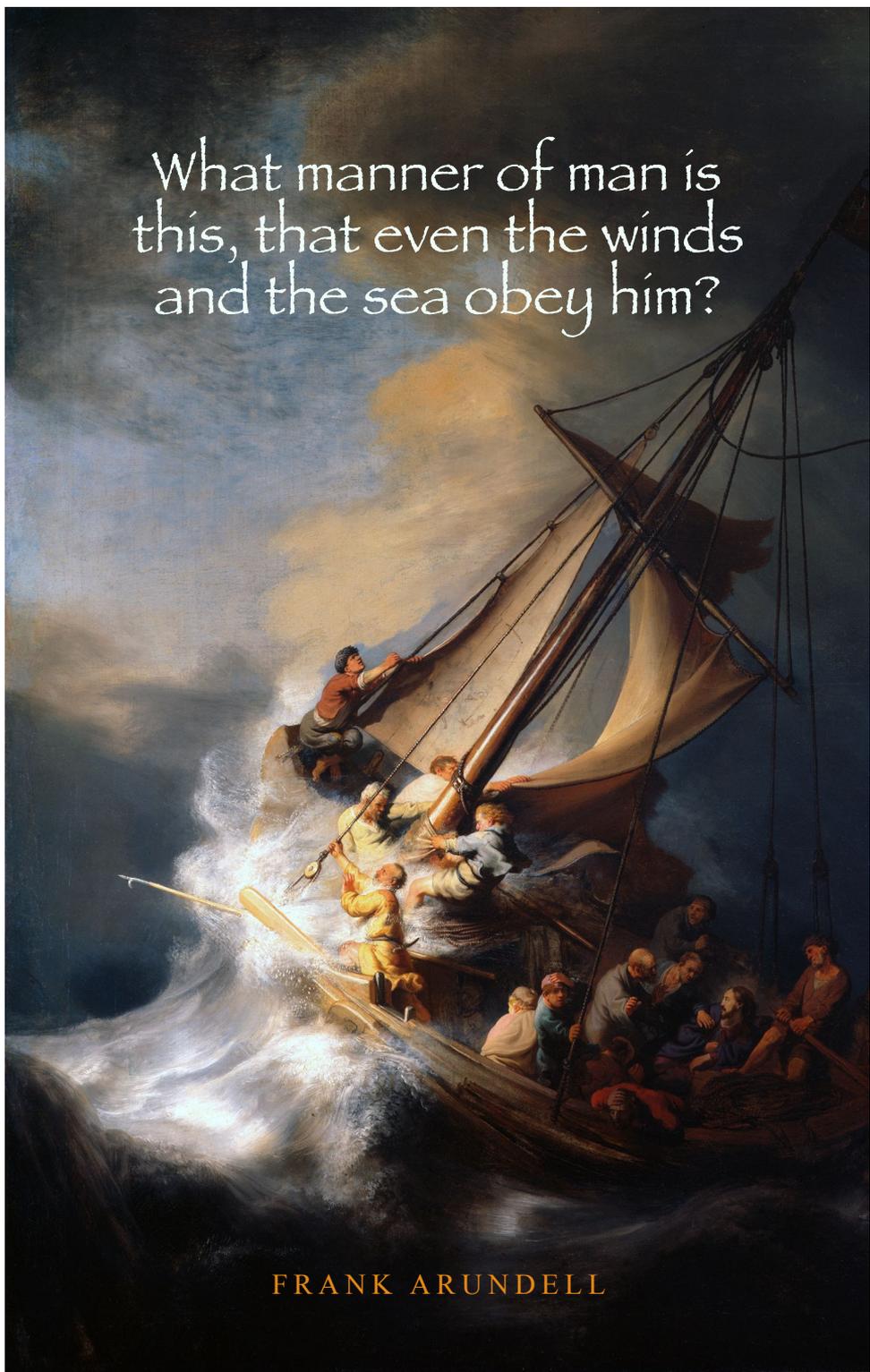


What manner of man is
this, that even the winds
and the sea obey him?



FRANK ARUNDELL

What manner of man
is this, that even the winds
and the sea obey him?

(Matthew 8: 27)

All Biblical texts from the NRSV, online

COVER: “The Storm on the Sea of Galilee” painted by
Rembrandt van Rijn in 1633 and stolen from the Stewart
Gardner Museum in 1990, whereabouts unknown

FRANK ARUNDELL

Jesus' Galilean Ministry



This is a modern tourist map of the Sea of Galilee. “The Sea of Galilee is situated in northeast Israel, between the Golan Heights and the Galilee region, in the Jordan Rift Valley, the valley caused by the separation of the African and Arabian Plates. Consequently, the area is subject to earthquakes, and in the past, volcanic activity. This is evident by the abundant

INTRODUCTION

basalt and other igneous rocks that define the geology of the Galilee.”

“The Sea of Galilee, is the largest freshwater lake in Israel, and it is approximately 33 mi in circumference, about 13 mi long, and 8.1 mi wide. The lake has a total area of 64.4 sq. mi at its fullest, and a maximum depth of approximately 157 feet. It is the lowest freshwater lake on Earth and the second-lowest lake after the Dead Sea, a saltwater lake. The lake is fed partly by underground springs although its main source is the Jordan River which flows through it from north to south.”

“Today, tourism is the Sea of Galilee's most important economic activity with the entire region being a popular holiday destination. The many historical and spiritual sites around the lake, especially its main town Tiberias, are visited by millions of local and foreign tourists annually. The Sea of Galilee attracts many Christian pilgrims, because, according to the New Testament, many of Jesus’ miracles occurred on its shores—including his walking on water, calming the storm, and the miracle of the loaves and fishes.” (Wikipedia, annotated)

“On a drought-dried shore of the Sea of Galilee in January 1986, two brothers who were fishermen from Ginosar—called Gennesaret in Jesus’ day [Matt. 14:34, Mark 6:53]—spied a mysterious object poking up out of the mud. Twelve days later, an ancient vessel saw the light of day for the first time since it sank some 2,000 years ago. Scholars suggest it was a combined ferry and fishing boat, and might have even served in a sea battle against the Romans at the battle of Migdal, However, for the millions of Christians who have seen it over the years, and

INTRODUCTION

for those looking forward to doing so in the future, it will always be “the Jesus boat.”

