

Following a busy day where Jesus had fed 5,000 people, He goes to the hills to be alone and to pray. His disciples are in their boat, suddenly they encounter stormy waters. Their fears subside when they see Jesus coming towards them walking over the raging waves. Courage! It is I! Do not be afraid are the reassuring words of Jesus. Hearing these words and responding to the word of Jesus, 'Come', Peter jumps out of the boat and with his eyes towards Jesus walks on the stormy waves. His trust in Jesus enables him to cross the stormy water but once his fears take over he begins to sink... Peter understands failure. After all, he denied Christ. He experienced the soothing balm of forgiveness, and he had the joy of being used greatly by God on the day of Pentecost. Peter preached the sermon that led to 5,000 people to join the church.

When it comes to Peter walking on the water, it is easy to condemn him for his lack of faith. Jesus does call Peter a man of little faith, but what about the other eleven disciples? They too heard the invitation to Come but they stayed in the boat! It's really easy to criticise others while doing nothing ourselves.

- When it comes to trusting Jesus, what keeps me from getting out of the boat?
- What keeps me from daring to trust Jesus? Can I dare to trust Jesus completely?

Prayer over the Gifts

Be pleased, O Lord to accept the offerings of your Church, for in your mercy you have given them to be offered And in your power you transform them into the mystery of our salvation.

Prayer after Communion

May the communion in your sacrament that we have consumed, save us and confirm us in the light of your truth.

***Jesus, hold out your hand and grip mine tightly.
Strengthen my faith so that I can reach out to
my sisters and brothers. Amen.***

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This Sunday's Readings: ***Nineteenth Sunday Yr A*** **9th August 2020**



Courage! It is I! Do not be afraid are the reassuring words of Jesus being spoken to us today. In the readings we hear of the discouragement, sadness and fear experienced by Elijah, Paul and the disciples. These emotions we so often experience in our daily lives. In the Gospel Jesus says to his disciples: 'Come.' Today this same word is being spoken to us personally: Jesus is inviting each one of us to turn to Him in trust and hope.

Opening Prayer

Look at your covenant, O Lord and forget not the life of your poor ones. Arise O God, and defend your cause and forget not the cries of those who seek you

1 Kings 19: 9a, 11-13a

When Elijah reached Horeb, the mountain of God, he went into the cave and spent the night in it. Then he was told, 'Go out and stand on the mountain before the Lord.' Then the Lord himself went by. There came a mighty wind, so strong it tore the mountains and shattered the rocks before the Lord. But the Lord was not in the wind. After the wind came an earthquake. But the Lord was not in the earthquake. After the earthquake came a fire. But the Lord was not in the fire. And after the fire there came the sound of a gentle breeze. And when Elijah heard this, he covered his face with his cloak and went out and stood at the entrance of the cave.

When do you expect God to communicate with you? Have you ever been disappointed with his answer, or times and occasions when you failed to hear the answer? Under a royal death sentence, Elijah fled the northern kingdom of Israel to the refuge of Mount Sinai, travelling south to hear the word of God. On the mountain, he may have expected to encounter God through earthquake, wind and fire as his ancestors had experienced. But, unlike his ancestors in the desert, Elijah did not experience God in these symbols. No, he heard the Lord's voice in a faint whisper, where he least expected it. God is indeed so great that we experience Him when we least expect Him to appear. He reveals himself to us.

Elijah heard the voice of God in the gentle breeze. Do I take the time and space to hear the whisper of God in the gentle breeze of my life?

Psalm 84

*I will hear what the Lord God has to say, a voice that speaks of peace.
His help is near for those who fear him and his glory will dwell in our
land.*

*Mercy and faithfulness have met; justice and peace have embraced.
Faithfulness shall spring from the earth and justice look down from
heaven.*

*The Lord will make us prosper and our earth shall yield its fruit.
Justice shall march before him and peace shall follow his steps.*

Romans 9: 1-5

What I want to say now is no pretence; I say it in union with Christ – it is the truth – my conscience in union with the Holy Spirit assures me of it too. What I want to say is this: my sorrow is so great, my mental anguish so endless, I would willingly be condemned and be cut off from Christ if it could help my brothers of Israel, my own flesh and blood. They were adopted as sons, they were given the glory and the covenants; the Law and the ritual were drawn up for them, and the promises were made to them. They are descended from the patriarchs and from their flesh and blood came Christ who is above all, God for ever blessed! Amen.

Every family has its ups and down, its high points and its low points...in today's reading Paul is experiencing pain as those around him reject Jesus, the Messiah.

At one time Paul hunted Christians in his zeal to protect his faith which he felt was his birth-right. After his conversion experience, he focused his zeal towards preaching and missionary work in service of the Messiah. Despite his efforts, he faced rejection; most of this Jewish audience turned away from him.

Paul felt deep pain over this rejection, not because he had a "thin skin," but because of his faith. He was an apostle. He believed his mission was an extension of Christ's mission. He knew that he had been called by God to a life of toil and travel and rejection for the sake of the Gospel. In his heart, he would do anything to spread that Good News. Yet, his own people rejected his message, but the Gentiles accepted it joyfully.

*Alleluia, Alleluia! Blessings on the King who comes, in the name of the
Lord! Peace in heaven and glory in the highest heavens! Alleluia!*

Matthew 14: 22-33

Jesus made the disciples get into the boat and go on ahead to the other side while he would send the crowds away. After sending the crowds away he went up into the hills by himself to pray. When evening came, he was there alone, while the boat, by now far out on the lake, was battling with a heavy sea, for there was a head-wind. In the fourth watch of the night he went towards them, walking on the lake, and when the disciples saw him walking on the lake they were terrified. 'It is a ghost' they said, and cried out in fear. But at once Jesus called out to them, saying, 'Courage! It is I! Do not be afraid.' It was Peter who answered. 'Lord,' he said 'if it is you, tell me to come to you across the water.' 'Come' said Jesus. Then Peter got out of the boat and started walking towards Jesus across the water, but as soon as he felt the force of the wind, he took fright and began to sink. 'Lord! Save me!' he cried. Jesus put out his hand at once and held him. 'Man of little faith,' he said 'why did you doubt?' And as they got into the boat the wind dropped. The men in the boat bowed down before him and said, 'Truly, you are the Son of God.'

