

August 4, 2008  
Monday of the Eighteenth Week in Ordinary Time

Readings of the day may be found on the following link:

<http://www.nccbuscc.org/nab>

Jeremiah 28:1-17

Psalms 119:29, 43, 79, 80, 95, 102

Matthew 14:22-36

*He said, "Come." Peter got out of the boat and began to walk on the water toward Jesus. But when he saw how strong the wind was he became frightened; and, beginning to sink, he cried out, "Lord, save me!"*

Recently, I told someone that Peter was not my favorite apostle. I have given that statement some thought since then. Peter was an imperfect man. He succumbed to fear on at least 2 occasions: in this gospel story and when he denied Jesus 3 times on the night Jesus was arrested. A part of me is uncomfortable with his obvious imperfections. A part of me is uncomfortable with my own imperfections. We live in a culture that almost canonizes perfection. The advertising world uses the quest for perfection to sell a multitude of products. According to a recent article I read, the weight loss industry brings in a profit of \$40 billion dollars per year. Another article reports that in 2004 Americans spent over \$9 billion on cosmetic surgery and non-surgical procedures. Now I do not know how accurate these figures really are, however, they do make a point. We are chasing the illusion of perfection. Peter, who was imperfect, was given the keys to the kingdom. He was called by Jesus to continue the work Jesus would no longer be able to do. Jesus wasn't looking for a perfect person; he was looking for someone who understood the message and the mission. At one point, Jesus asks Peter who he thinks he is and Peter answers that Jesus is the Messiah. Peter gets it—he understands the meaning of Jesus' life. In spite of his imperfections, Peter is able to love and lead. We spend a lot of time trying to get rid of our imperfections in order to be more 'worthy'. Peter just relied on Jesus. When he was in trouble, he called out to Jesus to help him. It appears that Peter knew he was saved by grace and not by his own efforts. I wonder what might be different if we too, simply focused on the decision to love, and let God take care of the rest. Like in the parable of the wheat and the weeds, if we just keep planting wheat, would it overtake the weeds without our having to pull them out?

*Love means to love that which is unlovable; or it is no virtue at all.*

G. K. Chesterton