

Nineteenth Sunday in Ordinary Time
Sunday, August 13, 2023

Proper 14 - If we want to get to Jesus, you have to get out of the boat.

1) My first sermons....

Fr Cy's late for Mass.

Pastor delivers death news to Air Force mom on death of her son. I was called to do morning Communion Service complete with sermon.

"Be With Me Lord, When I Am In Trouble" was the Psalm. Calling on Jesus to make me strong in faith, I plodded on with Jesus at my side and kept my focus on the Lord and made it through

1st Reading (1 Kings 19:9a, 11-13a)

At the mountain of God, Horeb,

Elijah came to a cave where he took shelter.

Then the LORD said to him,

"Go outside and stand on the mountain before the LORD;
the LORD will be passing by."

A strong and heavy wind was rending the mountains
and crushing rocks before the LORD—

but the LORD was not in the wind.

After the wind there was an earthquake—
but the LORD was not in the earthquake.

After the earthquake there was fire—
but the LORD was not in the fire.

After the fire there was a tiny whispering sound.

When he heard this,

Elijah hid his face in his cloak

and went and stood at the entrance of the cave.

The Word of the Lord R:/The Word of the Lord

2nd Reading (Romans 9:1-5)

Brothers and sisters:

I speak the truth in Christ, I do not lie;

my conscience joins with the Holy Spirit in bearing me witness that I have great sorrow and constant anguish in my heart.

For I could wish that I myself were accursed and cut off from Christ for the sake of my own people, my kindred according to the flesh.

They are Israelites;

theirs the adoption, the glory, the covenants,

the giving of the law, the worship, and the promises;

theirs the patriarchs, and from them,

according to the flesh, is the Christ,

who is over all, God blessed forever. Amen.

The Word of the Lord R:/The Word of the Lord

Gospel (Matthew 14:22-33)

After he had fed the people, Jesus made the disciples get into a boat and precede him to the other side, while he dismissed the crowds.

After doing so, he went up on the mountain by himself to pray.

When it was evening he was there alone.

Meanwhile the boat, already a few miles offshore,

was being tossed about by the waves, for the wind was against it.

During the fourth watch of the night,

he came toward them walking on the sea.

When the disciples saw him walking on the sea they were terrified.

"It is a ghost," they said, and they cried out in fear.

At once Jesus spoke to them, "Take courage, it is I; do not be afraid."

Peter said to him in reply,

"Lord, if it is you, command me to come to you on the water."

He said, "Come."

Peter got out of the boat and began to walk on the water toward Jesus. But when he saw how strong the wind was he became frightened; and, beginning to sink, he cried out, "Lord, save me!" Immediately Jesus stretched out his hand and caught Peter, and said to him, "O you of little faith, why did you doubt?" After they got into the boat, the wind died down. Those who were in the boat did him homage, saying, "Truly, you are the Son of God."

Gospel of the Lord. R:/Praise to you, Lord Jesus Christ.

Summary: Through all of Jesus' entire ministry years Jesus has always stressed the need for constant prayer. And all of us want to be in the boat where there is safety with Jesus, but he has gone off by himself to be alone after hearing the news of the death of John the Baptist. Along the way we're caught in a storm and face danger.

Peter sees Jesus walking on the water and cries out. When Jesus calls to him, Peter gets out of the boat, starts walking on the water, going toward Jesus. But when Peter is distracted by the storm, he loses faith in walking and starts to sink into the waves. Then, he cries out – 'Lord, save me.'

Walking on water means stepping out in faith. It means not letting the storms and disturbances of life distract us from our goal.

In the First Reading, Elijah experiences a heavy wind, and earthquake and a fire. But God's presence was in none of these events. Instead, God's presence was in a "tiny whispering sound following the storm. And Eliha listened and hid his face.

Peter is distracted for a moment as he walks on water. When he shifts his focus away from Jesus, he notices the strong wind and the storm on the sea. At that, Peter becomes frightened and starts to sink. If he had only not let himself be distracted from his faith in the Lord, he would have remained upright.

When our lives become difficult is when God shows the Divine self and asks us to keep faith with God's presence and our encounter with God. Surely we can believe in the greatness of God' love for us.

As we sink from our own lack of faith, Jesus grabs us by the hand, and pulls us up - and we're reminded that while we've lost focus, he has not.

"You of little faith," he says to each of us, "Why do you doubt my love for you? Why do you doubt my ability to protect and help you?"

Focus on Jesus when problems weigh you down. Focus on Jesus who takes care of all things for us. Focus on Jesus, who will be there to help you, no matter what storms may arise. Find that focus in his Word, which reminds us of the unending love and forgiveness for us all. Lord, help us to keep our focus on you today, tomorrow, and forever. Amen.

Jesus **did not say**, "**Do not be afraid**, it is I, take courage." He said, "Take courage, it is I; do not be afraid."

August 13, 2023

Deacon Gregory J Cecere