

19TH SUNDAY IN ORDINARY TIME YEAR A 2020

The readings today remind us of God's saving presence for His people through Christ and the need for trusting faith in a loving and providing God who always keeps us takes care of us.

Often times we worry ourselves sick over some deadline - a report that is due, an inspection of our work, a tough decision about our future - only to wonder the next day why we were so upset and jittery. We get worried over little things. And it only robs us of sleep and peace of mind, but doesn't really change the situation. What we need is trusting faith.

Think of Elijah in today's first reading, who having ran from Jezebel who wanted to kill him, goes up the mountain to meet the Lord. At first he thought God was coming to meet Him through either the thunder, earthquake or fire but God wasn't in any of those. Instead he was content with God meeting him through the soft whisper. He was consoled and trusted that his God was helping and protecting him. Like Elijah, we should not look for God only in the big occurrences, but also in the small everyday events. This will increase our faith and trust in Him.

In the gospel today, the disciples must have felt relieved, but probably a bit foolish, too! Jesus had scolded them. "O you of little faith!" That was embarrassing! However, the truth is that trusting in God is easier said than done. When everything is going well, it is very easy to believe and trust in the Lord. But when the going gets tough, then our faith is tested. However, the only faith Jesus expects of His followers is a faith which concentrates solely on Him. In other words, when we simply heed our Lord, great things happen.

When Peter takes his eyes off of Jesus he begins to sink. This is what often happens to you and me. We start off our lives fine. We have our eyes fixed firmly on Jesus. But then something happens that makes us take our eyes off Jesus. We look away from Him and that's when we lose our balance. That's when we begin to sink.

Today's gospel reading invites us to take an honest look at our lives. If we don't experience the spiritual peace and joy we once did, maybe it's because we have taken our eyes off Jesus. If we find ourselves in danger of being swallowed up by the storm waves of life, maybe it's because we have turned away from Jesus. Today's gospel invites us to turn our eyes back to Jesus. It invites us to say with Peter, *Lord, save me!*

This encounter with Jesus is also kind of theophany: Jesus revealing himself to His disciples as God by proving His mastery over the sea, which was considered by the ancients to be an unruly chaos inhabited by evil spirits. When He tells them: "Take courage; it is I." the disciples in the boat worshipped Him and proclaimed Him to be truly the Son of God

It is the presence of Jesus which gives us peace even in the wildest storms of life: storms of sorrow, storms of doubt, tension and uncertainty, storms of anxiety and worries, storms of anger and despair, storms of terrible diseases and pandemics and storms of depression, fear of death and storms of temptations. All these storms reveal to us our inability to save ourselves and point us to the infinite ability of God to save us. But this demands a personal relationship with God and continued focus on Jesus, enhanced through prayer, meditative study of Scripture and an active Sacramental life.

When Jesus shows up in our life's storms, He gives us the strength to do the seemingly impossible. He invigorates, restores, and empowers us to reach the unreachable; to cross the un-crossable. With arm outstretched, He is saying to us, "Take heart, it is I; do not be afraid." May we pray that our faith in the Lord may be increased and that we may always trust in Him especially when the storms of life hit us. Amen.