“While no one knows who owned or sailed in the boat or what its purpose was, it serves as a powerful visual reminder of the Gospel stories of Jesus and his disciples, many of whom were fishermen from Galilee” who became fishers of men.

What manner of man is this, that even the winds and the sea obey him?

There are all manner of men. One doesn't need a Ph.D to figure out what men and women are made of. When sperm meets ovum there is a tiny local creation. Nowadays to think of it as a *miracle* is considered eccentric. It is the presence or absence of the Y chromosome that determines the male or female sex of the offspring produced in sexual reproduction. Many people know this—most people really don't or don't really care. Admittedly there may be aberrations in this matrix, but so far, there is nothing scientifically definitive on the issue other than possible gene manipulation. Lately, sex has much more to do with the “crazy” notions, whence “You go to my head” or to personal, physical satisfaction rather than boring biology or stodgy religiosity. “Woman meets man and man must have his mate, that no one can deny.” It's still the same old story, but—is it a fight for love and glory? What is love and glory anyway?

What is it that sets one man apart from *all* other men who have ever lived and will ever live? Those of us with an interest in history can count hundreds of men who have literally changed life on earth by being a king; by winning a crucial battle at a critical time; by making momentous discoveries in science or epic contributions in the arts; by devising political philosophies freeing us from oppression, and so forth; but none were loved no less adored as was the man Jesus of Nazareth, known as the Christ.

The Jesus Boat

The last several hundred years of the second millennium brought such great advances in science that no “knowledgeable” person would expect the world population to live by the rubrics of a religion. Regardless of this progress seventy-five percent of the 7 3/4 billion people in the world (2019) profess some sort of belief in God and religious practices. It seems that the more that is known about the rise of Homo Sapiens, the more people are beginning recognize that the altogether unique and orderly progression and advancement in human nature may not just be the result of chance or “natural selection.” Living as we do, with good and bad side by side as well as within each of us, in the main, the good more often outpaces the bad. The “fight for love and glory” rather than hate and ignominy seems to prevail. Love is paramount, as the man Jesus made perfectly clear. In the classic 1942 movie Casablanca, Herman Hupfeld may have known more than we give him credit for by not becoming just another naysayer in a world at war. He wrote:

“It's still the same old story
A fight for love and glory
A case of do or die.
The world will always welcome lovers
As time goes by.
Oh yes, the world will always welcome lovers
As time goes by.”

God Bless you Hup!

What unique turn of events brought “Love as a person” into our midst? In the gospel of Luke it is said that a young Jewish maiden by the name of Mary, betrothed to a carpenter named

Joseph, was offered the option of giving birth regardless of the fact she had not “known” a man. In this third millennium who could possibly believe that? In our scientific world you’d have to be either totally stupid or delusional to accept even the possibility of that really happening. However, at least 3.8 billion out of the 7.1 billion of the world’s population are willing to accept that prospect as fact. One could legitimately ask, what on earth could they possibly base this belief ? There is absolutely no reasonable explanation for a “biological impossibility” to have gained so much acceptance. Although poll numbers are used to prove many of our sociological and cultural understandings, these numbers cannot be used to suggest, no less prove, a virgin birth.

Still, along with this incredulity we strongly doubt that many people would deny the existence and Jewish origins of Mary, Joseph, et al. as given in scripture. There has been just too much historical and archeological corroboration to throw the holy books, both First and Second Testaments, out the window. Scholars of every epoch have tirelessly parsed every phrase and sentence of these books to prove or disprove their veracity. For centuries archeologists have been scouring the Levant for every scrap of evidence that supports the scriptures. There is little doubt that it was Abraham and the Jews who brought monotheism to civilization and eventually were the people who looked forward to a messianic deliverance. The internet will give you at least forty references to “messianic deliverance” if you are willing to search for it using the title (Prophecies About Jesus, Old Testament Scripture, New Testament Fulfillment), then spend a few hours cross-referencing.

Though the inferences and connections are quite clear it most likely will not be enough to cause an instantaneous conversion to unequivocal belief in the circumstances of Jesus' arrival on earth. We find the beauty of St. Anselm's remark relevant here: *"I do not seek to understand in order that I may believe, but believe in order to understand"* which he gleaned from (Isaiah 7: 9). Obviously faith, for Anselm, came from another place, not concocted by the mind of man nor the result of the idea of "emergence" in evolutionary theory. "Truth is not made it is discovered."

Something had to have happened with Mary's reproductive system to fertilize the ovum which produced what the many prophecies of Israel pointed to, a Messiah. In Luke's gospel the messenger put it poetically:

"The Holy Spirit will come upon you, and the power of the Most High will overshadow you; therefore the child to be born will be holy; he will be called Son of God."

Believers have called the Holy Spirit the "Giver of Life;" i.e., all life from creation onward. Nine months from the time of Mary's "annunciation" a normal human birth is said to have taken place in the town of Bethlehem, Judaea, Israel, under arduous circumstances due to certain political events, rather than in Nazareth her hometown. The place of Jesus' birth was most likely a nearby cave used as an animal shelter since there was no room for them at the "inn" where travelers usually stayed. The circumstances surrounding the birth narratives were also the result of prophecy. (See Micah 5: 2)

Matthew 1: 19 tells us:

The Jesus Boat

At one point, before they were married, “*Joseph, being a righteous man and unwilling to expose her to public disgrace, planned to dismiss her quietly. But just when he had resolved to do this, an angel of the Lord appeared to him in a dream and said, ‘Joseph, son of David, do not be afraid to take Mary as your wife, for the child conceived in her is from the Holy Spirit. She will bear a son, and you are to name him Jesus, for he will save his people from their sins.’ All this took place to fulfill what had been spoken by the Lord through the prophet: ‘Look, the virgin shall conceive and bear a son, and they shall name him Emmanuel’, which means, ‘God is with us.’*”

The text from Isaiah 7: 14 says:

“Hear then, O house of David! Is it too little for you to weary mortals, that you weary my God also? Therefore the Lord himself will give you a sign. Look, the young woman (almah= virgin) is with child and shall bear a son, and shall name him Immanuel.”

To get the full meaning of the text its good to follow the historic significance surrounding it. Isaiah, prophesied around seven hundred years prior to Savior’s birth. The relationship of Jesus with the God of Israel is very clear and incredibly profound.

