



AMDG
19TH SUNDAY IN
ORDINARY TIME
YEAR A
13TH AUGUST 2017



Courage! It is I!

OPENING PRAYER

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.

Like Jesus in this week's Gospel story, we try and find the time to pray with our heavenly Father. Our readings this week reveal God's presence in our lives, especially in times of trial.

The dispirited prophet Elijah in the First Reading recognises God in 'the sound of a gentle breeze', rather than in impressive manifestations.

May we hear God's voice that speaks of mercy and faithfulness, justice and peace (Psalm).

St Paul in his Letter to the Romans (Second Reading) reveals his love and respect for his Jewish heritage and its people. He would even forgo his greater love for Christ to help them.

Jesus distances himself to find the space and peace to pray. The storm in the Gospel reflects the storm in Elijah's life. Can the disciples recognise the Lord? The question to Peter, "Why did you doubt?" is also addressed to us.

The God of power comes in dramatic crises but also in the quietness of our daily lives. Perhaps this week I can listen and become more aware of this.

FIRST READING: 1 KINGS 19: 9, 11-13

When Elijah reached Horeb, the mountain of God, he went into the cave and spent the night in it. Then he was told, “Go out and stand on the mountain before the Lord.” Then the Lord himself went by. There came a mighty wind, so strong it tore the mountains and shattered the rocks before the Lord. But the Lord was not in the wind. After the wind came an earthquake. But the Lord was not in the earthquake. After the earthquake came a fire. But the Lord was not in the fire. And after the fire there came the sound of a gentle breeze. And when Elijah heard this, he covered his face with his cloak and went out and stood at the entrance of the cave.

I come to my place of prayer. I focus on God’s presence, maybe with the help of a lighted candle or favourite picture.

I allow myself to relax into God’s all-embracing love.

I read the text slowly a couple of times. Elijah, too, is called into God’s presence.

I re-live the last day or days. I ask the Lord to help me see where I have sensed his presence in my life: in my prayer, my work, the people around me, the daily routine, in nature, in events ...?

I ponder these occasions and speak to the Lord of them. What does it reveal to me? How can it help me for tomorrow?

I turn again to Elijah. It may be that the Lord seems very distant and absent to me. I give him the gift of this time spent with him alone and wait with love and patience for him to pass by.

I end this time with gratitude, asking the Lord to remain with me always.

GOSPEL: MATTHEW 14: 22-23

Jesus made the disciples get into the boat and go on ahead to the other side while he would send the crowds away. After sending the crowds away he went up into the hills by himself to pray. When evening came, he was there alone, while the boat, by now far out on the lake, was battling with a heavy sea, for there was a headwind. In the fourth watch of the night he went towards them, walking on the lake, and when the disciples saw him walking on the lake they were terrified. "It is a ghost," they said, and cried out in fear. But at once Jesus called out to them, saying, "Courage! It is I! Do not be afraid." It was Peter who answered. "Lord," he said, "if it is you, tell me to come to you across the water." "Come," said Jesus. Then Peter got out of the boat and started walking towards Jesus across the water, but as soon as he felt the force of the wind, he took fright and began to sink. "Lord! Save me!" he cried. Jesus put out his hand at once and held him. "Man of little faith," he said, "why did you doubt?" And as they got into the boat the wind dropped. The men in the boat bowed down before him and said, "Truly, you are the Son of God."

I settle quietly to pray, taking the time to become slowly more aware of being in God's loving presence. I ask him to open my heart as I read the text a couple of times.

Perhaps I can unite myself with Jesus as he seeks silence and space to be with his Heavenly Father. I stay with him as long as it seems comfortable.

I might enter the story with my imagination, placing myself in the boat with the disciples.

I imagine their fear as I see the waves, feel the wind and the pitching and rolling of the boat. What particular fears are present for me?

Then I see Jesus walking towards me on the water. Am I reassured or even more fearful?

When he says "Come", asking me to step out of the boat towards him, how do I respond? Do I look at him, or at my feet? I note my feelings and reactions and speak to the Lord of this. Can I pray with an act of faith, like the disciples?

I bring my prayer to a close with gratitude, aware that the Lord is always interceding for me.

Here's a text if you've only got a minute...

I will hear what the Lord God has to say,
a voice that speaks of peace. *Psalm*

Jesus went up into the hills by himself to pray. *Gospel*

“Truly, you are the Son of God.” *Gospel*

This week's texts if you want to reflect further:

1 Kings 19: 9; 11–13; Psalm 84 (85); Romans 9: 1–5;

Matthew 14: 22–33

THERE CAME
THE SOUND
OF A GENTLE
BREEZE...



How does this image help me meditate on these readings?



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JESUIT
Ministries

