

## Pursuing Spiritual Breakthrough

### Walk on Water

This is a highly significant precept for me. In early 1971, my father was dying, our family was bankrupt, we were forced to move from our home, and though I was still in high school, I had to take a full time job to help support the family. As I prayed about our situation one day after school, before leaving for work, the Lord said to me, "I have called you to be a priest in My Church. If you keep your eyes on Me you will walk on water." I was 15 years old. I wasn't asking Jesus about the future; I wanted to know how we were going to make it as a family right then. "If you keep your eyes on Me you will walk on water."

Almost 25 years later, as we were leaving the Episcopal Church to join the CEC, storms were once again swirling about me, and the Lord repeated those words to me. I cannot relate the entire story in a one-page meditation, but suffice it to say that the message was clear: "If you keep your eyes on the storm you will sink. But, if you keep your eyes on Jesus, you will walk on water."

In the story of Peter walking on water (Matt. 14:28-33), Peter was doing fine until he took his attention off of Jesus. Matthew records, "but when he saw the wind, he was afraid." It is easy to get frightened by events over which we have no control, but "fear has to do with punishment, and he who fears is not perfected in love." (1 John 4:18b) So, if we are not being punished, what is the solution to our situation? The answer is found in the first half of that verse: "There is no fear in love, but perfect love casts out fear." (1 John 4:18a) To love Jesus is to keep your eyes on Him—to obey Him. "If you love Me you will obey what I command." (John 14:15) To love Jesus is to do what He says, even when it seems impossible. Walk on water? Can't be done. Unless...you keep your eyes on Jesus.

Recently, I was asked by a parishioner how I was able to persevere in the current circumstances. With so many families leaving the parish and having the validity of my ordination questioned by someone I love and respect, what could I do to handle that storm? And it is a storm, not unlike the ones raging about other members of the parish. But to what are we looking? Are we going to be like Peter and see the wind and waves and become fearful? Or will we keep our eyes on Jesus and walk on water?

In the midst of the storm, Peter and the other disciples see Jesus, and Peter addresses this apparition saying, "Lord, if it is you, bid me come to you on the water." The Lord doesn't offer explanation. He doesn't soften His command with comforting words. He simply says, "Come." It is a command. "If you love Me you will obey what I command." (John 14:15) When Jesus tells us to come, will we look at the storm and have our doubts and fears, or will we keep our eyes on Jesus and walk on the water right into His arms?