

Matthew: 14:22–36

From Catena Aurea:

22. 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.

23. 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.

24. But the ship was now in the midst of the sea, tossed with waves: for the wind was contrary.

25. And in the fourth watch of the night Jesus went unto them, walking on the sea.

26. And when the disciples saw him walking on the sea, they were troubled, saying, It is a spirit; and they cried out for fear.

27. But straightway Jesus spake unto them, saying, Be of good cheer; it is I; be not afraid.

28. And Peter answered him and said, Lord, if it be thou, bid me come unto thee on the water.

29. And he said, Come. And when Peter was come down out of the ship, he walked on the water, to go to Jesus.

30. But when he saw the wind boisterous, he was afraid; and beginning to sink, he cried, saying, Lord, save me.

31. And immediately Jesus stretched forth his hand, and caught him, and said unto him, O thou of little faith, wherefore didst thou doubt?

32. And when they were come into the ship, the wind ceased.

33. Then they that were in the ship came and worshipped him, saying, Of a truth thou art the Son of God.

CHRYSOSTOM. Desiring to occasion a diligent examination of the things that had been done, He commanded those who had beheld the foregoing sign to be separated from Him; for even if He had continued present it would have been said that He had wrought the miracle fantastically, and not in verity;

but it would never be urged against Him that He had done it in His absence; and therefore it is said, And straightway Jesus compelled his disciples to get into a ship, and to go before him to the other side, while he sent the multitudes away.

JEROME. These words shew that they left the Lord unwillingly, not desiring through their love for their teacher to be separated from Him even for a moment.

CHRYSOSTOM. It should be observed, that when the Lord works a great miracle, He sends the multitudes away, teaching us thereby never to pursue the praise of the multitude, nor to attract them to us. Further, He teaches us that we should not be ever mixed with crowds, nor yet always shunning them; but that both may be done with profit; whence it follows, And when he had sent the multitude away, he went up into a mountain apart to pray; shewing us that solitude is good, when we have need to pray to God. For this also He goes into the desert, and there spends the night in prayer, to teach us that for prayer we should seek stillness both in time and place.

JEROME. That He withdraws to pray alone, you should refer not to Him who fed five thousand on five loaves, but to Him who on hearing of the death of John withdrew into the desert; not that we would separate the Lord's person into two parts, but that His actions are divided between the God and the man.

AUGUSTINE. (De Cons. Ev. ii. 47.) This may seem contrary to that Matthew says, that having sent the multitudes away, He went up into a mountain that He might pray alone; and John again says, that it was on a mountain that He fed this same multitude. But since John himself says further, that after that miracle He retired to a mountain that He might not be held by the multitude, who sought to make Him a king, it is clear that He had come down from the mountain when He fed them. Nor do Matthew's words, He went up into a mountain alone to pray, disagree with this, though John says, When he knew that they would come to make him a king, he withdrew into a mountain himself alone. (John 6:15.) For the cause of His praying is not contrary to the cause of His retiring, for herein the Lord teaches us that we have great cause for prayer when we have cause for flight. Nor, again, is it contrary to this that Matthew says first, that He bade His disciples go into the boat, and then that He sent the multitudes away, and went into a mountain alone to pray; while John relates that He first withdrew to the mountain, and then, when it was late, his disciples went down to the sea, and when they had entered into a boat, &c. for who does not see that John is relating as afterwards done by His disciples what Jesus had commanded before He retired into the mountain?

JEROME. Rightly had the Apostles departed from the Lord as unwilling, and slow to leave Him, lest they should suffer shipwreck whilst He was not with them. For it follows, Now when it was evening he was there alone; that is, in the mountain; but the boat was in the middle of the sea tossed with the waves; for the wind was contrary.

CHRYSOSTOM. Again, the disciples suffer shipwreck, as they had done before; but then they had Him in the boat, but now they are alone. Thus gradually He leads them to higher things, and instructs them to endure all manfully.

