

NINETEENTH SUNDAY IN ORDINARY TIME

There are seasons when the struggles of someone we love become so consuming that they drown out nearly everything else. Fear about the future, disappointment over broken promises, and uncertainty about what comes next can easily dominate our thoughts. During these times, it becomes difficult to recognize that God is still present and still at work. The readings this Sunday remind us that His faithfulness does not disappear in the midst of life's storms.

In the first reading, Elijah encounters the Lord in an unexpected way (1 Kings 19:9a, 11-13a). A mighty wind, an earthquake, and a fire each pass before him, yet the Lord is not found in any of them. Instead, God comes in a tiny whispering sound. Elijah recognizes His presence, covers his face, and steps forward to meet Him.

Those affected by another person's addiction often long for dramatic change. We hope for a breakthrough conversation, a lasting commitment to recovery, or a complete transformation in someone we love. Sometimes those moments happen. More often, God works quietly within us. He strengthens us through prayer, fellowship, healthy boundaries, honest conversations, and the daily decision to entrust our loved one to His care. These quiet movements of grace may seem small, but they gradually reshape our hearts.

The gospel presents another powerful image of faith during uncertainty (Matthew 14:22-33). As the disciples struggle against the wind and waves, Jesus comes toward them walking on the water. Peter steps out of the boat at Christ's invitation and begins walking toward Him. But when Peter focuses on the storm instead of Jesus, fear

overtakes him and he begins to sink. Immediately he cries out, "*Lord, save me!*" and Jesus reaches out His hand.

Family recovery often follows this same pattern. We begin trusting God with our loved one's life, only to find ourselves pulled back into fear when circumstances become difficult. A relapse, broken trust, financial stress, or another crisis can quickly shift our attention away from Christ. Before long, we find ourselves trying once again to manage situations that are beyond our control.

Peter's experience reminds us that faith is not the absence of fear. It is returning our attention to Christ whenever fear begins to take over. Recovery teaches us that we cannot control another person's choices, but we can choose where we place our focus. We continue praying, participating in meetings, seeking wise counsel, and caring for our own spiritual health. These practices keep us connected to the One who remains steady even when life feels uncertain.

This does not mean we stop loving those who struggle. On the contrary, we often become more capable of loving them because our hope is no longer tied to outcomes we cannot control. Healthy boundaries, honest communication, and compassionate detachment become expressions of trust rather than fear. We learn to support recovery without assuming responsibility for another person's decisions.

Over time, we discover that God has been quietly transforming us. We become less reactive, more peaceful, and more confident in His care. We begin responding

thoughtfully instead of impulsively. We discover that our security rests not in changing circumstances but in Christ, who remains present through every storm.

Elijah's whisper and Peter's rescue reveal the same truth. God is never absent when life feels overwhelming. As we continue in family recovery, we are invited to listen for His quiet voice, keep our eyes fixed on Christ, and trust that His hand is always reaching toward us, even when the waves feel stronger than our faith.

REFLECTION QUESTIONS

- What situations are most likely to draw your attention away from Christ and back toward fear or control?
- Where have you experienced God's quiet work within your own recovery, even when your loved one's situation has not changed?
- How might keeping your eyes on Christ help you respond differently to a difficult situation this week?

MASS READINGS

FIRST READING 1 Kings 19:9a, 11-13a

RESP. PS. Psalm 85:9, 10, 11-12, 13-14

SECOND READING Romans 9:1-5

GOSPEL Matthew 14:22-33