

## 19<sup>th</sup> Sunday in Ordinary Time: Faith in the God Who Walks with Us (2020)

Dear Family and friends of CCST,

Greetings in the Lord!

"Let us see your kindness and grant us your salvation." I find this Responsorial Psalm a lesson of trusting prayer and a whisper of confidence that through the eyes of faith, we can say that amid our fears, God accompanies and walks with us for he is our salvation. This lesson and whisper of faith are communicated to us in our readings this Sunday, mainly, through the stories of Jesus walking on water and Prophet Elijah's plight.

Our Lord Jesus, who walks over the water, shows us that he has authority over natural and supernatural forces. Did you know that the Jews during the time of Jesus believed that the sea is the domain of supernatural demonic powers? The rough and stormy sea was regarded as the work of these hostile spirits. By walking on the raging waves and calming the stormy sea, Jesus is showing himself to be one who has power and total control over these hostile spiritual forces. We heard the disciples' declaration, "Truly, you are the Son of God" (Matt. 14:33).

The trembling and fear experience of the disciples and Prophet Elijah tells us of our shared human plight and our need for a Savior. The disciples were terrified when the waves tossed their boat for the wind was against them. They were terrified that they couldn't recognize the Lord walking amid the strong wind. They thought they saw a ghost (cf. Matt. 14:24-26). On the other hand, Prophet Elijah was running away out of fear because queen Jezebel was plotting to kill him. He ended up hiding in a cave. Inside the cave, his fears were compounded by lightning, earthquake, wind, and rain that raged outside the cave (cf. 1Kngs 19:11-12). The disciples' and Prophet Elijah's fearful reactions are normal, for they were confronted with a situation threatening their lives.

Yes, fear is very evident in our readings, BUT it is never the last word. The powerful message of our celebration is the word "TRUST." Elijah heard the "light silent sound" that moved him to go out of the cave (1Kgs 19:12). In the quiet, silent, still moment, God came and spoke to him, and Elijah regained his strength. We must always remember that our wonderfully mysterious God most often comes into our lives in the tiny whispering sound. He comes to us in silence. But also, he comes to us when we are scared to comfort us. In the Gospel, our Lord Jesus came to the terrified disciples and said, "Take courage; it is I. Do not be afraid" (Matt 14:27). These reassuring words of Jesus echo the words of God to Moses. Moses, who was anxious about what to do, God told him, "I AM WHO AM" (Exodus 3:14). These words are parallel to the reassuring words of our Lord Jesus to all of us: "Take courage; it is I. Do not be afraid." These words appear in the Bible more than 365 times. The frequency of these words in the Sacred Scripture indicates our great need to be reassured of God's love and care for us – to hear him say these words 24/7 throughout the year.

We have various stories of storms of life, fears, and helplessness, somewhat like the disciples' fears and the helplessness of Prophet Elijah. And if we are to write them, it might be a long list, and number one from this list is the COVID-19 coronavirus pandemic that many of us are cautious and praying to be spared from. Indeed, we always pray every Sunday before dismissal rite the prayer of healing and protection against this deadly pandemic.

When we are troubled with the storms of life, fears, and helplessness, it is crucial to be aware that there is a person who journeys with us. He who knows and shares our struggle, he calms our fears. This is our Lord Jesus. He accompanies and walks with us amid our uncertainties. His words to us, "Take courage; it is I. Do not be afraid," summed up what we reflected in our readings. Jesus wants us to cast our faith in him, to gaze our eyes on him.

As we remember the words of the Responsorial Psalm, "Lord, let us see your kindness and grant us your salvation," let us behold Jesus in the Holy Eucharist, the presence of his Body and Blood, Soul and Divinity. It is the concrete sign of his kindness and offer of salvation.

Let us thank him for this incredible enduring gift for all of us.

Praying for your safety and health!

In Christ,

Fr. Manny Hewe  
Pastor, CCST