Luke 2: 39-40 says:

“When they had finished everything required by the law of the Lord, they returned to Galilee, to their own town of Nazareth.

The child grew and became strong, filled with wisdom; and the favor of God was upon him.”

Luke continues his narrative with the story of the twelve year old Jesus staying behind in Jerusalem unbeknown by his parents. They were returning to Nazareth in a caravan having participated in the festivities of that years' Passover. After traveling for a day they missed him and made a worrisome return trip to Jerusalem to try to find him. Luke goes on:

“After three days they found him in the temple, sitting among the teachers, listening to them and asking them questions. And all who heard him were amazed at his understanding and his answers. When his parents saw him they were astonished; and his mother said to him, ‘Child, why have you treated us like this? Look, your father and I have been searching for you in great anxiety.’ He said to them, ‘Why were you searching for me? Did you not know that I must be in my Father’s house?’ But they did not understand what he said to them. Then he went down with them and came to Nazareth, and was obedient to them. His mother treasured all these things in her heart. And Jesus increased in wisdom and in years, and in divine and human favor.”

The story that Luke tells is one that that sounds so true to life that one wonders from whom Luke heard it. Luke was a disciple of Paul, as Mark was with Peter, and was not an eye witness to Jesus during his public ministry like John or Matthew were. In our opinion, the story is so intimate that it could only have come from Mary herself, so to whom did Mary tell the story that it filtered down to Luke years later. We know Mary was given to John's care by Jesus on the day of his death.

Afterwards, it's probably fair to say that Mary and perhaps the other women stayed close to the apostles for safety, particularly to Peter and John. The conversations that may have gone on between them could have included many of Mary's recollections regarding her young son which were then passed on and finally inscribed by Luke in his gospel. Of course this is pure speculation but it is a testament to the tradition that was incorporated in the narrative. It seems to us to be typical of a story a mother would tell once she understood the meaning of her son's remark. Jesus can still be found in his Father's house for those willing to return to look for him.

In reading the gospels it is not all that difficult to see that Jesus has two natures, one human, from Mary; and one divine, from the Holy Spirit. We also know that there was just one infant wrapped in swaddling clothes and placed in a manger. He is one person like us. Knowing our nature to be strictly human, our will struggles against anything that we find unreasonable; if we can't find a good reason for things, those things aren't worth thinking about; the will decides that no decision is necessary and the issue is normally dismissed and hopefully forgotten. But *is* our nature strictly human? Does any other creature we know have Sapiens' imagination; the ability to transcend the mundane and develop even vague understandings of particle physics and the vital relevancy of spirituality? So far no other creature has written a symphony, or designed a space ship. We have come a very long way from the Savanna. It may be said that we are not just naturally human but super-naturally human for all intents and purposes. It was the first *human* creatures who knew of God; they were given to see God in the prodigious order of nature. They were made of the earth and born of the Spirit. *Homo religioni* one might say.

Each one of us reflects the life of the Spirit as well as the substance of the stars. The first humans knew the difference between good and evil after they bit into the proverbial apple. Scientific claims that man cannot know things of the Spirit are absurd in our estimation. It is just the newest secular attempt to blind mankind to his inner consciousness of God. In the big picture man has known of God as Spirit since the evolutionary brain to mind transformation. It is with *his and her* spirit that mankind knows of *his and her* God connection. In our contemplative moments we don't usually think Emergence; every man's objective is the face of God and the fragility of his own being. It is through the Messiah, Christ Jesus, that we have gotten to see God his Father, as our Father, *in him*. By his life, death and resurrection the requirements as to his promises were made perfectly clear in the "good news" of the Kingdom of God. Not one stroke of the law has ever been changed; the laws of Torah became more distinctly known as the laws of love and service to each-other which the Sh'ma Yisrael * had said for centuries.

**Sh'ma Yisrael; Hear, Israel, the Lord is our God, the Lord is One. ... And you shall love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your might.*

After quoting the Shema as the "*first and greatest commandment,*" (Mark 12: 28-34), Jesus immediately goes beyond the question he was asked by a scribe quoting what he called the second greatest commandment: "*You shall love your neighbor as yourself*" — which he says "*is like the first,*" and which comes from another book of the law: Leviticus 19:18. Finally, Jesus concludes by saying, "*The whole law and the*

prophets depend on these two commandments.” Then the scribe said to him, ‘You are right, Teacher; you have truly said that “he is one, and besides him there is no other”; and “to love him with all the heart, and with all the understanding, and with all the strength”, and “to love one’s neighbor as oneself”,—this is much more important than all whole burnt-offerings and sacrifices.’ When Jesus saw that he answered wisely, he said to him, ‘You are not far from the kingdom of God.’ After that no one dared to ask him any question.”

The “fight for love and glory” is resolved as the Father is glorified by Love with a new covenant opening beyond Israel to the whole world— in the Body of Christ. Very different from the burnt animals of antiquity.

Most people are pragmatists to one degree or another. In one sense, pragmatism is another word for practical. Thus the term pragmatism emphasizes the practical consequences in determining the criterion of meaning, truth, or value. Pragmatism is a form of “radical empiricism.” It affirms that all knowledge is derived from experience only, and cannot be derived from reason alone. Pragmatists say there is no *a priori* knowledge in reasoning. This leaves some soft but hopeful believers struggling with the unreasonable aspects of their faith like virgin-birth, being raised from the dead or transubstantiation, etc..etc.. In the early centuries after the crucifixion, and with vigorous evangelization, most of the civilized world lived by faith because it was not that far off from eye witnesses to miraculous or un-explained phenomena known to have taken place. Those centuries of spirituality are waning due to the rapid advances in science. Most pragmatists simply cannot accept the biblical concept of the “grace of God”

because for them, since God cannot be empirically proven to exist, what possible favors or grace can come from a non-existent entity. They are prone to discount the knowledge and experiences of their forebears, a condition that would tend to make all of history suspect. Truth itself becomes only a relative judgement. Still, three quarters of the world in one way or another believe in the “gospel truth.” We have a feeling that is a miracle in itself. Without the good news that mankind is redeemed and that God is all merciful; and that reconciliation is easily available through Jesus Christ, it is conceivable that the world may descend into an abyss from which it may not recover. In fact, in some quarters of the world this seems to be advancing.

