

**God is present where least expected – 19th Sunday in Ordinary Time Year A
august 9th 2020 (1Kings 19:9,11-13, Romans 9:1-5, Matthew 14:22-33)**

A travelling aircraft was hit by severe storm in the mid-air. Everyone in the flight kept screaming and shouting except a little girl of 7 years who appeared undisturbed and calm holding onto her story book. Thank God the storms came to a stop, and a preacher asks the little girl why she did not worry when the aircraft was in danger. The little girl replies, “the pilot is my dad and he often tell me that storms sometimes come during flight, but they also pass, and the journey continues. I believe that my dad will get the aircraft through the storm. He does that every time; this is not the first time and I knew this too will pass.”

Brothers and sisters, today we are reminded by the readings that all the threats of nature cannot stand the power of God. Hurricanes, tornadoes, earthquake, floods and other natural disasters always leave us helpless and have our homes and communities destroyed. We are currently in the hurricane season and we are once again reminded of our powerlessness and our need to rely on the power of God in prayer. Jesus walked upon water and calmed the storm of the sea to show us that the one who has power over nature has not abandoned us. Elijah’s encounter with God on mount Horeb also reveals that God is present and actively involved in our storms of life where we least expect Him.

Our first reading tells us that Elijah was not happy with the turn of events after he conquered the prophets of Baal on Mount Carmel through the power of God. After his conquest, he executed all the 450 prophets of Baal and Jezebel decided to pursue and kill him. Elijah thought his zeal for God had ended in failure and now he flees to Mount Horeb (also called Mount Sinai) to seek God’s divine

presence. Elijah did not find God in the way he had expected. Fire, Wind, Storm and Earthquake came in turns, but Elijah did not find God's presence in any of them. Finally, he found God's presence revealed in a quiet way – “the sound of a gentle breeze”. Another bible version says, “in a sheer silence.” Our world is full of noise and distractions but when we seek silence, that is where we will find God and hear his voice. In your moments of silence, God can make you find him in your heart even amidst natural disasters and this pandemic.

In today's gospel, Jesus is manifested as God who walks on the sea. After the feeding of the five thousand men, Jesus made the disciples leave by boat while he went up the mountain to pray alone. After spending some time in silent prayer, Jesus came to his disciples walking on the sea making them terrified thinking he is a ghost. So, Peter said, “lord if it is you, command me to come to you on the water.” I really love Peter asking Jesus to command him to come to him on the water. Sometimes, we do not wait for the Lord to command before we act. God's word says, “so be careful to do what the Lord your God has commanded you...” (Deut. 5:32)

When Peter gets the command, he keeps walking on the sea to Jesus until he gets distracted by the storms and shifting his gaze from Jesus. When Peter was sinking, he cried “Lord save me” and Jesus held him. As Jesus and Peter get into the boat, the storms subside. Our storms of life come in various shapes and sizes. It could be facing poor health storms, marital separation storms, financial storms, death and disasters etc. May we be saved by Jesus' saving presence who stretches out his hand to save us from sinking, just as he did to Peter. **Amen**

By Fr. Emmanuel Subaar