Saturday of the Second Week of Easter

Gospel text (*Jn* 6:16-21): When it was evening, the disciples of Jesus went down to the sea, embarked in a boat, and went across the sea to Capernaum. It had already grown dark, and Jesus had not yet come to them. The sea was stirred up because a strong wind was blowing. When they had rowed about three or four miles, they saw Jesus walking on the sea and coming near the boat, and they began to be afraid. But he said to them, “It is I. Do not be afraid.” They wanted to take him into the boat, but the boat immediately arrived at the shore to which they were heading.

“It is I. Do not be afraid.”

Fr. Vicenç GUINOT i Gómez
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Today, Jesus unsettles us. We were used to a Redeemer who, attentive to all kinds of human destitution, would not doubt have recourse to His divine power. In fact, this happens just after the multiplication of the loaves and fishes to feed a large hungry crowd. But now, instead, He unsettles us with a miracle —to walk over the waters— that looks very much like Jesus was just playing to the gallery. Certainly not! Jesus had already discarded using His divine power to look for personal sparkle or profit when, at the beginning of His mission, He refused to be tempted by the evil one.

By walking over the waters, Jesus Christ is showing His mastery of all things created. We might, however, also see a dramatization of His dominion over the evil one, represented by the dark and stormy sea.

“Do not be afraid.” (Jn 6:20), Jesus told them on that occasion. “But take heart! I have overcome the world” (Jn 16:33), He will tell them after the Last Supper. Lastly, it is Jesus who, that Paschal morning, told the women after He rose from the tomb: “Do not be afraid.” Through the testimony of the Apostles, we are aware of Jesus' victories over man's enemies, sin and death. This is why, today, His words resound in our heart with special strength, as they are the words of someone who is alive.

The same words Jesus addressed to Peter and the Apostles, were repeated by Saint John Paul II, Peter's successor, at the beginning of his papacy: “Do not be afraid.” It was a call to open our hearts, our own existence, to the Redeemer so that with Him we are not afraid to face the attacks of Christ's enemies.

Before our personal frailness to successfully carry out the missions the Lord has asked us to do (a

vocation, an apostolic project, a service...), we may console ourselves just knowing that the Virgin Mary —after all a creature like ourselves— also heard the same words from the angel before facing the mission which the Lord had entrusted to her. Let us learn from her to accept Jesus' invitation every day, in every circumstance.

Thoughts on Today's Gospel

- “Jesus preferred to show by acts rather than words that He was the Christ.” (Origen)

- “Between the multiplication of the loaves and the Eucharistic discourse in the Capernaum Synagogue, the scene of Jesus Christ walking on the water takes place. It is an opportune event to introduce the comparison between Moses and Jesus. The first - by the power of God - divided the waters of the sea to cross it, stepping on land; Jesus simply walks on them. He is the "I am”.” (Benedict XVI)

- “It is always possible to pray: the time of the Christian is that of the risen Christ who is with us always (Mt 28:20), no matter what tempests may arise. Our time is in the hands of God.” (Catechism of the Catholic Church, Nº 2743)