In 1985 and 1986 a not unusual drought in Israel produced a very unusual archeological find. “Buried in a mudbank along the shore of the Sea of Galilee near the ancient town of Migdal for almost two millennia, the remains of the 27 foot fishing boat was discovered by two Israeli fishermen and amateur archaeologists. The discovery touched off a religious and archaeological furor. It was the first (and so far, the only) ancient boat to be recovered from the Sea of Galilee. A few over-enthusiastic Christians hailed it as the boat from which Jesus may have calmed the waters. The odds that Jesus ever sailed in the boat are about 1 in 1,000, says archaeologist Shelley Wachsmann, who directed the excavation and initial preservation of the fragile wooden hull. ‘But even if Jesus didn't sail in this particular boat, it opens a window onto what seafaring was like on the Sea of Galilee during that time,’ says Wachsmann, Meadows Assistant Professor of Biblical Archaeology in Texas A&M University's Nautical Archaeology program.

Wachsmann, then an inspector of underwater antiquities for the Israel Antiquities Authority, recreates the discovery, excavation and conservation of the boat's remains in a 420-page book, *The Sea of Galilee Boat -- An Extraordinary 2,000 Year Old Discovery*, published by Plenum Press in 1995.”

“The first apostles were fishermen, and most of those who heard Jesus preach also would have been fishermen. Probably because of that, Gospel stories and parables include images of fish and fishing. ‘Jesus used familiar ideas that they could understand,’ Wachsmann says.”

“The Gospels mention two specific boats in connection with Jesus -- the one owned by Zebedee, where he met the future apostles Simon Peter and Andrew, [*the writer may be a bit confused here*] and the one in which he crossed the Sea of Galilee from Capernaum to a ‘desolate place’ where he cast out a demon that possessed a man. There's no way to tell if this boat was either of those, Wachsmann says, but the odds are against it. There's little question that the boat Wachsmann writes about sailed during the period Jesus preached, he says. Using radiocarbon dating of hull timbers and analysis of artifacts and boatbuilding techniques used to construct the hull, the archaeologists determined that the boat was built during a period of 170 years from about 100 BC to about AD 70. The boat probably had a ‘working lifespan’ of between 10 and 20 years within that period, Wachsmann says.”

“‘Based on historical sources, we estimated that about 2,000 boats like this were on the lake during the period of time we have assigned to the boat,’ he says.”

As analyzed by Texas A&M ship construction expert Richard Steffy, professor emeritus of nautical archaeology, it is almost

The Jesus Boat

identical to an image of a fishing boat in a mosaic from the time of Jesus found at the nearby town of Migdal.

‘The hull will help answer questions about seafaring in a time and place about which we know very little,’ Wachsmann says.

The hull is now being conserved at the Yigal Allon Center Museum at Kibbutz Ginosar, a communal settlement on the Sea of Galilee not far from the site of the excavation.



We had the privilege of seeing this rare find on a 2009 trip to Egypt and Israel. The photo above is the boat on display at the Allon Museum in Ginosar.

A display model of the boat, built at Texas A&M by nautical archaeology graduate student William Charlton, is on display

The Jesus Boat

with the exhibit” (Texas A&M University, College Station,



Texas)

Model built by Charlton at Texas A&M.

It has always intrigued us when astronomers, looking at the galaxies through their powerful telescopes, are actually looking into the past. The same can be said of archeologists unearthing the stuff of ancient and pre-history. We get the chance to mentally adjust to the scale of things in days gone by. Those who read the scriptures are able to get a vague mental picture

of the events through the texts, but no imagination can compare to seeing related items in reality. For example, it's one thing to perceive the Sea of Galilee from text or a photograph, but seeing it from an upper hotel balcony at sunrise is definitely another story, the heart is touched. In that early morning air there is a scent of history. Unsubstantiated faith becomes much more trenchant. That's why this find is important. Though the boat may never have been anywhere near Jesus, Peter, Andrew or Zebedee, this remnant is a relic of the days of witnessed-miracles by Jesus on and around the Sea of Galilee. Seeing it we get a little closer to those holy days of messianic-deliverance. Regardless of what the pragmatists might say, one's spirituality is strengthened as faith makes sense.

“St. Peter's original name was Simon, sometimes occurring as Symeon.. He was the son of Jonah (Johannes) and was born in Bethsaida, a northern town on The Sea of Galilee. The Apostle Andrew, his brother, and the Apostle Philip were from the same town. Since he had a mother-in-law he was obviously married. (Matt. 8:14). The site of Bethsaida cannot be established with certainty. Bethsaida is mentioned more times in the gospels than any other city with the exception of Jerusalem and Capernaum, yet scholars are still debating its exact location.”

“The name ‘Bethsaida’ means either ‘house of the fisherman’ or ‘house of the hunter.’ Both names fit the geographical context. Bethsaida was one point of what Bargil Pixner called the ‘Evangelical Triangle.’ Korazin and Tabgha were the other two points of the triangle and Capernaum was the midpoint of the triangle's base. Jesus did most of his mighty works and miracles of his Galilean ministry within these three points. Two recorded miracles are the healing of the blind man outside the city of Bethsaida (Mark 8:22-26) and the feeding of the 5,000 men, plus women and children in a ‘deserted place’ within the

region of Bethsaida (Matt. 14:13-21; Mark 6:31-44; Luke 9:11-17; John 6:1-13). Prior to this miracle, Jesus turned to Philip and asked him where they should buy bread. Philip, whose hometown was nearby would have known where all the bakeries were.”

“The implication that fishing on the Sea of Galilee was well organized is confirmed by what we are told about Jesus’ companions. Simon and Andrew worked in partnership (Luke 5: 7) with James and John, the sons of Zebedee (Luke 5: 10), who had employees (Mark 1: 20). One has the impression that they owned their own boats (Luke 5: 11). They apparently operated under a system whereby fishing rights were farmed out to those who could guarantee a certain supply. Fish did not stay fresh long in the heat of Galilee. To be transported any distance they had to be preserved. The Hebrew and Greek names of a site between Tiberias and Capernaum reveal two techniques. ‘Magdala’ comes from ‘Migdal Nunnaya’, meaning ‘Tower of Fish,’ and evokes a wooden structure in which fish were air-dried. ‘Taricheae’ means a place where fish were pickled. The quality of its product was known as far away as Rome” (The Holy Land, Oxford Archeological Guides, Jerome Murphy O’Connor)

The Jordan River was the border line between the territories ruled by Antipas and Philip, Herod’s sons. If Peter was operating his fishing business in Bethsaida, on the East side of the lake, he had to take his catch across the border to Magdala for processing. Magdala was on the West side of the lake, south of Capernaum. They had to pay a tax to cross the border. At some point in time he must have moved the business, with others we suppose, to Capernaum, to increase his profits by saving the tax as well as shortening the trip to Magdala where

the fish were air-dried, smoked or pickled before going to market.

