

19th Sunday in Ordinary Time

Just a few quick thoughts again today.

- How do we find God...in the midst of the storms and struggles of our lives?
 - How do we find Him...
 - in the midst of the trials that we all encounter...
 - even when we're trying our best...to do His will?
 - God commands Elijah in our First Reading...
 - to stand on that mountain...
 - and wait for Him to pass by.
 - And in our Gospel...
 - Jesus makes the disciples...
 - set out on the sea before Him.
 - And in each case...
 - the Lord does make His Presence known...
 - but only after a lot of chaos and confusion...
 - after heavy winds and high waves...
 - after earthquakes and fire.
 - First...they need to face the brunt of the storm.
 - Only then can they see the Lord.
- And what about us?
 - When the storms in our life inevitably come...
 - do we watch and wait like Elijah...
 - patiently...quietly...trustingly.
 - Or...
 - maybe we're more like the Apostles...
 - crying out in terror...
 - so afraid in fact...
 - that they can't even recognize the Lord!
- And these storms that we face...they come in so many different forms.
 - Maybe it's an internal struggle...
 - something in your heart...
 - some weakness or sin.
 - The wind and the waves of temptation...
 - so easily overwhelm us...
 - and...no matter how hard we try...
 - we sink instead of swim.
 - Where are you Lord? Save me!

- And these temptations...
 - they are so strong at times...
 - that we feel like we have no choice but to give in.
- It could be greed...
 - and that urge to buy something...you just don't need...
 - over and over again.
- Or it could be the irresistible temptation...
 - to share that one little piece of gossip...
 - and then another...and then another.
- Or...the ever present battle with lust...
 - that's pervasive in our culture.
- But with each of these temptations...
 - if we hang on...just a little bit longer...
 - no matter how strong that initial hit...
 - it will simply wash...right on past us.
- Much like a wave...
 - they tend to grow...in intensity...rather quickly...
 - but they do peak and die out...just as quickly as well.
- Or...the storm could be something that affects your whole family...or us as a nation...or the entire world.
 - like unemployment...
 - certainly the pandemic...
 - or just think about...
 - what the people in Lebanon are dealing with right now.
 - Where's God in the midst of all that?
 - And what's next for our fallen world?
 - Unfortunately...more I think...
 - because our focus is still not on the Lord.
- But when these things do hit...no matter what form they take...
 - it's no time to panic...
 - but to watch and wait...
 - all the more expectedly...
 - for the Lord.
- And there's no doubt that each of us...will be tested and tried...
 - That's the Lord at work...He's purifying our faith.
 - He's teaching us to rely less on self...and more on Him.

- And the only way...we'll make it through these trials...
 - is if we start listening for that still...small...Voice...
 - now...while things are relatively calm.
 - We've got to start quieting the world around us...
 - because that's something we can control.
 - Or we will never be able to hear the Lord speak to us...
 - in an uncontrollable storm.
 - So turn off the radio...pick up the rosary.
 - Turn off the bad news in the media...
 - pick up the Good News instead.
- All these things that we face...that seem so big and strong...they will all pass away.
 - Every form that they take...
 - will eventually wash right on past us.
 - God's love...His glory
 - that's what lasts forever.
 - So keep your eyes fixed in the direction of Jesus Christ...
 - even if you can't see Him yet.
 - Have faith...He will surely come.
 - I want to leave you with a passage...from the Gospel of Luke (21:28):
 - *"But when you see these things begin to happen..."*
 - that's that tidal wave of temptation coming at you...
 - that's that fear...about what's happening in our world...
 - *"But when you see these things begin to happen..."*
 - *stand erect and raise your heads...*
 - *because your redemption is at hand."*