JEROME. While the Lord tarries in the top of the mountain, straightway a wind arises contrary to them, and stirs up the sea, and the disciples are in imminent peril of shipwreck, which continues till Jesus comes.

CHRYSOSTOM. But He suffers them to be tossed the whole night, exciting their hearts by fear, and inspiring them with greater desire and more lasting recollection of Him; for this reason He did not stand by them immediately, but as it follows, in the fourth watch of the night he came to them walking upon the sea.

JEROME. The military guards and watches are divided into portions of three hours each. When then he says that the Lord came to them in the fourth watch, this shews that they had been in danger the whole night.

CHRYSOSTOM. Teaching them not to seek a speedy riddance of coming evil, but to bear manfully such things as befall them. But when they thought that they were delivered, then was their fear increased, whence it follows, And seeing him walking upon the sea, they were troubled, saying, It is a vision, and through fear they cried out. For this the Lord ever does; when He is to rescue from any evil, He brings in things terrible and difficult. For since it is impossible that our temptation should continue a long time, when the warfare of the righteous is to be finished, then He increases their conflicts, desiring to make greater gain of them; which He did also in Abraham, making his hot conflict his trial of the loss of his son.

JEROME. A confused noise and uncertain sound is the mark of great fear. But if, according to Marcion and Manichæus, our Lord was not born of a virgin, but was seen in a phantasm, how is it that the Apostles now fear that they have seen a phantasm (or vision)?

CHRYSOSTOM. Christ then did not reveal Himself to His disciples until they cried out; for the more intense their fear, the more did they rejoice in His presence; whence it follows, And immediately Jesus spoke to

them, saying, Be of good cheer, it is I, be not afraid. This speech took away their fear, and prepared their confidence.

JEROME. Whereas He says, It is I, without saying who, either they might be able to understand Him speaking through the darkness of night; or they might know that it was He who had spoken to Moses, Say unto the children of Israel, He that is has sent me unto you. (Exod. 3:14.) On every occasion Peter is found to be the one of the most ardent faith. And with the same zeal as ever, so now, while the others are silent, he believes that by the will of his Master he will be able to do that which by nature he cannot do; whence it follows, Peter answered and said unto him, Lord, if it be thou, bid me come unto thee upon the water. As much as to say, Do thou command, and straightway it will become solid; and that body which is in itself heavy will become light.

AUGUSTINE. (Serm. 76. 5.) This I am not able by myself, but in Thee I am able. Peter confessed what he was in himself, and what he should receive from Him by whose will he believed he should be enabled to do that which no human infirmity was equal to.

CHRYSOSTOM. See how great his warmth, how great his faith. He said not, Pray and entreat for me; but Bid me; he believes not only that Christ can Himself walk on the sea, but that He can lead others also thereon; also he wishes to come to Him speedily, and this, so great a thing, he asks not from ostentation, but from love. For he said not, Bid me walk upon the waters, but, Bid me come unto thee. And it seems that having shewn in the first miracle that He has power over the sea, He now leads them to a more powerful sign; He saith unto him, Come. And Peter, going forth of the boat, walked on the sea, that he might go to Jesus.

JEROME. Let those who think that the Lord's body was not real, because He walked upon the yielding waters as a light æthereal substance, answer here how Peter walked, whom they by no means deny to be man.

CHRYSOSTOM. Peter overcame that which was greater, the waves, namely, of the sea, but is troubled by the lesser, the blowing wind, for it follows, But seeing the wind boisterous, he was afraid. Such is human nature, in great trials oftentimes holding itself aright, and in lesser falling into fault. This fear of Peter shewed the difference between Master and disciple, and thereby appeased the other disciples. For if they had indignation when the two brothers prayed to sit on the right and left hand, much more had they now. For they were not yet made spiritual; afterwards when they had been made spiritual, they every where yield the first place to Peter, and appoint him to lead in harangues to the people.