While there is a substantial archeological find of a fisherman's house at Et Tell (Bethsadia Julia), Peter's second house can be seen in Capernaum today. This is the house where his mother-in-law was cured of a high fever by Jesus according to the gospels. (Matt., 8: 14; Luke, 4: 38-40) The Franciscan's, a Catholic religious order, have done a marvelous archeological job over a long period of time for pilgrims to see much of the town of Capernaum unearthed—the town that Jesus made his home. A modern church has been built over the site of what is thought to be Peter's house with a glass floor that permits a view of the center of the house.

The first three gospels are, in the main, chronologically pretty much the same. Only the fourth gospel differs telling the story of Jesus' recruiting his disciples and finally appointing them "Apostles" to spread the good news of The Kingdom of God to the whole world. Regarding the recruitment we will use Matthew's and John's gospels to accentuate the difference. Then we will try to explain the various lake-crossings from Matthew's narrative, specifically the one that led to the exclamatory interrogative we used to title this essay. "*What manner of man is this, that even the wind and the sea obey him?*"

In Matthew 1 and 2, after the genealogy and the birth and infancy stories, he writes of the desert of Judaea where John the Baptist is preaching repentance based on the coming of the Kingdom of Heaven, essentially, the coming of the Messiah.

Matthew 3; 13 says:

“Then Jesus came from Galilee to John at the Jordan, to be baptized by him. John would have prevented him, saying, ‘I need to be baptized by you, and do you come to me?’ But Jesus answered him, ‘Let it be so now; for it is proper for us in this way to fulfill all righteousness.’ Then he consented. And when Jesus had been baptized, just as he came up from the water, suddenly the heavens were opened to him and he saw the Spirit of God descending like a dove and alighting on him. And a voice from heaven said, ‘This is my Son, the Beloved, with whom I am well pleased.’”*

Many from Judaea and the Jordan district came to be baptized by John. Jesus entered public life by coming to be baptized as well. Following the baptism he is “led by the Spirit” to “a desolate hilly region stretching from the central ridge of Palestine to the Jordan Valley and the Red Sea.” (NJB, p. 1613, Ch.3 footnote f) There, he is said to be tempted by the devil after fasting for forty days and forty nights. After hearing that the Baptist had been arrested he returned to Galilee according to Matthew’s gospel. Leaving his home in Nazareth, he settled in Capernaum to begin preaching “Repentance” and “the Kingdom of Heaven is at hand.”

By comparison, John’s gospel Ch. 1, opens with his beautiful prologue then goes directly to John (the Baptist) baptizing at “Bethany on the far side of the Jordan,” not the Bethany nearer Jerusalem. This site would agree with Matthew’s site, about 60 mi. south of the southern tip of the lake on the East side of the Jordan River closer to the Dead Sea.

Where the gospels differ is with (John, 1: 35):

“The next day John again was standing with two of his disciples, and as he watched Jesus walk by, he exclaimed,

'Look, here is the Lamb of God!' The two disciples heard him say this, and they followed Jesus. When Jesus turned and saw them following, he said to them, 'What are you looking for?' They said to him, 'Rabbi' (which translated means Teacher), 'where are you staying?' He said to them, 'Come and see.' They came and saw where he was staying, and they remained with him that day. It was about four o'clock in the afternoon. One of the two who heard John speak and followed him was Andrew, Simon Peter's brother. He first found his brother Simon and said to him, 'We have found the Messiah' (which is translated Anointed). He brought Simon* to Jesus, who looked at him and said, 'You are Simon son of John. You are to be called Cephas' (which is translated Peter*).'"*

John, 1: 43, follows with this:

"The next day Jesus decided to go to Galilee. He found Philip and said to him, 'Follow me.' Now Philip was from Bethsaida, the city of Andrew and Peter. Philip found Nathanael and said to him, 'We have found him about whom Moses in the law and also the prophets wrote, Jesus son of Joseph from Nazareth.' Nathanael said to him, 'Can anything good come out of Nazareth?' Philip said to him, 'Come and see.' When Jesus saw Nathanael coming towards him, he said of him, 'Here is truly an Israelite in whom there is no deceit!' Nathanael asked him, 'Where did you come to know me?' Jesus answered, 'I saw you under the fig tree before Philip called you.' Nathanael replied, 'Rabbi, you are the Son of God! You are the King of Israel!' Jesus answered, 'Do you believe because I told you that I saw you under the fig tree? You will see greater things than these.' And he said to him, 'Very truly, I tell you, you will see heaven opened and the angels of God ascending and descending upon the Son of Man.'"

After this, in John's gospel, they all went off to a wedding at Cana in Galilee, to which the disciples were invited for the miracle that convinced them of their decision to leave everything behind and set out following the presumed Messiah. Who could deny a man who could change jugs of water into the finest wine.

Now, in Matthew's gospel, after Jesus is "settled" in Capernaum he is said to have found his disciples while walking by the lake rather than at the baptismal site in the South according to John.

(Matthew 4: 18) says this:

"As he walked by the Sea of Galilee, [one would assume in Capernaum] he saw two brothers, Simon, who is called Peter, and Andrew his brother, casting a net into the lake—for they were fishermen. And he said to them, 'Follow me, and I will make you fishers of men.' Immediately they left their nets and followed him. As he went from there, he saw two other brothers, James son of Zebedee and his brother John, in the boat with their father Zebedee, (Simon's partners) mending their nets, and he called them. Immediately they left the boat and their father, and followed him."

