

# Ordinary Time XIX Sunday [Year A]

Homily by Fr. Maraiah

The readings for this week speak of God's saving presence among His people, our need for trusting Faith in our loving and providing God who always keeps us company, and our need for prayer in storms of life.

The first reading tells us of how Elijah the prophet who had defeated the 450 false priests of Baal with the help of just such a trusting Faith in the power of Yahweh, fled to the Lord God for help and strength on Mt Horeb, and encountered Him there in His mercy.

In the second reading, Paul laments and mourns over the Jews who, having lost their Faith in Yahweh and His prophets, had rejected their promised Messiah, Jesus. Paul tells us later (11:7-24), that God's plan allowed the Jews to reject Jesus so that a few believers, like Paul, would be free to carry the Good News outside Judaism, evangelizing the Gentiles.

The Gospel episode occurred during an unexpected storm on the Sea of Galilee in the early morning hours. As Jesus approached the apostles, miraculously walking on water, he allayed their fears by telling them, "*It is I.*" The Gospel episode also explains how Peter lost his trusting Faith in Jesus for a few seconds, failed his attempt to walk on water, but was rescued when he called on Jesus for help.

**Messages for Life:** 1) We all need to call Jesus in the storms facing us in the Church and in our lives. Let us approach Jesus with strong Faith in his ability and willing availability to calm the storms in the life of the Church and in our own

lives. Church history shows us how Jesus saved his Church from the storms of persecution in the first three centuries, from the storms of heresies in the 5<sup>th</sup> and 6<sup>th</sup> centuries, from the storms of moral degradation and the Protestant reformation movement (later resulting in hundreds of denominations). We need to realize that it is the presence of Jesus which gives us peace even in the wildest storms of life: the storms of anxiety and worries about the future we are suffering now in the ongoing Coronavirus Pandemic (COVID-19), storms of sorrow, storms of doubt, tension and uncertainty, storms of anger and despair, storms of temptations, and storms in family relationships. But this peace flows only from a personal relationship with God, with Jesus, enhanced through prayer, meditative reading of Scripture and active participation in the Holy Mass and reception of the Sacraments when these are available to us.

2) We need to imitate the short prayer of sinking Peter We are expected to pray to God every day with trusting Faith for strengthening our personal relationship with Him and for acknowledging our dependence on Him. But when we have no time or mental energy for formal prayers, let us use the short prayers in the Gospels like Peter's prayer: "*Lord, save me!*" or the prayer of the mother of the possessed girl: "*Lord, help me!*" or the blind man's prayer: "*Son of David, have mercy on me!*" or the repentant sinner's prayer: "*Lord, have mercy on me a sinner!*" We get plenty of time during our travels to say the short prayers like the "Our Father", "Hail Mary" and "Glory be...." We may begin every day offering all our day's activities to God and asking for His grace to do His will; then we may conclude every day before we go to sleep, by asking God's pardon and forgiveness for our sins. Keeping a Bible on our table will encourage us to read at least a few words of the Bible and thus listen to what God is telling us to do.