

COURAGE - AS CHURCH COMMUNITY - TO RESPOND TO JESUS WHO SAYS 'COME' - 13 August 2017

Before we begin the homily, let us pause and pray for peace on the Korean Peninsula.
(Quiet prayer).
Amen.

In our parish church, behind the Table of the Eucharist and the Table of God's Word, are **louvres shaped in bow form**, like the front of a **boat**.
This reminds us as a **community that we travel together on mission**.

Above is the **sail**, reminding us of **Holy Spirit** prompting us, being the wind in our sail.
In front is the **Cross**, the **mast** of the boat, reminding us that **Jesus leads the way, we follow**.



Already in **Matthew 8:23-27** we have the instance of Jesus asleep in the boat while the boat is being swamped by a storm.
They woke Jesus.
He challenges them *'Why are you afraid, you of little faith?'*
He calmed the storm.

That passage is a reference to our prayer in the church's design.
Another Biblical passage highlighting the church design is today's Gospel **Matthew 14:22-33**.
There are several dimensions to our church design.
One of them is the prayer of petition for people anywhere in the world experiencing great fear.
We call out to God for them and for us.

For example -

- Today's prayer for the Korean Peninsula.
- Our *Pray@8* every evening for peace, especially for Iraq and Syria.
- Our Prayer Vigils over the past few years.
- Our new format beginning on Sept 8th of prayer 7pm-8pm each Friday night until 2020.
- Our petitions at weekend Masses and weekday Masses each week.

THE GOSPEL IN FOUR PARTS

Let us look at Matthew 14:22-33 in **FOUR** parts.

1. ON THE BOAT JOURNEY

*“Immediately he made the disciples get into the boat
And go on ahead to the other side, while he dismissed the crowds.
And after he had dismissed the crowds, he went up the mountain by himself to pray.
When evening came, he was there alone,
But by this time the boat, battered by the waves, was far from the land,
For the wind was against them.”*

This time Jesus is not in the boat.

For the Christians for whom Matthew’s Gospel is written,
the difference between the two Gospel passages would stand out.

In chapter 8, Jesus is physically with them.

In chapter 14, Jesus comes to them, walking on water.

Around 50 years or so after the Resurrection and Ascension,

Matthew’s community knows that Jesus is there for them.

Matthew’s community and our community know that Jesus comes to us.

2. DISCIPLES CRY OUT IN FEAR AND JESUS ANSWERS

*“And early in the morning he came walking towards them on the lake.
But when the disciples saw him walking on the lake,
they were terrified, saying, ‘It is a ghost!’ And they cried out in fear.
But immediately Jesus spoke to them and said, ‘**Take heart, it is I; do not be afraid.**’ “*

WHY CAN’T WE BE OPEN TO WHATEVER WAYS GOD WISHES TO SAVE US?

The initial response of the disciples is fear.

HOW OFTEN DOES JESUS CALM OUR FEARS AS WE PRAY?

In this celebration of Eucharist, what fears do we recognise within each of us and

HOW DO WE CALL OUT TO GOD TO CALM US AND REASSURE US?

Fear of illness, of failure, of pain,

- of not living up to our expectations,
- of not living up to the expectations of us,
- of what people think of us,
- of addiction, of phobias, of death,
- of not responding well in a crisis,
- of taking God for granted, of being lukewarm in faith.

ARE WE LIKE PETER?

3. PETER

*“Peter answered him, ‘Lord, if it is you, command me to come to you on the water.’
He said, ‘**Come.**’
So Peter got out of the boat, started walking on the water, and came towards Jesus.
But when he noticed the strong wind, * he became frightened,
And beginning to sink, he cried out, ‘Lord, save me!’
Jesus immediately reached out his hand and caught him,
Saying to him, ‘**You of little faith, why did you doubt?**’ “*

**DO WE PUT TRY TO PUT CONDITIONS ON GOD'S LOVE FOR US?
AND WHEN GOD SHOWS US THE WAY FORWARD, WHAT IS OUR RESPONSE?
HOW DO WE THINK PETER FELT WHEN JESUS SAID 'COME'?
WHAT DO WE BELIEVE WERE PETER'S THOUGHTS?**

Let us pause for a moment and hear Jesus saying to us 'COME'.

