

Homily for Sunday Mass  
August 9, 2020  
Year A – Matthew 14:22-33  
----Father Michael Grant George Cadotte----

I have been feeling very much like the Disciples in today's reading [Matthew 14:22-33] being tossed about in life by powerful forces beyond my control. Between a pandemic, public debate, and hostile expressions pro/con for preventative measures (when did taking care of others – the common good, become an issue?), extreme divisive politics, and economic hardships and emergencies for many. Any as so often the case is, when I read the readings for this Sunday to prepare and develop this homily, I find God speaking to these very issues. Let us together ponder what are our specific concerns and listen to God's whisper as to how our Creator can help us get through them.

The prophet Jeremiah, the presumed author of the Book of Kings, gives us in today's reading [I Kings 19:11-13] a base list of the qualities of God as displayed or manifested in our physical world: a strong and heavy wind, earthquakes or crushing rocks, and fire. But in all this natural awe and awesome power God was not there. It was **after** the display of force, power, and might that Elijah heard a faint whisper which **was** the voice of God.

Here is a lesson for us my believers, you will not find God in force, nor in strength, nor in displays of might. You **will** find God in the gentle kindness of a compassionate whisper. This is a lesson the Prophet Elijah can teach us once again across time where we live now, much as he did then, in a society where the look and feel of power and strength yields to the calm and steady peacefulness of others. Where might does not, and never should in a Christian's world, make right.

Yes, God is all powerful. God is the creator of the earth and of all things on the earth and the power of God is **beyond** any human understanding or measure. That known, it is the gentle kindness and love of God that truly displays his love and affection for us, his created and chosen people. A love so great that God gave his only son to us for our salvation. **That** is the true measure and power of God.

When you go out in the world, listen to leaders, politicians, and influencers measure them against **that** standard of God's display of love. If they speak of power and might and not of love and compassion, they are weak and lacking. They are not worthy of your attention as you are called to follow God's call of love. Want a better example of this? In our Eucharistic Liturgy today we have, for the safety of the common good (another Catholic way to live our Gospel values) replaced the passing of the peace with the prayer of St. Francis. Listen to that prayer in your heart as those words are the means to not only measure the worth of others but of ourselves too.

In St. Paul's letter to the Romans [2nd reading Romans 9:1-5] he established the chosen status of Israel to show God to the Gentiles (pagans) of the day. What is exciting is St. Paul's call to the newly established Church to take up this call in

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new and exciting ways by sharing and living the powerful teachings of Jesus. Not in conquest and threat but in **love**. The challenge here is hard as so many forces are against us. Maybe those forces are medical, natural, political, or even family and friends.

In Matthew's Gospel we see the believers, the Disciples, in a boat being tossed by the wind and the waves. In the midst of this physical power and threat comes Jesus walking on the water as if in the writings of the Psalmist where God makes his, "...way through the sea, his path through the mighty waters..." (Ps 77:19). Jesus is teaching, through action, that he is God in what he is physically doing before us but also in what Scripture has said of God as well.

All these readings and actions of Jesus are reaching out to us in our specific times of doubt, fear, anger, and concern over what is to come – the unknown, to tell us you are good. You are loved by God and that God is there along side you to keep you close. The world of abusive and bitter power of men existed all around Jesus and yet his mighty message of peace and love punched through those clouds of dim to reach a people in need - then and all of us now. Listen to God's whispering call of calm and love to you now. Take time to step out of your caves and meet God and hear his saving words and incorporate them into your daily life.

And to inspire us all to make those steps and to listen for the calming, loving whisper I offer you the words of an African American Spiritual that has been sung in protest against oppression of civil liberties, environmental negligence, and tyranny, let us also adopt the call of this song as we stand against powerful forces that maliciously push and pull us away from our path with Christ and on a path of popularism and destruction of our moral good and the common good of all people. Therefore...

Hold firm...we shall not be moved  
just like a tree planted by the water, oh, I shall not be moved  
by forces of power and might against God's will.  
when my load is heavy, I shall not be moved  
Hold on my brothers, hold on my sisters  
keep your hand on the plow and hold on  
Hold on for freedom and justice...  
We shall not be moved...we shall not be moved...

AMEN.

---Citations---

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