JEROME. Moreover he is left to temptation for a short season, that his faith may be increased, and that he may understand that he is saved not by his ability to ask, but by the power of the Lord. For faith burned at his heart, but human frailty drew him into the deep.

AUGUSTINE. (Serm. 76. 8.) Peter then presumed on the Lord, he tottered as man, but returned to the Lord, as it follows, And when he began to sink, he cried out, saying, Lord, save me. Does the Lord then desert him in his peril of failure whom he had hearkened to when he first called on Him? Immediately Jesus stretched forth his hand, and caught him.

CHRYSOSTOM. He bade not the winds to cease, but stretched forth His hand and caught him, because his faith was required. For when our own means fail, then those which are of God stand. Then to shew that not the strength of the tempest, but the smallness of his faith worked the danger, He saith unto him, O thou of little faith, why didst thou doubt? which shews that not even the wind would have been able to hurt him, if his faith had been firm. But as the mother bears on her wings and brings back to the nest her chick which has left the nest before its time and has fallen, so did Christ. And when they were come into the boat, the wind ceased. Then they that were in the boat came and worshipped him, saying, Truly thou art the Son of God.

CHRYSOSTOM. Observe how He leads all gradually to that which is above them; He had before rebuked the sea, now He shews forth His power yet more by walking upon the sea, by bidding another to do the same, and by saving him in his peril; therefore they said unto Him, Truly thou art the Son of God, which they had not said above.

JEROME. If then upon this single miracle of stilling the sea, a thing which often happens by accident after even great tempests, the sailors and pilots confessed them to be truly the Son of God, how does Arrius preach in the Church itself that He is a creature?

HILARY. Or, that He is alone in the evening, signifies His sorrow at the time of His passion, when the rest were scattered from Him in fear.

JEROME. Also He ascends into the mountain alone because the multitude cannot follow Him aloft, until He has instructed it by the shore of the sea.

AUGUSTINE. (ubi sup.) But while Christ prays on high, the boat is tossed with great waves in the deep; and forasmuch as the waves rise, that boat can be tossed; but because Christ prays, it cannot be sunk. Think of that boat as the Church, and the stormy sea as this world.

HILARY. That He commands His disciples to enter the ship and to go across the sea, while He sends the multitudes away, and after that He goes up into the mountain to pray; He therein bids us to be within the Church, and to be in peril until such time as returning in His splendour He shall give salvation to all the people that shall be remaining of Israel, and shall forgive their sins; and having dismissed them into His Father's kingdom, returning thanks to His Father, He shall sit down in His glory and majesty. Meanwhile the disciples are tossed by the wind and the waves; struggling against all the storms of this world, raised by the opposition of the unclean spirit.

AUGUSTINE. (ubi sup.) For when any of a wicked will and of great power, proclaims a persecution of the Church, then it is that a mighty wave rises against the boat of Christ.

AUGUSTINE. (ubi sup.) The Lord came to visit His disciples who are tossed on the sea in the fourth watch of the night—that is, at its close; for each watch consisting of three hours, the night has thus four watches.

HILARY. The first watch was therefore of the Law, the second of the Prophets, the third His coming in the flesh, the fourth His return in glory.

AUGUSTINE. (ubi sup.) Therefore in the fourth watch of the night, that is when the night is nearly ended, He shall come, in the end of the world, when the night of iniquity is past, to judge the quick and the dead. But His coming was with a wonder. The waves swelled, but they were trodden upon. Thus howsoever the powers of this world shall swell themselves, our Head shall crush their head.

HILARY. But Christ coming in the end shall find His Church wearied, and tossed by the spirit of Anti-Christ, and by the troubles of the world. And because by their long experience of Anti-Christ they will be troubled at every novelty of trial, they shall have fear even at the approach of the Lord, suspecting deceitful appearances. But the good Lord banishes their fear, saying, It is I; and by proof of His presence takes away their dread of impending shipwreck.

