



Email: manseltonurc@gmail.com

Weekly Letter – 13 August 2023

Matthew 14.23-33

Faith = seeing the world as it is?

Perhaps today you can use your imagination? It's fun! Having read the passage, imagine you yourself are on board with the disciples, and perhaps with your eyes closed, ask yourself several questions as you are present on this boat.

So you might ask (remembering the light is fading) what do you see? Is the boat being tossed around by the waves? What are the disciples expressing on their faces? What are you feeling? What do you smell? How soaked are your clothes? And because everyone is sprayed with water, what do you taste? As you imagine yourself on the sea, notice your reactions, your thoughts, and then perhaps record these.

So there you are in the middle of a storm, you see a figure of a man walking, and you recognise his face. Are you feeling unsettled, baffled and perplexed, or even a growing anxiety? Your fellow disciples begin to express their fear. What sounds do you hear? Then you hear a familiar voice, and it brings a moment of relief, and so you say, "Is it you?" How do you react to Jesus request to 'come'? – Again notice your reactions, and do record these accurately. (This is a great way of deepening your understanding of a passage, and was developed by St Ignatius Loyola).

Would you have stepped out? To have chosen to respond to Jesus' request is an act of faith. Showing that you have faith is not a childish belief in magic, because that is ignorance or wilful blindness. Faith means I do not accept the limitations of current thinking, that is, everything is within my power and understanding, but instead you act because God is calling you to discover, and you decide/choose to show a commitment to the essential goodness of life and its creator.

Faith does not mean, "make yourself look stupid by behaving in an irrational way," rather it means the opposite for faith points to, stop reducing life to thinking I know, and aim higher, for better thoughts and better choices. Perhaps it might mean, stop talking about the downside of life, and let a little more light come into what you say? Perhaps it means seeing more of the essential goodness and meaningfulness of life, as this will help you and people you speak to, and counterbalance the tragic irrationalities of life. This faith of seeing God's light at work, will help you to see more and more goodness in the world, and in your life, for faith is in part about goodness.

Stephen

Sunday Morning Worship in Christ Well, and on Zoom at 10.30 am will be led by Mrs Adella Pritchard
Bible Readings: Psalm 23: Romans 12.1-21

Cycle of Prayer in the Swansea Region – Uniting Church, Sketty

Prayers for every household – we will pray for Pwll y Domen

Tea and Chat

There will be two extra meetings of Tea and chat in Christ Well in August, for all ages. These will be held on **Tuesday 15th** and **Tuesday 22nd**, at 2-4 pm. Everyone is welcome.

Calming the Storm (Genesis 37.1-4, 12-20: 1 Kings 19.9-18: Romans 10.5-15: **Matthew 14.22-33**)

God of dreamers and deceiver
of storms and stillness,
whoever we are,
wherever we are,
we come to you.
You gather us in with all our fears and hopes.
Forgive us our lack of faith and our fear of others.
forgive us our acting out and our acts of destruction,
forgive us,
and take us back into the boat beside you,
where we will sail on
and know your truth.

Anne Sarderson (URC Prayer Handbook 2023)

