It’s a common saying that a person that acts like a know-it-all is said to think they can walk on water. I know that I’m almost perfect because when I walk on water only my ankles get a little wet.

Matthew’s gospel story we read today is another one that I enjoy because of the imagery. I picture Peter cautiously stepping out of that fishing boat and taking those tepid steps toward Jesus.

But as I visualize St. Peter, he is slowly sinking in those rough waters until Jesus takes his hand and leads him back into the boat. What is our message from these passages?

I don’t think trust is the main issue here. Peter stepped out in to that rough sea because he trusted that Jesus would not have him do anything to cause him harm.

He had seen Jesus feed thousands on a few loaves of bread and a couple of fish. Throughout his discipleship, Peter had witnessed several other healing and compassionate miracles. I’m sure trust was not a factor in this event.

The theme or issue for Peter and for us today is faith.

Like Peter, we trust in God’s love and forgiveness by our receiving and then practicing our Catholic religion. We trust that the prolific writings of Pope, St. John Paul II were the inspiration of the Holy Spirit, and that our current Pope, Francis, is also, through Divine intervention, chosen to lead God’s Church on earth.

Faith is the living out of the trust we have in God. I like the saying of St. Augustine, “Faith is to believe what we do not see, and the reward of faith is to see what we believe”.

Peter’s lack of faith is the cause of his sinking in that stormy sea and it’s our lack of faith today that is the challenge in our journey to God’s Kingdom.

When we finally have the faith that is required of us, we will not only pray but live the Our Father. Jesus told us to ask of His Father, “Thy will be done, on earth as it is in
heaven”. Is that not living out the total life of faith, God’s will being done on earth as it is in heaven!

If we fully live our faith, we would have the strength to stand up to the power of evil and not sink into the desires of the flesh and the accumulation of worldly goods.

We all really want to say to Jesus, “Yes, I believe!” but are we willing to demonstrate that belief by trusting our total life to Him

In all this, it is very important that we realize that this story of Peter is just as valid today. He was exercising the faith that he had, but it was not a complete faith. It was just not strong enough to answer our Lord’s call. Not yet anyway!

Gradually but consistently, Peter’s faith grew until he was not only able to stand up and preach to the world about his Savior, Jesus Christ, but could accept the sacrifice of his own life to prove it. Again, Faith is not an intellectual exercise. It involves total commitment.

It’s very important to realize or accept that everyone’s faith is at a different level. Our Lord knows that, so instead of constantly holding our hand to lead us, He is always just a step away with His hand out ready to catch us when we truly need Him. And He will catch us, over and over, until we can fulfill a total commitment to God.

Here is an interesting and spiritual contemplation: The disciples did not make the decision to cross the sea at night. Jesus told them to cross the sea and they were simply following orders.

Did you ever feel like you were doing what Jesus wanted you to do – only to find yourself in trouble?

Causes: by doubt // lack of faith // self-centeredness

I believe we are all ordered by which I mean created for a certain purpose on our journey to return to the Father. A personal example to me is my daughter, Karen.

I drove her to Cleveland for her orientation at Case Western University. Karen had always talked about nursing and she had her mind set through high school to follow through.

Following an overview of the campus, the parents were ushered off to fill out paperwork to sign our life savings over.
The new students of the Nursing College were given the opportunity to spend time in an area of their choosing in the Cleveland Clinic. Of course, some chose the E.R., some chose the Maternity floor, and so on. My daughter, to my surprise and horror, chose the Burn Unit.

On the way home I asked her about the hospital experience and she proceeded to tell me about how she assisted the nursing staff with the needs of the burn victims. The first impression I had was a sick feeling of and for these poor patients but what has continually surfaced is that if she could do that then she was really called to be a nurse. Or, as in the story of today's gospel, she was ordered by God to use her talents this way.

My brother said in the 8th grade that he wanted to be a priest and he was the best priest in the Diocese of Columbus. He followed orders!

I, on the other hand, did not want to be a priest or a deacon or anything religious. As you see now, I am standing here as a Permanent Deacon. I followed orders!

As I look around today, I believe that you too are following orders to be a spouse, parent, nurse, teacher, and other vocations that your Creator has instilled in you.

If you are not following your orders, it could be that you just haven't heard them yet, or you might be fighting them by selfishly placing your wants above His. Either way, I can honestly say you're gonna lose the fight.

We do believe that through our baptism and by the nourishment of the Eucharist, the Body and Blood of Christ, we hold total confidence, which is trust.

Our faith today may be equivalent to that of Peter when he stepped out of that boat, but by continually reaching out for the hand of Jesus, we will all enjoy the faith of Peter and all the communion of saints.

May we be the outstretched hand of Christ for each other and for all who come to us in need.