

Nineteenth Sunday in Ordinary Time



True faith is not born of miracles,
but of believing in the Word of Jesus.
True faith is not born of the divine power of Jesus,
but of trust in His person and His Word.
And when faith does not spring from there,
it ends up being a very weak faith—
one that shatters at the first sign of difficulty,
leaving us to sink
like a ship taking on water.

Reading 1 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.

Responsorial Psalm Psalm 85:9, 10, 11-12, 13-14

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**

Reading 2 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.*

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."



LEARNING TO BELIEVE FROM DOUBT

It's not easy to sincerely respond to that question that Jesus makes to Peter in the very moment he saves him from the waters. «Why did you doubt?»

Sometimes the deepest convictions fade in us and the eyes of the soul get cloudy on us without us knowing exactly why. Principles that were accepted forever as immovable begin to wobble. And there awakens in us the temptation to abandon it all without rebuilding anything new.

Other times, God's mystery becomes overwhelming to us. The last word about my life escapes me and it's hard to abandon myself to the mystery: my reason is unsatisfied and keeps looking for a clear and true light that isn't found and never could be found.

More than a few times the superficiality and glibness of our daily life and the secret cult of so many idols submerge us in big crises of indifference and inner skepticism, with the sensation of having really lost God.

Frequently it's our own sin that breaks our faith, since faith declines and weakens when we distance ourselves from God. If we're sincere, we need to confess that there's an enormous distance between the believer we profess to be and the believer we are in reality. What to do when we confirm in ourselves a faith at times so fragile and unsteady?

What's primary is to not lose hope or get frightened at discovering within us doubts and uncertainties. The search for God is lived out almost always in insecurity, obscurity and risk. God is sought «blindly». And we mustn't forget that many times «genuine faith can only appear as doubt overcome» (Ladislao Boros).

What's important is to accept God's mystery with an open heart. Our faith depends on the truth of our relationship with God. And it's not necessary to hope that our questions and doubts get resolved in order to live in truth before that Father.

That's why it's important to know how to cry out as Peter did: «Lord, save me». To know how to raise our empty hands to God, not just as a gesture of supplication, but also of a trusting giving of ourselves as someone who knows ourselves to be small, ignorant and in need of salvation. Let's not forget that faith is «walking over the waters», but with the possibility of always meeting up with that hand that saves us when we start to sink.

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