NOTE:

One can imagine Zebedee and Simon and Andrew's family being pretty upset that the fishing enterprise of their "partnership" was suddenly in jeopardy; not understanding the magnitude of the Messianic event. Our imagination tells us that these families had just enough of a thriving business so as not to impoverish those who would be left behind. We do not believe they were abjectly poor people. Alicia J. Batten Associate Professor, University of Waterloo, Canada says;

“There was no free market that functioned independently from other dimensions of society, and little if any upward mobility. Most peasant fishing families *were* poor and lived at subsistence level, while a small minority of elites held the bulk of wealth and power. Fishing licenses were required for access to certain areas, and fishermen needed various raw materials such as wood for their boats and flax for their nets. Evidently, families occasionally had to hire day laborers for assistance with the haul (Mark 1:19-20).” The size of the fisherman’s house unearthed in Bethsaida Julia tells a little different story, but we will not argue with Dr. Batten. One also wonders how Peter’s wife might have responded to what today would constitute abandonment.

Now both gospels have Jesus baptized by John at “Bethany on the far-side of the Jordan.” John’s gospel has Jesus meeting Andrew, Peter, Philip and Nathanael there. All this before the Baptist was arrested and subsequently beheaded. According to John’s gospel, Jesus spent a considerable amount of time, maybe a year or so in Judaea while the Baptist was also ministering. They were both involved baptizing, though it was Jesus’ disciples who were doing the baptizing. He left again for Galilee through Samaria, and wound up for the second time at Cana. The question remains, were the disciples who were baptizing, Andrew, Peter, Philip, Nathanael, or others?

In Matthew, after the Baptist is arrested Jesus returned to Galilee (Matt, 4: 12-13) and proceeds to call or recall, as has been suggested, Peter, Andrew, James and John. He goes ahead with them in tow and draws huge crowds, preaching and curing everywhere he went.

To throw a little more light on this seeming contradiction we have included a piece from Fr. Ryan Erlenbush’s blog. We

cannot claim enough scholarship to offer a conclusion on this apparent contradiction. We will simply take the gospels as they are written. Feel free to skip Fr. Ryan's input if you wish, since our primary interest is in the lake crossings, the multiplication of the loaves and fishes recorded in all four gospels (in Matthew and Mark twice); and Jesus' miracles on the water with reference to the "Jesus boat" as recorded by John and Matthew.

From *The New Theological Movement*: Fr Ryan says:

"There are times when the gospels are not entirely clear as to the historical order of events — when this occurs, we are not necessarily bound to assume that they are related in chronological order. However, at other times, the gospel writers specify chronology, and then we must affirm that the historical chronology given is true. When there is an apparent contradiction, we must try to understand how the gospels are harmonious."

In Mark (as well as Matthew and Luke), it is very clear that John the Baptist had already been arrested when Peter and Andrew as well as James and John were called by Jesus: (Mark 1:14). However, in John, it is equally clear that the Baptist had not yet been arrested when Andrew and Peter were called, since it is John the Baptist who says to Andrew, Behold, the Lamb of God. The only logical conclusion must be that there were two vocations, two callings of these apostles. Jesus had called Andrew and Peter first when they were still disciples of John the Baptist and then, some time later, called them a second time while they were fishing (after the Baptist had been arrested). This, however, means that some amount of time passed from Jesus' baptism in the Jordan and fasting in the desert (cf. Mark 1:13) and the arrest of John and calling of the disciples (cf.

Mark 1:14). So, just how much time did pass between Mark 1:13 and 14? The time after Jesus' baptism and before John's arrest a full year passes between the fast in the desert and the arrest of the Baptist. This time period is recalled only by St. John, comprising the first three chapters of St. John's Gospel. Consider the commentary of Fr. Cornelius a'Lapide on Matthew 4:12:

“Matthew, Mark, and Luke all omit the ambassadors of the Jews meeting John the Baptist, asking him if he is the Messiah. To this first year of Christ's ministry pertain also the turning water into wine, the driving the buyers and sellers out of the temple, and the discourse with Nicodemus. These all took place before the imprisonment of the Baptist, and are related only by John. For before his imprisonment Christ had committed to John the work of preaching, but now He took that office upon Himself.”

“Speaking of the passage of a year between Mark 1:13 and 14, the Venerable St. Bede (cited in the Catena Aurea) writes:

“Let no one, however, suppose that the putting of John in prison took place immediately after the forty days' temptation and the fast of the Lord; for whoever reads the Gospel of John will find, that the Lord taught many things before the putting of John in prison, and also did many miracles; for you have in his Gospel, This beginning of miracles did Jesus; and afterwards, for John was not yet cast into prison. Now it is said, that when John read the books of Matthew, Mark, and Luke, he approved indeed the text of the history, and affirmed that they had spoken truth, but said that they had composed the history of only one year after John was cast into prison, in which year also he suffered. Passing over then the year of which the transactions

had been published by the three others, he related the events of the former period, before John was cast into prison.”

“And thus, it is clear that there need be no contradiction between the calling of Peter and Andrew as related in the synoptic gospels and that of St. John – for there were two callings, which took place roughly one year apart. And it was fitting that Jesus should call these apostles twice, for they were disciples of the Baptist and did not begin to follow Christ publicly until after the Baptist had been arrested and so run his course.” So says Fr. Ryan.

There are some who are somewhat critical of Ryan’s theological judgements. This particular post has little to do with theology. What Fr. Ryan is suggesting is that a “double-calling” seems to be the consensus of many theologians.

In a previous essay we wrote: We don't exactly experiment with the gospels to prove them true. We consider the texts sacred because the events that were recorded were witnessed first hand by individuals whom we have traditionally learned to trust. However, the tradition was handed down in the community in the form of stories, parables and short sayings remembered for their teaching or for the light they shed on the person or the message of Jesus. As to their date, scholars can only be sure that they all stem from the last forty years of the first century. (Pocket edition NJB, Doubleday 1990.) It is reasonable *not* to expect the chronology between them to perfectly harmonize.

There was no editor-in-chief for the New Testament save the Holy Spirit. I’m sure St. Jerome also wrestled with what could be called apparent contradictions. We tend to favor John’s gospel since he was one of those chosen with his brother James at Capernaum, as told to us by Matthew. There has been some

conjecture in the past that there were two “Johns,” one, the Apostle another the Evangelist, but most scholars agree that they are one and the same person. It is he who would have known whether Andrew and Peter had been chosen once before then called a second time. Matthew came later (Matt. 9: 9) and would had to have heard about the recruitment story from the others as would Mark and Luke. Who knows, maybe Matthew, being a tax collector, may have even collected tolls from Peter or Zebedee. We ought never try to fit the picture to the frame but let the frame fit the picture. Humanity has not exactly been perfected yet.

