

19th Sunday of the Year A, August 9 2020

First Reading 1 Kgs 19.9a, 11-13a, Second Reading Rom 9:1-5, Gospel Matt 14:22-33,

Theme: To Fix Our Eyes on Jesus and Stretch our Hands to Cling to Him

The raging waves of the sea are often compared to the storms of human life. Today in the Gospel we are presented with the account of how the raging storms of the sea wanted to carry Peter away as he walked towards Jesus on the water. The first question for our reflection is: what do we do when being ravaged by the turbulent waves of adversity? Do we have that faith of St Peter to stretch out our hands to cling to Jesus? What do we do when we are lashed by stormy marriage, straying children, walking into the future with some dread diseases. Some of us run away from God like Elijah the Prophet when he is most needed. Elijah the prophet unable to face violent opposition gave himself up to despair and hid in the cave. But God called him out to meet him. Even as Elijah was hiding in the cave he was attentive and open to recognize God's voice in the tiny whispering sound. When we face opposition of any kind like Elijah did, do we pause to hear God's voice calling us out or do we run away from God and shut our doors and ears and mind against God?

To cling to Christ, especially in times of turmoil we need strong faith in his mighty power and in his presence even today in our midst. It is this faith that would compel us to fix our eyes, gaze and attention on Jesus so that we are not swept away by the storms of human life. Faith in this case is more of an encounter with Jesus than it is a belief about him. It means to have a relationship with Jesus what I call personal and intimate relationship with Christ. It is this relationship more than belief that assures us that he is with us. It is more an experience of his divine presence itself than just an acceptance of dogmatic pronouncement about him.

It would be nice to state, that strong faith in Jesus will not remove all our difficulties, but it will give us the strength to cope with them. It won't eliminate all the darkness that sometimes surround us, but it will let enough light filter through to allow us recognize Christ presence in that darkness.

A final message we are to take home today is the words of Jesus to all of us. "Take courage, it is I, Do not be afraid". Jesus tells us today not to be afraid because he is there near us at every moment of our lives. He is there to lift us up especially when we go through the raging storms and trials of our lives. When we experience the storms of life Jesus reassures us that he is near, let us fix our eyes on him and stretch out our hands to cling to him. When we cling to him in our trouble he would not allow us sink that's the reason he tells us not to be afraid.