

2020 August 09

Nineteenth Sunday of the Ordinary Time

Readings:

First Reading: 1 Kings 19.9, 11-13, "The Lord is about to pass by" (11b)

The Psalm 85, "Righteousness and peace will kiss each other" (10b)

Second Reading: Romans 9.1-5, "To them belong the adoption, the glory, the covenants...." (4a)

The Gospel: Mathew 14.22.33, He cried out, "Lord save me"! (30c)

The Only Saviour!

The ecstasy in the transfiguration of the Lord was definitely a welcome and desirable experience. It was so for the disciples; it will be so for us if it happens to us. We have agonies, and not ecstasies, in today's readings. Prophet Elijah upon instruction from God stands before the Lord on the top of the mountain and encounters a severe storm even capable of breaking rocks into pieces. Then comes the earthquake followed by a wild fire. Elijah apparently does not find God in all these. Then comes 'the sound of sheer silence', and he meets his God in that silence. (1 Kings 19.11-12)

The disciples today are out in the sea in their boat encountering a severe storm which terrified them and threw them out of gear. At a point they almost lost all hope of deliverance, and the Lord comes to them quietly walking on the water. He brings peace and comfort to them. Can it be true that the Lord was not in the storm, in the earthquake and in the fire, which Elijah went through? Where was Jesus when the disciples were drowning due to the storm in the sea? The truth of all these incidences in the life of Prophet Elijah and of the disciples is that the Lord was there in all these but they failed to recognize him in their midst. This is often the reality in our daily life.

We refuse to find the Lord in the ups and downs of our lives. We fail to recognize God and turn to him in gratitude when everything goes well with us, when things happen the way we like. When we are in trouble, in trials and tribulations, we refuse to see God who has been is a silent partner, a bystander in our life. That is the meaning of the question of Jesus to the disciples, "You of little faith, why did you doubt?" (Matthew 14.31b)

We refuse to accept that the Lord is "gracious, slow to anger and steadfast in abounding love". (Psalm 145.8) The storm, the earthquake, and fire that Prophet Elijah had were those that were raging in his mind. He was fleeing for his life from the wrath of a vicious and vengeful queen, Jezebel. Even a Prophet of Elijah's stature failed to see his God who was with him and within him. This is also true in the storms and earthquakes of our own lives. When they rage we fail to see our God, the Lord, standing close to us or even holding or carrying us in his arms. Don't fail ever to cry out like Peter, "Lord, save me," and then incline your ears to hear the soothing and endearing words of the Lord, "You of little faith, why did you doubt?" (Matthew 14. 30b, 31b)

Fr. George