Since the disciples were totally committed to Jesus one would have to assume that their boat or boats were at his disposal. Who would refuse a man who is able to change water into wine, cure serious diseases by touch, or cure a Roman officer’s servant unseen and at a distance. In the following few pages after Peter’s mother-in-law, and many others had been cured of their maladies, we feature the activities in Matthew’s gospel that pertain to the use of the boat. Continuing with the narrative he got into *the* boat, most likely Peter’s boat, followed by the disciples and headed across the lake for the Eastern shore, Gadara. Matthew continues:

*“A gale arose on the lake, so great that the boat was being swamped by the waves; but he was asleep. And they went and woke him up, saying, ‘Lord, save us! We are perishing!’ And he said to them, ‘Why are you afraid, you of little faith?’ Then he got up and rebuked the winds and the sea; and there was a dead calm. They were amazed, saying, ‘**What manner of man is this, that even the winds and the sea obey him?**’”*

At Gadara he dispatched “evil spirits” from two demoniacs into a herd of swine which subsequently charged into the lake and

The Jesus Boat

were drowned. He promptly was asked to leave that place by the Gadarenes. He and the disciples got back in the boat and crossed the lake returning to Capernaum. By this time everyone knew the power of God was in him. Where ever he went large crowds followed him to hear what he had to say; on one occasion he got on the boat and sat there (probably on stowed nets) to preach, thus keeping the crowds from pressing in. The people all stood on the beach as he related his parables from the boat.

Some time later, Jesus found out that the Baptist had been murdered. Once again, with the disciples, he crossed the lake to a lonely place, probably near Bethsaida, to rest. Still, the crowds were able to find him. Matthew 14: 13 relates what happened:

“When he went ashore, he saw a great crowd; and he had compassion for them and cured their sick. When it was evening, the disciples came to him and said, ‘This is a deserted place, and the hour is now late; send the crowds away so that they may go into the villages and buy food for themselves.’ Jesus said to them, ‘They need not go away; you give them something to eat.’ They replied, ‘We have nothing here but five loaves and two fish.’ And he said, ‘Bring them here to me.’ Then he ordered the crowds to sit down on the grass. Taking the five loaves and the two fish, he looked up to heaven, and blessed and broke the loaves, and gave them to the disciples, and the disciples gave them to the crowds. And all ate and were filled; and they took up what was left over of the broken pieces, twelve baskets full. And those who ate were about five thousand men, besides women and children.”

Following this he had the disciples get into the boat and go ahead to the other side while he dismissed the crowd, Matthew continues:

“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. 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.’ 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?’ When they got into the boat, the wind ceased.³³ And those in the boat worshipped him, saying, ‘Truly you are the Son of God.’”*

They landed at Gennesaret where huge crowds gathered bringing their sick and infirm to be cured, and he cured them.

After a visit to the region of Tyre and Sidon in today’s Lebanon he met an intrepid Canaanite woman for a conversation; then returned to the shores of the lake and fed another 4000 people on a mountainside after curing many them of their diseases in the same manner he had fed and cured the others. In Matthew’s gospel this is known as the “Second miracle of the loaves.” When the crowds had dispersed he and the disciples boarded the boat again and went to the territory of Magidan (Magdala) where he was asked by Pharisees and Sadducees to show them

a sign from heaven; whereupon he gave them the well known meteorological couplet about reading the face of a red sky in the morning; telling them that the only sign they will be given is “the sign of Jonah” obviously signifying his three days in the tomb of Arimathea.

They crossed the lake again and went north to Caesarea Philippi; about 25 miles north of Bethsaida, where Peter professed his faith and was given pre-eminence by Jesus; the “keys of the kingdom of Heaven.” Catholics believe this was the birth of the concurrent papacy where mere men, like Peter, attempt to live up to the promises of Christ.

Six days later, according to Matthew, the major event of the Transfiguration took place on Mt. Tabor in lower Galilee eleven miles west of the Southern tip of the lake. Obviously they had returned to the West side by boat. Further preaching and teaching continuously took place in and around Capernaum. An interesting fishing incident happened there as well, Matthew says:

“The collectors of the temple tax came to Peter and said, ‘Does your teacher not pay the temple tax?’ He said, ‘Yes, he does.’ And when he came home, Jesus spoke of it first, asking, ‘What do you think, Simon? From whom do kings of the earth take toll or tribute? From their children or from others?’ When Peter said, ‘From others’, Jesus said to him, ‘Then the children are free. However, so that we do not give offense to them, go to the lake and cast a hook; take the first fish that comes up; and when you open its mouth, you will find a coin; take that and give it to them for you and me.’”

“When he had finished what he wanted to say they left Galilee and came into Judaea on the far side of the Jordan.” Matthew

does not elaborate how they got there, one would presume, again, by boat.

After Jesus' passion and resurrection the eleven returned to Galilee to the mountain where Jesus had arranged to meet them. In Matthew 28: 16, he says:

“When they saw him, they worshipped him; but some doubted. And Jesus came and said to them, ‘All authority in heaven and on earth has been given to me. Go therefore and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, and teaching them to obey everything that I have commanded you. And remember, I am with you always, to the end of the age.’” And so it is.

In John's gospel there are far fewer incidents regarding the boat. Much time is spent in Judaea, in and around Jerusalem at least for a year as previously noted. When they did get back to Galilee in John's Chapter 6, they crossed to the East side of the lake (most likely to the same location near Bethsaida as Mathew said). John then tells his version of the multiplication of the loaves and fishes. John says:

Jesus went to the other side of the Sea of Galilee, also called the Sea of Tiberias. A large crowd kept following him, because they saw the signs that he was doing for the sick. Jesus went up the mountain and sat down there with his disciples. Now the Passover, the festival of the Jews, was near. When he looked up and saw a large crowd coming towards him, Jesus said to Philip, ‘Where are we to buy bread for these people to eat?’ He said this to test him, for he himself knew what he was going to do. Philip answered him, ‘Six months’ wages would not buy enough bread for each of them to get a little.’ One of his disciples, Andrew, Simon Peter's brother, said to him, ‘There is

The Jesus Boat

a boy here who has five barley loaves and two fish. But what are they among so many people?’ Jesus said, ‘Make the people sit down.’ Now there was a great deal of grass in the place; so they sat down, about five thousand in all. Then Jesus took the loaves, and when he had given thanks, he distributed them to those who were seated; so also the fish, as much as they wanted. When they were satisfied, he told his disciples, ‘Gather up the fragments left over, so that nothing may be lost.’ So they gathered them up, and from the fragments of the five barley loaves, left by those who had eaten, they filled twelve baskets. When the people saw the sign that he had done, they began to say, ‘This is indeed the prophet who is to come into the world.’

