

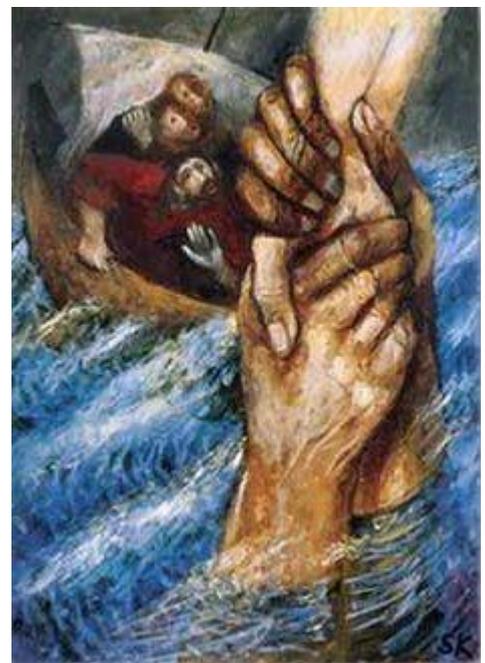
Stronghold – The Closeness of God

Sieger Koder

Scripture reading: Mt.14: 24-33

... The boat was already a considerable distance from land, buffeted by the waves because the wind was against it. Shortly before dawn Jesus went out to them, walking on the lake. When the disciples saw him walking on the lake, they were terrified. "It's a ghost," they said, and cried out in fear. But Jesus immediately said to them: "Take courage! It is I. Don't be afraid."

"Lord, if it's you," Peter replied, "tell me to come to you on the water." "Come," he said. Then Peter got down out of the boat, walked on the water and came toward Jesus. But when he saw the wind, he was afraid and, beginning to sink, cried out, "Lord, save me!" Immediately Jesus reached out his hand and caught him. "You of little faith," he said, "why did you doubt?" And when they climbed into the boat, the wind died down. Then those who were in the boat worshiped him, saying, "Truly you are the Son of God."



Meditation:

(adapted from *'Christ our Morning Star – The art and inspiration of Sieger Koder'* by Magdalen Lawler)

In this story, the awesome power of water focuses our attention. Water can cleanse and heal, but it can also engulf and drown each one of us. This is a gripping tale and Sieger Koder paints it with great robustness of swirling, white crested waves and a bobbing, tilting boat. The artist shows us three of the disciples crouching in the doomed boat, its sail torn and flapping in the gale. Their pale faces are transfixed by fear of the storm.

With characteristic robust courage, Peter is the one who draws us into the action. We are told that he recognises Jesus and steps out of the boat having asked to share in Jesus' dominance over the waters. Confident, he begins to walk towards his Master across storm-tossed waves, but suddenly his confidence is rocked. His fright helps us to realise how it is for each of us and for the Church itself when we seem to be submerged beneath the buffeting waves of life. He becomes unsure and he begins to sink, despite his desire to imitate Jesus and be with him. With the waters threatening to engulf him, we listen to his heartfelt cry of worship ring out, *'Lord, save me!'* The powerful hand of Jesus fills the forefront of the picture plane. The hands of Peter grasp the hand of Jesus that is being offered to him as he begins to drown. The gospel tells us that he cried out and 'at once' Jesus held him. There is simply no time between his cry and the aid that comes to him in the form of Jesus' firm, supportive clasp. As they board the boat together, the wind drops. The Lord of creation brings peaceful harmony to the elements once again, just as he does to our troubled hearts.

Questions for reflection:

- In what ways am I not putting my trust in Jesus?
- How am I sensing Jesus holding me from my hand?

At the end of this meditation, while looking at Jesus' hand holding Peter's hand, form your own prayer to God...