4. TOGETHER THEY WORSHIP JESUS

"When they got into the boat, the wind ceased.

And those in the boat worshipped him, saying, 'Truly you are the Son of God.' "

We worship Jesus in silence, in word, in song, in art, in drama and dance, in deed.

In the Eucharist.

In the Sacraments.

In our prayer groups and our liturgies.

In our individual prayer time. In family time. In school time.

We can share ways of praying in the [PRAYER BLOG](#) in our parish social media.

Learning from each other.

In this [YEAR of PRAYER](#) in our parish.

DO WE HAVE A COMMON LANGUAGE TO HELP US SHARE?

COMMON LANGUAGE

As we pray today in our church building,

HOW DO WE STEP OUT IN REFORM AND RENEWAL OF OUR CHURCH HERE AND IN AUSTRALIA?

HOW DO WE CELEBRATE THE GOODNESS WE SEE?

HOW INCLUSIVE ARE WE?

HOW DO WE FACE THE CHALLENGES OF PROVIDING A SAFE ENVIRONMENT FOR ALL?

HOW DO WE RESPOND AS CHURCH TO THE COMMAND OF JESUS TO 'COME'?

As we prepare as a Church for the national [PLENARY COUNCIL](#) in 2020,

the five Brisbane Archdiocesan Agencies are sharing a common language in their document.

"Archdiocese of Brisbane to 2020 and Beyond"

Page Five of the Document calls for Our Future to be:

A LISTENING CHURCH

A people of faith, listening to the voice of the Holy Spirit and discerning what action this requires.

A WORSHIPPING CHURCH

Celebrating the sacred mysteries in a way that nourishes and strengthens the life in the Spirit of all who gather with us.

A COMMUNICATING CHURCH

Delivering a simple effective message with consistent communication of the Good News which we have heard in listening to the Spirit.

A SERVING CHURCH

Supporting those in need by Archdiocesan agencies seeking to work with parishes to give impetus to the Church's mission as the Spirit prompts.

A HEALING CHURCH

Protecting and advocating for those who are vulnerable and bringing the healing power of the Spirit to those who have been subjected to Church related sexual abuse.

AN INCLUSIVE CHURCH

Being attentive to all members of the community, believing that the Spirit speaks and moves through all.

A WELL-LED CHURCH

Developing and forming current and future leaders who are able to discern the ways of the Spirit and help others to do the same.

AN INNOVATIVE CHURCH

Enhancing governance structures and systems so that they are responsive and innovative, open to the surprises of the Spirit.

A RESPONSIBLE CHURCH

Ensuring sustainable and effective use of resources in a way that respects creation, builds community and looks to the sovereignty of God.

The document is available at <http://bit.ly/PlenaryArchdioceseBne2020>
On another time we will reflect on the **FIVE** Priorities in the document.

OUR PARISH COMMUNITY

HOW ARE EACH OF THESE REFLECTIONS A RESPONSE TO THE WORDS OF JESUS 'COME'?

Over the next few years, we are called to be *'open to the surprises of the Spirit'*.

AND HOW DO WE SHARE THAT DISCERNMENT WITH OUR PARISH PASTORAL COUNCIL?

HOW DO WE ENSURE SUSTAINABLE AND EFFECTIVE USE OF OUR RESOURCES?

WHO ARE THE VULNERABLE IN OUR MIDST?

AS A PARISH COMMUNITY, WHAT REFLECTIONS AND STATEMENTS SHOULD WE ADD, AS WE DISCERN OUR RESPONSE TO THE COMMAND OF JESUS TO 'COME'?

Let us pray.

Fr. Gerry

[Fr. Gerry Hefferan –Courage, as Church Community, to Respond To Jesus Who Says 'Come' – 5 August]

[Readings: <http://www.usccb.org/bible/readings/081317.cfm>]

[Parish Facebook: <http://bit.ly/parishFacebook13082017>]

Parish Blog: <http://www.stjosephsbrackenridge.com/blog>

'Archdiocese of Brisbane to 2020 and Beyond' document: <http://bit.ly/PlenaryArchdioceseBne2020>