and saying, "Lord, save me!" And we see that the Lord does not delay. He does not leave the frightened Peter to drown. He gently rebukes him, saying, "O you of little faith, why did you doubt?" Then He stretches out His hand, catches him, and leads him safely back into the boat.

My beloved brothers and sisters, Christ is always waiting for us. He is always ready to extend His hand, provided that we are willing to stretch out ours to grasp it. Then He will lead us into the safety of the spiritual ship, which is His Holy Church. What is needed is faith—that is, trust in Christ, who is our final, yet certain, hope. Let us not struggle alone against the waves of despair. Let us hold fast to the mighty hand of the Lord and cry out with all the strength of our hearts: "Lord, save me!"