AUGUSTINE. (Quæst. Ev. i. 15.) Or; That the disciples here say, It is a phantasm, figures those who yielding to the Devil shall doubt of the coming of Christ. That Peter cries to the Lord for help that he should not be drowned, signifies that He shall purge His Church with certain trials even after the last persecution; as Paul also notes, saying, He shall be saved, yet so as by fire. (1 Cor. 3:15.)

HILARY. Or; That Peter alone out of all the number of those that were in the vessel has courage to answer, and to pray that the Lord would bid him come to Him upon the waters, figures the forwardness of his will in the Lord's passion, when following after the Lord's steps he endeavoured to attain to despise death.

But his fearfulness shews his weakness in his after trial, when through fear of death, he was driven to the necessity of denial. His crying out here is the groaning of his repentance there.

HILARY. That when Peter was seized with fear, the Lord gave him not power of coming to Him, but held him by the hand and sustained him, this is the signification thereof; that He who alone was to suffer for all alone forgave the sins of all; and no partner is admitted into that which was bestowed upon mankind by one.

AUGUSTINE. (Serm. 76.) For in one Apostle, namely Peter, first and chief in the order of Apostles in whom was figured the Church, both kinds were to be signified; that is, the strong, in his walking upon the waters; the weak, in that he doubted, for to each of us our lusts are as a tempest. Dost thou love God? Thou walkest on the sea; the fear of this world is under thy feet. Dost thou love the world? It swallows thee up. But when thy heart is tossed with desire, then that thou mayest overcome thy lust, call upon the divine person of Christ.

HILARY. Also by this entrance of Christ into the boat, and the calm of the wind and sea thereupon, is pointed out the eternal peace of the Church, and that rest which shall be after His return in glory. And forasmuch as He shall then appear manifestly, rightly do they all cry out now in wonder, Truly thou art the Son of God. For there shall then be a free and public confession of all men that the son of God is come no longer in lowliness of body, but that He has given peace to the Church in heavenly glory.

AUGUSTINE. (Quæst. Ev. i. 15.) For it is here conveyed to us that His glory will then be made manifest, seeing that now they who walk by faith see it in a figure.

14:34–36

34. And when they were gone over, they came into the land of Gennesaret.

35. And when the men of that place had knowledge of him, they sent out into all that country round about, and brought unto him all that were diseased;

36. And besought him that they might only touch the hem of his garment: and as many as touched were made perfectly whole.

CHRYSOSTOM. But the Evangelist shews that it was now long time since Christ had come into these parts; for it follows, And when the men of that place knew him, they sent into all that region.

JEROME. They knew Him by fame, not by sight; although indeed by reason of the greatness of the signs which He did among the people, He was known by face to great numbers. And note how great the faith of the men of the land of Gennezareth, that they were not content with the healing of the men of that country only, but sent to all the towns round about.

CHRYSOSTOM. Nor do they now as before drag Him to their houses, and seek the touch of His hand, but they draw Him by their greater faith, for they brought unto him all them that were sick, and besought him that they might touch but the hem of his garment. For the woman who suffered under the issue of blood had taught them all this wisdom, namely, that by touching the hem only of Christ's garment they might be saved; therefore it follows, And as many as touched, were made whole.

JEROME. If we knew what the word Gennezareth would convey in our tongue, we might understand how under the type of the Apostles and the boat, Jesus guides to shore the Church when He has delivered it from the wreck of persecution, and makes it to rest in a most tranquil harbour.

HILARY. Otherwise; When the times of the Law were ended, and five thousand out of Israel were entered within the Church, it was then that the people of believers met Him, then those that were saved out of the Law by faith set before the Lord the rest of their sick and weak; and they that were thus brought sought to touch the hem of His garment, because through their faith they would be healed. And as the virtue of the hem proceeded from the whole garment, so the virtue of the grace of the Holy Spirit went forth from our Lord Jesus Christ, and imparted to the Apostles, who proceeded as it were from the same body, administers salvation to such as desire to touch.