In John’s gospel, similar to Matthew’s, after the miracle of the loaves an incident on the water took place. John tells it this way:

When Jesus realized that they were about to come and take him by force to make him king, he withdrew again to the mountain by himself.

When evening came, his disciples went down to the lake, got into a boat, and started across the lake to Capernaum. It was now dark, and Jesus had not yet come to them. The lake became rough because a strong wind was blowing. When they had rowed about three or four miles, they saw Jesus walking on the lake and coming near the boat, and they were terrified. But he said to them, ‘It is I; do not be afraid.’ Then they wanted to take him into the boat, and immediately the boat reached the land towards which they were going.

“The next day the crowd that had stayed on the other side of the lake saw that there had been only one boat there. They also saw that Jesus had not got into the boat with his disciples, but

that his disciples had gone away alone. Then some boats from Tiberias came near the place where they had eaten the bread after the Lord had given thanks. So when the crowd saw that neither Jesus nor his disciples were there, they themselves got into the boats and went to Capernaum looking for Jesus.”

“When they found him on the other side of the lake, they said to him, ‘Rabbi, when did you come here?’ Jesus answered them, ‘Very truly, I tell you, you are looking for me, not because you saw signs, but because you ate your fill of the loaves. Do not work for the food that perishes, but for the food that endures for eternal life, which the Son of Man will give you. For it is on him that God the Father has set his seal.’ Then they said to him, ‘What must we do to perform the works of God?’ Jesus answered them, ‘This is the work of God, that you believe in him whom he has sent.’ So they said to him, ‘What sign are you going to give us then, so that we may see it and believe you? What work are you performing? Our ancestors ate the manna in the wilderness; as it is written, “He gave them bread from heaven to eat.” ’ Then Jesus said to them, ‘Very truly, I tell you, it was not Moses who gave you the bread from heaven, but it is my Father who gives you the true bread from heaven. For the bread of God is that which comes down from heaven and gives life to the world.’ They said to him, ‘Sir, give us this bread always.’”

“Jesus said to them, ‘I am the bread of life. Whoever comes to me will never be hungry, and whoever believes in me will never be thirsty.’”

Following this, Jesus engages in the most beautiful and intense discourse in the synagogue at Capernaum, the capstone of John’s gospel. He then continued traveling around Galilee for some time. When the feast of Shelters drew near he bid the

disciples to go up to Jerusalem by themselves. However, after his brothers had left he secretly went up himself and when the festival was half over he began to teach again in the Temple. By directly confronting the authorities his passion, death and resurrection were near.

In the epilogue to John's gospel, after the resurrection Jesus again revealed himself to the disciples. John's gospel says: *"Gathered there together were Simon Peter, Thomas called the Twin, Nathanael of Cana in Galilee, the sons of Zebedee, and two others of his disciples. Simon Peter said to them, 'I am going fishing.' They said to him, 'We will go with you.' They went out and got into the boat, but that night they caught nothing."*

"Just after daybreak, Jesus stood on the beach; but the disciples did not know that it was Jesus. Jesus said to them, 'Children, you have no fish, have you?' They answered him, 'No.' He said to them, 'Cast the net to the right side of the boat, and you will find some.' So they cast it, and now they were not able to haul it in because there were so many fish. That disciple whom Jesus loved said to Peter, 'It is the Lord!' When Simon Peter heard that it was the Lord, he put on some clothes, for he was naked, and jumped into the lake. But the other disciples came in the boat, dragging the net full of fish, for they were not far from the land, only about a hundred yards off."

"When they had gone ashore, they saw a charcoal fire there, with fish on it, and bread. Jesus said to them, 'Bring some of the fish that you have just caught.' So Simon Peter went aboard and hauled the net ashore, full of large fish, a hundred and fifty-three of them; and though there were so many, the net was not torn. Jesus said to them, 'Come and have breakfast.' Now none of the disciples dared to ask him, 'Who are you?' because they

knew it was the Lord. Jesus came and took the bread and gave it to them, and did the same with the fish. This was now the third time that Jesus appeared to the disciples after he was raised from the dead.”

“When they had finished breakfast, Jesus said to Simon Peter, ‘Simon son of John, do you love me more than these?’ He said to him, ‘Yes, Lord; you know that I love you.’ Jesus said to him, ‘Feed my lambs.’ A second time he said to him, ‘Simon son of John, do you love me?’ He said to him, ‘Yes, Lord; you know that I love you.’ Jesus said to him, ‘Tend my sheep.’ He said to him the third time, ‘Simon son of John, do you love me?’ Peter felt hurt because he said to him the third time, ‘Do you love me?’ And he said to him, ‘Lord, you know everything; you know that I love you.’ Jesus said to him, ‘Feed my sheep. Very truly, I tell you, when you were younger, you used to fasten your own belt and to go wherever you wished. But when you grow old, you will stretch out your hands, and someone else will fasten a belt around you and take you where you do not wish to go.’ (He said this to indicate the kind of death by which he would glorify God.) After this he said to him, ‘Follow me.’”

“Peter turned and saw the disciple whom Jesus loved following them; he was the one who had reclined next to Jesus at the supper and had said, ‘Lord, who is it that is going to betray you?’ When Peter saw him, he said to Jesus, ‘Lord, what about him?’ Jesus said to him, ‘If it is my will that he remain until I come, what is that to you? Follow me!’ So the rumor spread in the community that this disciple would not die. Yet Jesus did not say to him that he would not die, but, ‘If it is my will that he remain until I come, what is that to you?’”

“This is the disciple who is testifying to these things and has written them, and we know that his testimony is true. But there

The Jesus Boat

are also many other things that Jesus did; if every one of them were written down, I suppose that the world itself could not contain the books that would be written.”

The Feast of Corpus Christi

Gospel Acclamation John 6:51

Alleluia, alleluia.

I am the living bread that came down from heaven, says the Lord; whoever eats this bread will live forever.

Alleluia, alleluia.