

Fr Hilary Brzezinski homily 8-9-20

Read: 1 Kings 19:9a, 11-13a (115A); Romans 9:1-5; Matthew 14:22-33

Fr Hilary spoke about the Missionary Cooperation Plan as follows:

So maybe we never saw Jesus walk on water ourselves. Maybe we didn't have such an incredible miracle happen to us, the storm and the boat. But have we not had some other experiences that maybe we couldn't explain, maybe we didn't understand but somehow sensed that God was somehow here? Maybe experience like today's first reading when Elijah was way up high on that mountain. And like us, Elijah too, didn't find God in a storm, didn't find God in an earthquake but he did sense God present in the gentleness of the breeze. Maybe for those of you who live in Door County, maybe you sense God near in the beauties of Door County. And then there's St Paul today's second reading letter of the church where Paul found himself struggling. Struggling as a witness for Jesus. With Paul's heart broken by his own loved ones he turned away from Jesus. And yet as much as that broke Paul's heart, he could not stop. He had to go on, he had to move on for other people that they might come experience God near, God close by with the good news of Jesus for in the end words just fail. And so, I'm here today as representative of the Franciscans from Pulaski and Green Bay and speaking of the people in our mission in Greenwood Mississippi. Speaking for your fellow Catholics who likely will never meet or see or hear. But your fellow Catholics, small numbers as they are deep down south in the bible belt, where Catholics are as few in Mississippi as Jews would be in Wisconsin. And so, your fellow Catholics in Greenwood Mississippi are praying. They are asking God to bless you and they are thanking God for you and the hope and with a prayer that you will help them, certainly with praying, for their mission church in Greenwood Mississippi and if you can maybe share a donation for our mission school in Greenwood Mississippi. Because St. Francis Mission School will open again for another school year Monday. They can open for school for another year because they are only about 45 students this year so they can school, meeting the requirements and restrictions of the COVID virus. But they can't be sure their school will stay open, and they need their school to stay open because there is no other school there that could teach them as Jesus has taught you. There's no other school in that area that can give them a chance for a better future because

the schools in Mississippi have been getting an F grade for a long time. Not long ago, I heard about examiners from the Department of Education who were examining one of the public schools and that school had been getting a grade of F from the Mississippi Department of Education. And so, after they finished their most recent examination of that school, they had a meeting with the parents and town. And they told the parents that they had news for them, that their public school would no longer have a grade of F from the Mississippi Department of Education, instead their school would have a D! The parents clapped and cheered because they could hope for no better and their poor circumstances usually define their lives. Recently, a dear friend from Mississippi called me, and he happens to be a white man, he told me that there was more cases of the COVID virus then we have here in Wisconsin but he said he didn't know of any white people that had the COVID virus only about black people suffering with the COVID virus. One of our teachers at St Francis School, taught me for decades, is being buried today and he died from complications of COVID. So, the economy did not turn bad when COVID turned up, in Mississippi the economy was already bad. And so, that's a lot of bad news and hearing a lot of bad news, we might feel like we've already heard too much bad news. For the whole of our country, not only about the COVID virus or our economy but about the violence as well that threatens to many of our cities. And so, we might feel like cursing the darkness but there are children at St Francis School who are African American children and Mexican American children because schools in Mississippi are segregated now as they were in the past. Those children and their parents and grandparents are hoping that you won't curse darkness but instead you'll carry out the slogan of the light movement. Rather than curse the darkness it's better to light the candle. So, thank you for the light of your faith, for your generosity over the years of the missions. It keeps hope alive for your fellow Catholics who struggle in Greenwood Mississippi. On their behalf, I thank you and with them I thank God for you.