JEROME. Or, by the hem of the garment understand His least commandment, which whosoever transgresses, shall be called least in the kingdom of heaven; or, again, His assumption of the body, by which we come to the Word of God.

CHRYSOSTOM. But we have not a hem or a garment only of Christ, but have even His body, that we may eat thereof. If then they who touched the hem of His garment derived so much virtue therefrom, much more they that shall receive Himself whole.

From Ancient Christian Commentary on Scripture:

14:22 Jesus Sends Away the Disciples

The Plain and Spiritual Meaning.

Hilary of Poitiers: The spiritual significance of this must be discerned, comparing the temporal order with the coming revelation. The historical event of his solitude in the evening anticipates a future event: his solitude at the time of the Passion, when everyone else had fled in fear.

He then orders his disciples to get into the boat and cross the sea while he dismisses the crowds. Once they are dismissed, he goes up on the mountain. This prefigures that he is on the sea and within the church. He orders that he be carried throughout the world until he returns in a dazzling second advent to all who are left from the house of Israel, when he will bring salvation and forgive sins.

Finally, in dismissing the crowds, the Lord is symbolically permitting them to enter into the kingdom of heaven. Then he proceeds to give thanks to God the Father, which anticipates his taking his place in glory and in majesty. On Matthew 14.13.

14:23 Jesus Dismisses the Crowd

Into the Hills.

Chrysostom: For what purpose does he go up into the hills on the mountain? To teach us that solitude and seclusion are good, when we are to pray to God. With this in view, you see, we find him continually withdrawing into the wilderness. There he often spends the whole night in prayer. This teaches us earnestly to seek such quietness in our prayers as the time and place may afford. For the wilderness is the mother of silence; it is a calm and a harbor, delivering us from all turmoils. The Gospel of Matthew, Homily 50.1.

14:24 The Boat Beaten by Waves

Many Furlongs Distant from the Land.

Chrysostom: The disciples are tossed on the waves again. They are in a storm, fully as bad as the previous one. Gently and by degrees he excites and urges the disciples on toward greater responsiveness, even to the point of bearing all things nobly. Whereas in the previous storm they had him with them in the ship, now they were alone by themselves. Even when he was asleep in the boat in the previous situation, he was ready to give them relief from danger. But then he was present to them.

Now he is leading them into a greater degree of challenge. Now he is not even present to them. He has departed. In midsea he permits a storm to arise. This was all for their training, that they might not look for some easy hope of preservation from any earthly source. He then allows them to be tossed by the storm all night! This had the purpose of awakening their stony hearts in a most complete way. This is how Jesus dealt with the nature of their fear, which the rough weather and the timing had produced. He cast them directly into a situation in which they would have a greater longing for him and a continual remembrance of him. The Gospel of Matthew, Homily 50.1.

The Wind Was Against Them.

Augustine: Meanwhile the boat carrying the disciples—that is, the church—is rocking and shaking amid the storms of temptation, while the adverse wind rages on. That is to say, its enemy the devil strives to keep the wind from calming down. But greater is he who is persistent on our behalf, for amid the vicissitudes of our life he gives us confidence. He comes to us and strengthens us, so we are not jostled in the boat and tossed overboard. For although the boat is thrown into disorder, it is still a boat. It alone carries the disciples and receives Christ. It is in danger indeed on the water, but there would be certain death without it. Therefore stay inside the boat and call upon God. When all good advice fails and the rudder is useless and the spread of the sails presents more of a danger than an advantage, when all human help and strength have been abandoned, the only recourse left for the sailors is to cry out to God. Therefore will he who helps those who are sailing to reach port safely, abandon his church and prevent it from arriving in peace and tranquility? Sermon 75.4.

14:25 He Came to Them, Walking on the Sea

The Miracle Foreseen in Prophecy.

