

He Has Faith in Us

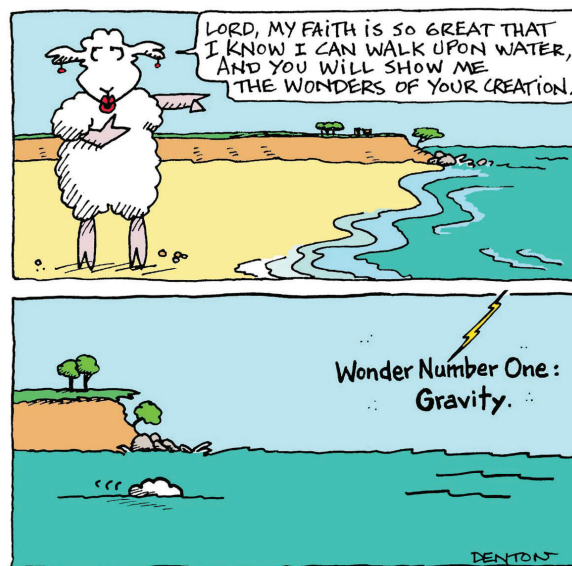
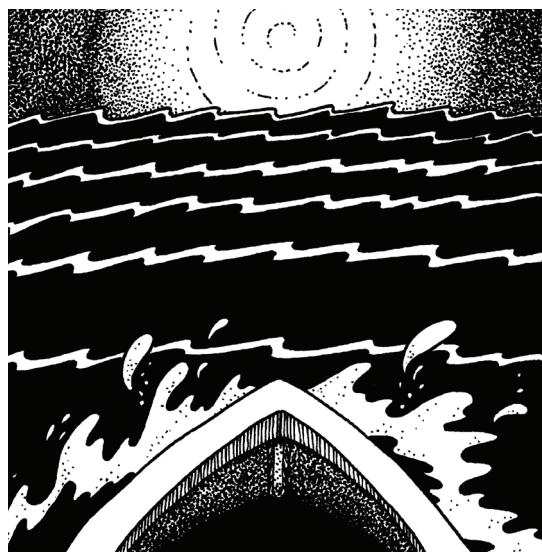
This Week's Readings at Mass

- 1 Kings 19:9, 11-13 • Elijah's flight to Horeb
- Romans 9:1-5 • Grief for the Jews; God's free choice
- Matthew 14:22-33 • Jesus walks on water

Often people hear this passage of Peter's failed attempt to walk on water, and they hear criticism in Jesus' voice: "O you of little faith, why did you doubt?" They assume Jesus was disappointed that Peter doubted him. But Jesus wasn't sinking. Peter was. So what if it's the other way around? What if Jesus was asking Peter why he doubted *himself* and his own ability to walk on water?

In Jesus' time and culture, Jesus wasn't the only rabbi who had students, "disciples," following him and learning from him. It was a common practice for rabbis to choose disciples to follow them whom they judged could eventually, with enough teaching and training, do what they did. Being a disciple to a rabbi was a high calling; very few men were good enough students to follow in a rabbi's footsteps. The student had to have the potential to do what his master did. That's why when Jesus sent the disciples out two by two to cure the sick, cast out demons, and proclaim the good news, others wouldn't have been surprised. After all, they were training all along to do what their master did.

So when Peter sees Jesus walking on water, he wants to do what his master does. Incredibly, Peter *can* walk on water—at least until he looks around and begins doubting himself. If Jesus didn't think Peter could walk on water, he wouldn't have told Peter to get out of the boat. If Jesus didn't



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"Lord, if it is you, command me to come to you on the water."

Sheepish Question:

How can I square "reality" with my faith in the power of Jesus?

know Peter could do what Jesus did, he wouldn't have called him to be his disciple in the first place. In fact, Jesus told his disciples, "You didn't choose me. I chose you" (Jn. 15:16). Jesus believes in Peter and the other disciples—that's why he chose them. He knew they could feed the hungry, clothe the naked, care for the sick, and work for justice. And they did—and they changed the course of history.

The thing is, Jesus believes in all of us too. Two thousand years later Jesus chooses all of us to do what he did. We have faith in Jesus. Can we accept that Jesus has faith in us?

Questions of the Week

- 1 Jesus chose 12 apostles who were probably illiterate, working poor people to carry on his work after he was gone. Who have you seen God work through whom others might have overlooked because of their lack of education, money, or prestige?
- 2 Do you think that Jesus has faith in you? Why or why not?

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