



LIVING THE GOSPEL

**Nineteenth Sunday in Ordinary Time
August 09th, 2026**

Theme: "Take heart, it is I; have no fear"

Gathering Prayer

All: Almighty ever-living God, whom, taught by the Holy Spirit, we dare to call our Father, bring, we pray, to perfection in our hearts the spirit of adoption as your sons and daughters, that we may merit to enter into the inheritance which you have promised. Through our Lord Jesus Christ, your Son, who lives and reigns with you in the unity of the Holy Spirit, one God, for ever and ever. **Amen.**

Exploring the Word

Gospel Reading: Matthew 14:22-33

²² Then he made the disciples get into the boat and go before him to the other side, while he dismissed the crowds. ²³ And after he had dismissed the crowds, he went up on the mountain by himself to pray. When evening came, he was there alone, ²⁴ but the boat by this time was many furlongs distant from the land, beaten by the waves; for the wind was against them. ²⁵ And in the fourth watch of the night he came to them, walking on the sea. ²⁶ But when the disciples saw him walking on the sea, they were terrified, saying, "It is a ghost!" And they cried out for fear. ²⁷ But immediately he spoke to them, saying, "Take heart, it is I; have no fear."

²⁸ And Peter answered him, "Lord, if it is you, bid me come to you on the water." ²⁹ He said, "Come." So Peter got out of the boat and walked on the water and came to Jesus; ³⁰ but when he saw the wind, he was afraid, and beginning to sink he cried out, "Lord, save me." ³¹ Jesus immediately reached out his hand and caught him, saying to him, "O man of little faith, why did you doubt?" ³² And when they got into the boat, the wind ceased. ³³ And those in the boat worshiped him, saying, "Truly you are the Son of God."

Gospel Notes

22-23. It has been a very full day, like so many others. First Jesus works many cures (14:14) and then performs the remarkable miracle of the multiplication of the loaves and the fish, a symbol of the future Eucharist. The crowd who have been following him were avid for food, teaching and consolation. Jesus "had compassion on them" (14:14), curing their sick and giving them the comfort of his teaching and the nourishment of food. He continues to do the same, down the centuries, tending to our needs and comforting us with his word and with the nourishment of his own body. Jesus must have been very moved, realizing the vivifying effect the Blessed Sacrament would have on the lives of Christians—a sacrament which is a mystery of life and faith and love. It is understandable that he should feel the need to spend some hours in private to speak to his Father. Jesus' private prayer, in an interlude between one demanding activity and another, teaches us that every Christian needs to take time out for

recollection, to speak to his Father, God. On Jesus' frequent personal prayer see, for example, Mark 1:35; 6:47; Luke 5:16; 6:12. See the notes on Matthew 6:5-6 and Matthew 7:7-11.

24-33. This remarkable episode of Jesus walking on the sea must have made a deep impression on the Apostles. It was one of their outstanding memories of the life they shared with the Master. It is reported not only by St Matthew, but also by St Mark (6:45-52), who would have heard about it from St Peter, and by St John (6:14-21).

Storms are very frequent on Lake Gennesaret; they cause huge waves and are very dangerous to fishing boats. During his prayer on the hill, Jesus is still mindful of his disciples; he sees them trying to cope with the wind and the waves and comes to their rescue once he has finished praying.

This episode has applications to Christian life. The Church, like the Apostles' boat, also gets into difficulties, and Jesus who watches over his Church comes to its rescue also, after allowing it to wrestle with obstacles and be strengthened in the process. He gives us encouragement: "Take heart, it is I; have no fear" (14:27); and we show our faith and fidelity by striving to keep an even keel, and by calling on his aid when we feel ourselves weakening: "Lord, save me" (14:30), words of St Peter which every soul uses when he has recourse to Jesus, his Saviour. Then our Lord does save us, and we urgently confess our faith: "Truly you are the Son of God" (14:33).

29-31. St John Chrysostom (*Horn. on St Matthew*, 50) comments that in this episode Jesus taught Peter to realize, from his own experience, that all his strength came from our Lord and that he could not rely on his own resources, on his own weakness and wretchedness. Chrysostom goes as far as to say that "if we fail to play our part, God ceases to help us." Hence the reproach, 'O man of little faith' (14:31). When Peter began to be afraid and to doubt, he started to sink, until again, full of faith, he called out, "Lord, save me."

If at any time we, like Peter, should begin to weaken, we too should try to bring our faith into play and call on Jesus to save us.

Gospel Focus

In this Sunday's gospel, the disciples are vividly aware that they are not in control of their circumstances. As they journey on the "Barque of Peter" toward Jesus, who has gone before them to pray, it is the darkest part of the night and the wind is tossing the boat. They are seemingly alone. As Jesus appears to them on the water, they do not recognize Jesus and instead react precisely opposite to Jesus' intention for them—they fear what they believe is a ghost. When Jesus appears to us in the church, especially in ways that we do not expect, do we recognize him? Allow him to help us? Or do we think that we have to do it all ourselves—*our* church, *our* way? At this darkest moment, Jesus measures the disciples in the boat that he is present with them, proving dominion over even the weather. Where Jesus is, there is no need for fear.

Gospel Reflection

At the conclusion of a recent performance of the symphony, a few seconds elapsed before the audience burst into applause. During the ensuing intermission, a handful of patrons remained and sat still, quietly relishing the exquisite sounds they had just heard. The majority, however, quickly whipped out their cell phones and began checking messages, texting and talking. The need for constant communication won out over the momentary gift of contemplative silence. Today's readings invite us to choose to enter into spaces of silence, where it is easier to hear the One who is constantly communicating divine love to us.