Chromatius: Who was able to walk on the sea if not the Creator of the universe? He, indeed, about whom the Holy Spirit had spoken long ago through blessed Job: "Who alone stretched out the heavens and walked on the sea as well as the earth." Solomon spoke about him in the person of Wisdom: "I dwelt in the highest places and my throne was in a pillar of cloud. I orbited the heavenly sphere alone and walked on the waves of the sea." David likewise declared in his psalm: "God, your way was through the sea, your path through the great waters." So too Habakkuk noted, "The raging waters swept on; the deep gave forth its voice."

What is more evident than this testimony, what is more clear? It points to him walking on the water as well as on the ground. This is God's only begotten Son, who long ago according to the will of the Father stretched out the heavens and at the time of Moses in a pillar of cloud showed the people a way to follow. Tractate on Matthew 52.2.

The Four Watches of the History of Revelation.

Hilary of Poitiers: In the meantime, however, the disciples are harassed by wind and by sea. Amid all the disturbances of the world, in conflict with the unclean spirit, they are tossed about. But the Lord comes in the fourth watch. For the fourth time, then, he will return to a roving and shipwrecked church. In the fourth watch of the night, the measure of his concern is found to be just as great. The first watch was that of the law, the second of the prophets, the third of the Lord's coming in the flesh and the fourth of his return in splendor. But he will find the church in distress and beleaguered by the spirit of the antichrist and by disturbances throughout the world. He will come to those who are restless and deeply troubled. And since, as we may expect from the antichrist, they will be exposed to temptations of every kind, even at the Lord's coming they will be terrified by the false appearances of things and crawling phantasms with eyes. But the good Lord will then speak out and dispel their fear, saying, "It is I." He will dispel the fear of impending shipwreck through their faith in his coming. On Matthew 14.14.

The Spiritual Meaning of the Fourth Watch of the Night.

Chromatius: Let us focus on the meaning of this fourth watch in which the Lord comes to his disciples who were caught in the storm. The first watch of the night—that is, of the present world—is understood to be from Adam to Noah, the second watch from Noah up until Moses, through whom the law was given. The third watch was from Moses up to the coming of the Lord and Savior. In these three watches the Lord, even before coming in the flesh, with the vigilance of the angels defends the encampments of his saints from the snares of the enemy—that is, the devil and his angels, who from the beginning of the world plotted against the salvation of the righteous. In the first watch, protection is given to Abel, Seth, Enos, Enoch, Methuselah and Noah. In the second watch, to Abraham, Melchizedech, Isaac, Jacob and Joseph. In the third watch, to Moses, Aaron, Joshua the son of Nun and, after that, to the other righteous men and prophets. The fourth watch marks the time when the Son of God was born in the flesh and suffered, the time he promised his disciples and his church that he would be eternally watchful after his resurrection, saying, “I will be with you even to the consummation of the world.” Tractate on Matthew 52.5.

14:26–27 Take Heart; Have No Fear

It Is a Ghost!

Chrysostom: “When the disciples,” it is said, “saw him walking on the sea, they were troubled, saying, It is a spirit! And they cried out for fear.” This is the way he constantly deals with our fears. He does not hesitate to bring on worse things, even more alarming than those before. They were troubled here not only by the storm but also by the distance from the land. Note that he did not too easily remove the darkness. He did not come quickly to their rescue. He was training them, as I said, by the continuance of these fears and instructing them to be ready to endure. The Gospel of Matthew, Homily 50.1.

Bearing All Challenges.

Chrysostom: Accordingly, neither did he present himself to them at once. For it is written that “in the fourth watch of the night he came to them, walking on the sea.” He was instructing them not too hastily to seek for deliverance from their pressing dangers but to bear all challenges courageously. In any case, just when they looked to be delivered, their fear was again heightened. The Gospel of Matthew, Homily 50.1.

