

FROM HEART TO HEART  
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## ***Stormy times demand radical trust, faith***

by Mary Sharon Moore

I think that these troubled times were exactly what Jesus had in mind when he urged his disciples, more than once, “Do not be afraid.”

It’s easy for the emphasis in that line to fall on the last word, “afraid.” Like, “Be anything, but just don’t be that.” Or sometimes the translation reads, “Have no fear,” and I picture Dudley Do-Right, courageous Canadian Mountie, coming to the rescue. But I place the emphasis on that little word “not.” Do NOT be afraid. Do NOT go to that place of fear.

The scene I have in mind comes from the Gospel of St. Matthew (14:22-36), where Jesus tells his disciples to get into the boat and go ahead of him to the other side of the lake while he dismisses the crowds he has fed. He goes up onto the mountain to spend the evening in prayer.

Meanwhile, the disciples’ boat is tossed about on stormy waves. Deep in the night Jesus approaches the boat, walking across the stormy waters. When the disciples see him they become terrified.

At once Jesus speaks to them, “Take courage, it is I. Do not be afraid.” Peter says to him, “Lord, if it is you, command me to come to you on the water.” Jesus says, “Come.” Peter gets out of the boat and begins to walk on the water toward Jesus. But remembering the wind and waves, he cries out, “Lord, save me!” Immediately Jesus stretches out his hand and catches Peter, and says to him, “Why did you

doubt?” They get into the boat and the wind dies down.

Fast-forward to today. What’s your storm? Loss of income? Chaotic relationships? Medical care you can’t afford? Overwhelming debt? Discouragement—maybe even profound discouragement—over the way your life is turning out?

Privately and together we’re riding some pretty wild waves that are indifferent to our hopes or hard work or dreams. In the Christian view of times like these, just when the night is darkest and the waves most fierce, Jesus appears out of nowhere, in the midst of those pounding waves, and says, simply, “Come.”

And foolish people that we can be, we might say, “Oh, this can’t work! I can’t step outside the only way of life and security I’ve ever known and still survive.” And as Peter aptly demonstrated, if you think you can’t, you’re right. But for a moment Peter did believe otherwise, and walked on water.

Jesus asks Peter, “Why did you falter?” That question is for us, too. Our nation, all nations, all of humankind and all creation groans, crushed by a furious, widespread, uncaring storm largely of our collective making. If we have not yet cried out in honest faith, now would be a good time to do it. The One who is for us, for each of us unconditionally, is saying, “Come.” Let’s link arms and walk with radical trust and confidence through the storm. The One who beckons you and me is Peace himself.