

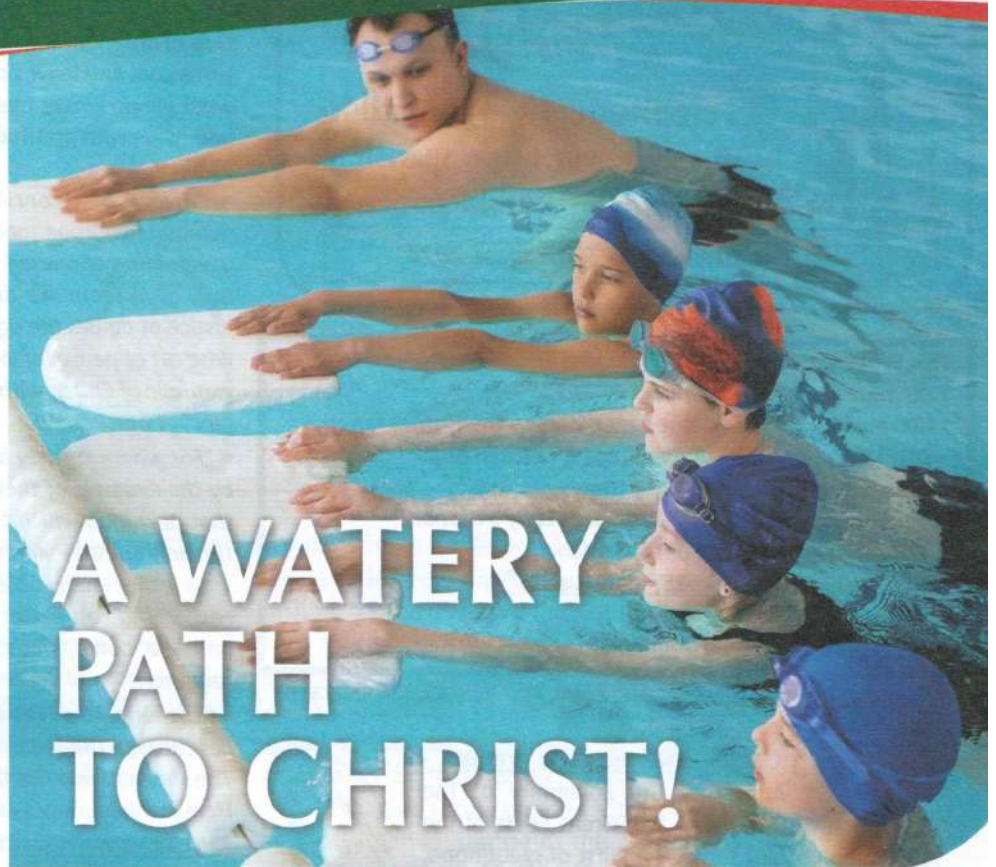
I belong to a group of people who learned to swim as adults – and I can assure you, it is a much harder skill to acquire than as a child. This is mainly because you have to let go of so many things and trust in the process and the element in which you are (literally) immersed. Our swim coach would encourage us to relax and trust in the natural buoyancy of the human body. He taught us to float first. He told us that fear would sink us faster than water ever could. Once we got it into our heads that we would be OK and were safe in the water, then we could develop our own natural swimming stroke. It was a hard lesson for me to realise that my youthful strength (I was twenty-six at the time) was to no avail in water – what was needed was my trust. I had to, in a way, ‘command’ the panic within me to abate and move. Maybe we have to let go of our assumptions and false images of what and who Jesus is, to re-adjust our gaze upon him, before we can make progress in traversing the storms of our modern times.

Having someone with you in the storm of life makes all the difference. I’ve heard people who have undergone surgery relate gratefully how the surgeon asked them to trust in them and their team, that they would be with them in all this. It doesn’t change the reality of what a

patient is facing, but it changes everything when a person tells you ‘I will be right with you in all this – have faith.’ It is, in short, the gift of presence. In the widely acclaimed TV production *The Chosen*, this scene from the Gospel is depicted (with some artistic license) as coming when Peter and his wife are facing a personal crisis – a miscarriage. Peter is angry at Jesus for helping everyone else and not them. But he comes to him on the water – and sinks when his gaze is distracted. He is lifted by the hand of Jesus and clings to him, sobbing repeatedly, ‘don’t let me go, don’t let me go.’ It is interesting that the Gospel has the Lord present in storm and wind, but in the First Reading he is present in the gentle breeze. The Jubilee Banner for the past year showed an

outline depiction of a boat crossing the waves of our time – with an anchor to secure it in the shape of the Cross. It is only in keeping our gaze on the Lord that we find strength in our difficulty, the courage to step out of the boat and try to grasp his hand, steadying the little faith we have. Peace begins the moment we begin to trust. ■

— Tom Cox



## A WATERY PATH TO CHRIST!

### Reflection

What helps best to calm your fears at a time of anxiety?

### Lesson

We are never on our own. God is always with us, and human help may be closer than we realise.

### Prayer

‘I will hear what the Lord God has to say, a voice that speaks of peace’  
— Psalm 85:8