

The Nineteenth Sunday in Ordinary Time/Year A
12/13 August 2017 – Blessing of Students, etc., at
All Weekend Masses (Return to School)/Registration
Weekend –
Our Lady of Victory Parish Community
HOMILY

1st Reading:

1 Kings 19:9a, 11-13a

- “. . . Elijah . . . the Lord will be passing by. . . a strong and heavy wind was rending the mountains and crushing rocks . . . the Lord was not in the wind. . . . an earthquake – but the Lord was not in the earthquake. . . . fire – but the Lord was not in the fire. . . . 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 - *Sung*

2nd Reading:

Romans 9:1-5

- “. . . 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 . . . 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 . . . is the Christ, who is over all, God blessed forever. Amen.

GOSPEL:

MATTHEW 14:22-33

- “After he fed the people . . . 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. . . . Meanwhile the boat, . . . was being tossed about by the waves, for the wind was against it. . . . he came toward them walking on the sea. When the disciples saw him walking . . . they were terrified. “It is a ghost,” . . . and they cried out in fear. **At once Jesus spoke to them, “Take courage, it is I; do not be afraid.”** . . . Peter said . . . “. . . if it is you, command me to come to you on the water. . . . “Come.” . . . Peter . . . walk on the water toward Jesus. But when he saw how strong the wind was he became frightened; . . .

- beginning to sink, . . . “Lord, save me!” . . . Immediately Jesus stretched out his hand and caught Peter, . . . “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.”

NOTE: Jesus has already called the disciples - **Matthew 4:18-20**

“As he was walking by the Sea of Galilee, he saw two brothers, Simon who is called Peter, and his brother Andrew, casting a net into the sea; they were fishermen. He said to them, “Come after me, and I will make you fishers of men. At once they left their nets and followed him. He walked along from there and saw two other brothers, James, the son of Zebedee, and his brother John. They were in a boat, with their father Zebedee, mending their nets. He called them, and immediately they left their boat and their father and followed him.”

(from their jobs as fisherman) “and immediately they left their boat and their father and followed him.” . . . he went all around Galilee; taught in the synagogues . . . proclaimed the gospel of the kingdom; cured every disease and illness; his fame spread; people followed . . . the Sermon on the Mount has happened . . . he has “preached”/taught on many things . . . taught about prayer . . . the need for dependence on God . . . about not judging others . . . cleansed the leper . . . healed the Centurion’s servant . . . cured Peter’s mother-in-law . . . caused amazement by already calming a storm at sea . . . missioned and commissioned the twelve . . . spoke of the coming persecutions for believers . . . but encouraged them to be courageous . . . was clear that he would be a cause for division . . . clear about the conditions of discipleship . . . spoke of who the true family of Jesus is . . . taught in parables . . . spoke of new and old treasures . . . as he was the fulfillment of the law and the prophets . . . grieved over John the Baptist’s death . . . fed the 5,000 . . .

i. There are those who will remember that some time ago, I spoke of how the shape of most Churches is that of a great ark . . . upside down . . . but still an arc . . . symbolizing in many ways how the Church . . . the **BAPTIZED** . . . is to set out on the seas of this world to “catch” others and bring them to the Lord . . .

Given that, there are a variety of scripture scholars and commentators that would suggest that is precisely what Matthew is portraying in this particular Gospel passage . . . the boat that Peter and others are in is really the Church . . . tossed about in the seas of the world . . . and can only be settled and calmed when we reach out and grab onto the Lord for stability and to maintain our bearings through such rough seas and times.

But that’s not this Homily . . .

Although, I do think that what Matthew serves us is some pretty neat stuff . . . a boat . . . a storm . . . some nervous fisherman . . . and one in particular who, it appears, **DELIROUSLY**, steps out of the safety and security that the boat provided . . . to the extent this was possible in such a storm . . . and decides he’s going to walk on water toward the Lord!

But, then again . . . was Peter really delirious, **OR**, was he just making **another** step . . . a **risky** step toward becoming the Disciple Jesus was calling him to be?

ii. We **all** have our boats . . . we get in them and set sail each and every day . . . in fact, perhaps many of us are sitting in them right this moment . . .

They are those secure places . . . those comfortable places . . . and so long as . . . as the saying goes, “No one rocks the boat” . . . **we’re good!**

Get me in . . . get me out . . . I’m good for a week . . .

BUT THAT IS NOT BEING THE DISCIPLE JESUS CALLS EACH OF US TO BE!

Sometimes . . . as in the case of Peter . . . **sometimes** . . . Jesus calls us to step **OUT** of our boats of comfort, complacency . . . Yes, Jesus even calls us to step **OUT** of our boats of anger, disillusionment, apathy, despair, criticism . . . whatever the boat is that we have been stuck in . . . step **OUT** . . . and **come to Him** . . .

Yes, sometimes . . . Jesus calls us to step **OUT** of our boat . . . and with all the faith we have . . . **EVEN IF TINY AS A MUSTARD SEED . . . walk on that water** . . . be tossed about by those waves and that sea . . . **BUT NEVER . . . NEVER** lose sight of Him . . . for His arm is outstretched and waiting . . . **WAITING . . . WAITING PATIENTLY** simply for us to cry out, **“Lord, save me!”** . . . and, **He will . . . He does!** That is what Peter did . . . that is what **disciples** do . . . that is our call . . . yours’ and mine!

As one homilist wrote, “Sometimes Jesus is asking us to leave what is familiar, . . . [even what may appear to be] easy, [. . .] secure, and come to him in the midst of the storm. . . . the **good news**: Although the waves may be high and the winds strong, and people might think that we are crazy to step out of the boat, we are simply being **disciples**. We are only going to where Jesus is, taking with us the confidence that he will not” [let go of us] . . . and we must never let go of Him!