They Saw Him Walking on the Water.

Augustine: The fourth watch of the night marks the end of the night. One watch consists of three hours. This means that at the end of the world the Lord will come to the rescue, and he will be seen walking on the water. Although this ship is tossed by the storms of temptation, it sees the glorified Lord walking upon all the billows of the sea—that is, upon all the powers of this world. For through the voice of his Passion he gave an example of humility according to the flesh. Those waves of the sea to which he willingly submitted for our sake were stilled, in accordance with the prophecy: “I came to the height of the sea, and the storm swallowed me up.” Sermon 75.7.

14:28 Peter Asks to Walk to Jesus

Peter’s Boldness.

Jerome: Peter is found to be of ardent faith at all times. When the disciples are asked who people say that Jesus is, Peter declares him to be the Son of God. Though mistaken in wanting to follow Christ to his Passion, he is not mistaken in his affection. He does not desire the death of him who a short time before he declared to be the Son of God. Peter is among the first to go up the mountain with the Savior and is the only one to follow him in his Passion. With bitter tears he immediately washes away the sin of denial that sprang up from fear. After the Passion when they were fishing in Lake Gennesaret, the Lord was standing on the beach, while the others were slowly sailing in the boat. He hesitated not for a moment. He put on his overgarment and plunged into the sea. And now, with the same ardor of faith he always had, the other apostles gazing in awe, he believes that he can do by the will of the Master what the latter could do by nature. “Bid me come to you on the water.” Just say the word, and immediately the waves will become solid. The body which of itself is heavy will become light. Commentary on Matthew 2.14.28.

Lord, If It Is You, Bid Me Come.

Augustine: What is signified by the fact that Peter dared to come to him upon the water? Peter indeed has the principal role in the church. And what is the meaning of those other words: “Lord, if it is you, bid me come to you on the water,” if not, Lord, if you are truthful and never lie at all, let your church be glorified also in this world, for prophecy declared this about you? Let it walk upon the water, and it shall come to you, to whom it was said, “The rich among the people shall entreat your favor.” Sermon 75.10.

14:29 Peter Walks on the Water

Peter Got Out of the Boat.

Chrysostom: Why then did Christ permit Peter to come? Suppose he had said, "No, you cannot come." With his boldness Peter might have protested again. But when Peter saw the sea and wind, he became dizzy and was afraid, and beginning to sink he cried out, "Lord, save me."

In relating this same situation, John remarks that "then they were willing to take him into the boat, and immediately the boat reached the shore where they were heading." This implies that when they were on the point of arriving at the land, he entered the ship. Peter then having come down from the ship went to Jesus, not rejoicing so much in walking on the water as in coming to him. The Gospel of Matthew, Homily 50.2.

14:30 Peter Fears the Wind

Fear of the Lesser Danger.

Chrysostom: The sea caused his dizziness, but the fear was caused by the wind. The sea was the greater threat, the wind the less. As Peter was struggling with the sea, he was on the point of suffering more anxiety from the violence of the wind. Such is human nature that we so often feel exposed to the lesser danger but experience it as the greater. The Gospel of Matthew, Homily 50.2.

Peter Began to Sink.

Hilary of Poitiers: The fact that out of all those in the boat, only Peter speaks up and asks that he be ordered to come to the Lord on the water demonstrates the force of his will at the time of the Passion. Then coming back alone and following the Lord's footsteps, with contempt for the turmoil of the world as of the sea, Peter is attended by strength equal to disdaining death itself. His timidity, however, gives an inkling of his weakness in the face of future temptation. For though he ventured forth, he began to sink. Through the feebleness of the flesh and the fear of death, he is brought to the point of denial. But he cries out and asks the Lord to save him. That cry is the groan of his repentance. Though the Lord did not yet suffer, Peter has recourse to confession and in due course receives forgiveness for his denial. Christ was then about to suffer for the redemption of all people. On Matthew 14.15.

