

Homily
August 9, 2026
19th Sunday in Ordinary Time

Lift Your Eyes to Christ

“Look where you're going.”

I never really understood that advice from experienced cyclists—until the day I crashed.

One morning, I was riding when I became fixated on the gutter beside me. Instead of looking ahead to where I wanted to go, I kept staring at the very thing I was trying to avoid. Before I knew it, my front wheel slipped into the gutter, and I was lying flat on the road—with a few scrapes on my elbow and a badly bruised ego.

Later, I realised what had happened. My bike had simply followed my gaze. I was so focused on the obstacle that I rode straight into it.

That lesson doesn't just apply to cycling. It also applies to life—and, as today's Gospel reminds us, to our faith. We often move toward whatever holds our attention.

The disciples are battling strong winds and crashing waves when Jesus comes walking toward them on the water. At Jesus' invitation, Peter steps out of the boat and begins walking toward him. As long as his eyes are fixed on Jesus, he does the impossible. But the moment he notices the wind and the waves, his focus shifts. He stops looking at Jesus and starts looking at the storm—and he begins to sink.

The storm hadn't suddenly become stronger. It had been there all along. The turning point came when Peter took his eyes off Jesus.

Isn't that often our experience too?

Life will always have storms. Some come from outside us: illness, family struggles, financial pressures, grief, uncertainty, or broken relationships. We cannot always control the winds that blow against us. Like the disciples, we sometimes feel exhausted from rowing against forces much stronger than ourselves.

But sometimes the greater storm is not around us—it is within us. There is the storm of anxiety that steals our peace, the storm of guilt that whispers we are beyond forgiveness, the storm of resentment that hardens our hearts, the storm of fear that tells us we are alone, and the storm of doubt that makes us wonder whether God is still with us. These inner storms quietly draw our eyes away from Christ and fix them on our fears, failures, and worries.

The Gospel invites us to do what Peter forgot to do: keep our eyes fixed on the Lord. Storms will come—that is part of life. But in every storm, Jesus comes to us with the same words he spoke to Peter: "Take courage. It is I. Do not be afraid." He may not calm the storm as quickly as we would like, but he never leaves us to face it alone.

May we not spend our lives staring at the gutter. May we not become so absorbed by our fears, our failures, or our problems that we lose sight of the One who is calling us forward. Let us lift our eyes to Christ. The storms may not disappear, but his presence will never fail. And as he reached out his hand to Peter, so he reaches out his hand to us—ready to steady us, strengthen us, and lead us safely home. Amen.