In the first reading, at a time of deep fear and distress, Elijah goes to the place that

connects him again with the roots of Israel's covenantal bond with the Holy One. But God is not manifest in devouring fire, like that which surrounded the mountain at the giving of the law to Moses (see Exodus 24:17). Nor can Elijah hear God in the fierce, crushing wind or in the earthquake. It is in a "tiny whispering sound" (or as the NRSV translates the original Hebrew, "a sound of sheer silence") that Elijah hears the voice of God. "Why are you here, Elijah?" (1 Kings 19:13) is the probing question that invites Elijah and us to reflect on whether our actions and choices are leading us to our hearts deepest desires for oneness with God and God's purposes. The subsequent verse sketch out how God strengthens Elijah of the remainder of his prophetic mission before he dies. In the gospel, we see Jesus likewise retreat to a mountain by himself to pray, following the noisiness of healing and feeding a crowd of more than five thousand people. That previous episode begins with the note that Jesus had just heard of the death of John the Baptist and had withdrawn to a deserted place by himself (Matt 14:13). But the crowds find him, and he breaks out of his solitude to respond compassionately to their needs.

Today's gospel begins with Jesus' effort to retreat again. Even at night, the peoples' need for him does not abate. His disciples have been in distress in their boat on the lake ever since he left them that evening. He does not go to them immediately, however, but waits till the fourth watch of the night, the last watch, about three hours before dawn. We can surmise that although he is aware of the strong wind that is tossing them about, he remains in solitude, in the necessary inner stillness, where he experiences oneness with God and becomes strengthened to continue to minister compassionately. Coming to the disciples at last, he shares with them his gift of fearlessness. Although his beloved mentor has been executed, and although he can see a similar fate awaiting him as well, from the still center of his heart set on God, he can do what seems impossible. Disciples too, when they grasp his outstretched hand to come to him, find in him the still center, where his contagious courage dispels all fear.

Old/New Testament and CCC links

First Reading — 1 Kings 19:9a, 11-13a

⁹ And there he came to a cave, and lodged there; and behold, the word of the LORD came to him, and he said to him, "What are you doing here, Elijah?"... ¹¹And he said, "Go forth, and stand upon the mount before the LORD." And behold, the LORD passed by, and a great and strong wind rent the mountains, and broke in pieces the rocks before the LORD, but the LORD was not in the wind; and after the wind an earthquake, but the LORD was not in the earthquake; ¹² and after the earthquake a fire, but the LORD was not in the fire; and after the fire a still small voice. ¹³ And when Elijah heard it, he wrapped his face in his mantle and went out and stood at the entrance of the cave. And behold, there came a voice to him, and said, "What are you doing here, Elijah?"

Responsorial Reading — Psalms 145:8-9

R: Lord, let us see your kindness, and grant us your salvation.

I will hear what God proclaims; the Lord—for he proclaims peace.
Near indeed is his salvation to those who fear him, glory dwelling in our land. **(R)**

Kindness and truth shall meet; justice and peace shall kiss.
Truth shall spring out of the earth, and justice shall look down from heaven. **(R)**

The Lord himself will give his benefits; our land shall yield its increase.
Justice shall walk before him, and prepare the way of his steps. **(R)**

Second Reading — Romans 9:1-5

¹ I am speaking the truth in Christ, I am not lying; my conscience bears me witness in the Holy Spirit, ² that I have great sorrow and unceasing anguish in my heart. ³ For I could wish that I myself were accursed and cut off from Christ for the sake of my brethren, my kinsmen by race. ⁴ They are Israelites, and to them belong the sonship, the glory, the covenants, the giving of the law, the worship, and the promises; ⁵ to them belong the patriarchs, and of their race, according to the flesh, is the Christ, who is God over all, be blessed for ever. Amen.

Catechism of the Catholic Church

448. Very often in the Gospels people address Jesus as "Lord". This title testifies to the respect and trust of those who approach him for help and healing.(Cf Mt 8:2; 14:30; 15:22; et al) At the prompting of the Holy Spirit, "Lord" expresses the recognition of the divine mystery of Jesus.(Cf. Lk 1:43; 2:11) In the encounter with the risen Jesus, this title becomes adoration: "My Lord and my God!" It thus takes on a connotation of love and affection that remains proper to the Christian tradition: "It is the Lord!"(Jn 20:28,21:7)

Sharing and Discussion

- 1) What lessons can you draw from the disciples' experience?
- 2) How can you prevent the stressful experiences of the wind and waves of life from creating fear and doubt? Has Jesus given you the quiet assurance?

Closing Prayer

Facilitator: Loving God, you know our needs and answer them. Hear us when we call to you and give us the strength to rely on you, even when you seem distant. We ask this through Christ our Lord.

All: Amen.

Leader: May the Lord bless us, protect us from all evil and bring us to everlasting life.

All: Amen

Looking to deepen your faith and connect with fellow parishioners? Join us for our "Living the Gospel" Bible study and sharing session at the parish. Together, we will reflect on God's Word, grow in faith, and journey together in fellowship.

Resuming on Saturday the 15th of August

Time - 9.30 – 11.00 am

Venue: Level 3, Rm 03-06

All are welcome! For more information or to RSVP, please contact;

Mary Bay - 96965049 (marybay2468@gmail.com)

George Chee – 97399216 (georgejc@gmail.com)

Reflection material available on Parish Website under – (Weekly Bible Sharing - Living the Gospel)

References for the Living the Gospel Reflection:

- 1) Gospel notes taken from the Navarre Bible
- 2) Gospel reflection and Living Liturgy are taken from "Living Liturgy for Sunday and Solemnities" by Order of St Benedict. Published by Liturgical Press, Collegeville, Minnesota. Reprinted with permission.
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