14:31 Jesus Rescues Peter

Jesus Reached Out His Hand.

Augustine: While human praise does not tempt the Lord, people are often ruffled and nearly entranced by human praise and honors in the church. Peter was afraid on the sea, terrified by the great force of the storm. Indeed, who does not fear that voice: “Those who say you are happy place you in error and disturb the path of your feet”? And since the soul struggles against the desire for human praise, it is good for it to turn to prayer and petition amid such danger, lest one who is charmed by praise be overcome by criticism and reproach. Let Peter, about to sink in the waves, cry out and say, “Lord, save me!” The Lord reached out his hand. He chided Peter, saying, “O man of little faith, why did you doubt?”—that is, why did you not, gazing straight at the Lord as you approached, pride yourself only in him? Nevertheless he snatched Peter from the waves and did not allow him who was declaring his weakness and asking the Lord for help to perish. Sermon 75.10.

14:32 The Wind Ceased

Peace Restored.

Hilary of Poitiers: Once he got into the vessel, the wind and the sea calmed down. After the return of eternal splendor, peace and tranquility are in store for the church. And with his arrival made manifest, with great wonder they will all exclaim, “Truly you are the Son of God.” All people will then declare absolutely and publicly that the Son of God has restored peace to the church, not in physical lowliness but in heavenly glory. On Matthew 4.18.

14:33 Worshiping the Son of God

They Worshiped Him.

Chromatius: In the face of the storm the Lord got into the boat and the wind ceased. Those who were in the boat came and worshiped him. This signifies that Our Lord and Savior, once the storm of persecution had passed, would come again in the last days to his disciples and his church. For this he made holy Peter the first of the apostles and commended his sheep to him, saying, “Feed my sheep.” When the apostles in the church of believers, positioned in the vessel as it were, beheld the glory of the Lord’s resurrection,

adoring our Lord and Savior, they declared to the human race that he was truly the Son of God. Tractate on Matthew 52.8.

The Son of God.

Chrysostom: Do you see how by degrees Jesus was leading them all higher and higher? For by his walking on the sea, and by his commanding another to do so and by preserving Peter in jeopardy, their faith was henceforth great. On that occasion he rebuked the sea. But now he is not rebuking the sea, but in another sense his power is still being abundantly demonstrated. For this reason the believers worship him and say, "Truly you are the Son of God." Did Jesus refuse to accept this confession? No, on the contrary, he rather confirmed what they said and with even greater authority healed such as approached him. The Gospel of Matthew, Homily 50.2.

14:34–35 Bringing the Sick

They Brought Him All Who Were Sick.

Chrysostom: For neither did they approach him as before, dragging him into their houses and seeking a touch from his hand and directions from him in words. But now in a far higher pattern, and with greater self-denial and with a more abundant faith, they tried to win themselves a cure. By now the woman who had the issue of blood had taught them all to be constrained in seeking wisdom. And the Evangelist, also implying that at long intervals Jesus visited the various neighborhoods, said, "When the men of that place recognized him, they sent round to all that region and brought to him all that were sick." Far from abolishing their faith, this interval of miracles had made it even greater and preserved it vigorously. The Gospel of Matthew, Homily 50.2.

14:36 Touching His Garment

The Fringe of His Garment.

Hilary of Poitiers: Many things came in the way that, after the gathering of five thousand men who were filled to satiety, dampened our effort to give a proper account. Our understanding on this point, however, remains the same. The time of the law was over, and five thousand men were brought into the church from Israel. The believing people now hastened from the law, saved through their faith. They offered to

God the remaining persons among them who were feeble and ill. These offered persons wanted to touch the hem of his garment to be made whole through faith. As from the hem of the entire garment, the whole power of the Holy Spirit came forth from our Lord Jesus Christ. This power was given to the apostles, who were also going out as it were from the same body, and it afforded healing to those who wished to touch the garment. On Matthew 14.19.