

The Ninth Sunday after Pentecost Matthew 14:22-34

And straightway Jesus constrained his disciples to get into a ship, and to go before him unto the other side, while he sent the multitudes away. And when he had sent the multitudes away, he went up into a mountain apart to pray: and when the evening was come, he was there alone. But the ship was now in the midst of the sea, tossed with waves: for the wind was contrary. And in the fourth watch of the night Jesus went unto them, walking on the sea. And when the disciples saw him walking on the sea, they were troubled, saying, It is a spirit; and they cried out for fear. But straightway Jesus spake unto them, saying, Be of good cheer; it is I; be not afraid. And Peter answered him and said, Lord, if it be thou, bid me come unto thee on the water. And he said, Come. And when Peter was come down out of the ship, he walked on the water, to go to Jesus. But when he saw the wind boisterous, he was afraid; and beginning to sink, he cried, saying, Lord, save me. And immediately Jesus stretched forth his hand, and caught him, and said unto him, O thou of little faith, wherefore didst thou doubt? And when they were come into the ship, the wind ceased. Then they that were in the ship came and worshipped him, saying, Of a truth thou art the Son of God. And when they were gone over, they came into the land of Gennesaret. (KJV)

Wisdom comes from the Lord God. Believers do well to turn to the Lord when seeking wisdom. God's wisdom is found in the Holy Scriptures. (Ecclesiastes 2:26) Wisdom from God is proclaimed in the Church.

The Gospel teachings at each Divine Liturgy communicate God's wisdom. The current Gospel reveals Jesus' ability to bring calm in the storms of life. Jesus' ability to save those perishing in the tumultuous sea of life is verified.

The Church is often likened to a ship. Noah was saved in the ark when the earth was subject to great flooding. (Gen.7:7, 2 Peter 2:5) The disciples in the current Gospel were not harmed when the storm arose as they travelled in the ship at Jesus' direction.

Believers learn the value of listening to Jesus in the Church. Jesus' known words and teachings are preserved and proclaimed in the Church. Attentive believers value Jesus' words and find peace in them.

Hunger in the soul is nourished and addressed by the Gospel. Love for Jesus Christ develops by being attentive to the Gospel. The Church is where believers enter the life in Christ and learn to grow in Christ.

The Church offers daily nourishment for believers to grow in Christ. The Church provides daily Divine services and teachings for individuals seeking to grow. Baptism is the beginning point for the life in Christ. Eternal life is the final goal.

Believers become aware of God's Kingdom by coming to church. Believers learn about and experience Jesus Christ in the Church. The needs for life are addressed in God's Holy Church.

Each Divine Liturgy gives believers the opportunity to partake of the Precious Body and Blood of Jesus Christ. The saving actions of Jesus Christ proclaimed in the current Gospel are taught throughout the year in the Church.

The present Gospel describes the disciples witnessing Jesus' walking on the water. Jesus made a great impact on the disciples. Jesus transforms the lives of believers attentive to the Gospel.

The Church is currently continuing to celebrate Jesus' transfiguration on Mt. Tabor before the Holy Apostles Peter, James and John. (Mt. 17:1-2) Jesus' transfigured glory shines through the centuries in the Church.

Joy emanates from Jesus' radiance. During this time of the Dormition Fast in the Church believers have opportunities to increase their life in the Transfigured Christ. Believers are called upon to fully embrace the Transfigured Christ.

The Light of the Transfigured Christ shines the path to the Heavenly Kingdom. The Light of the Transfigured Christ destroys the darkness of the world. The Light of Christ illumines the goodness revealed by God.

Darkness is often prevalent in daily life. Jesus is the Light for believers to follow through the darkness. Peter was wise to ask Jesus to save him when he began to sink while walking on the water.

Believers can always turn to Jesus in prayer and ask to be saved from drowning in life's stormy seas. Jesus is attentive to pleas made in good faith. The thief on the cross next to Jesus changed his life completely at the last moment. (Luke 23:40-43)

While there is life in the body and the mind functions well, the opportunity exists to be saved with Christ. Believers having falling away from Christ are always welcome to repent and return to Christ.

Many baptized into Christ have fallen away. Those having fallen away are very near parish churches everywhere. Jesus Christ welcomes home all those who have fallen away just as the father welcomed home the prodigal son. (Luke 15:11-32)

Having strong faith is a valuable lesson in the current Gospel. Strong faith is nourished by attending the Divine services and being attentive. The Church nourishes believers seeking to address the hunger in the soul.

Jesus did not disappoint Peter when Peter was fearful of drowning. Jesus will not disappoint believers crying out from the depths of their souls with sincere and strong faith. Now is the time to reach out to Jesus in faith.

The Ninth Sunday after Pentecost. Afterfeast of the Transfiguration. Holy Martyrs Anicletus and Photius and Others with Them. August 12/25, 2024. Hidden Valley, Pennsylvania. Father Rodney Torbic