

NINETEENTH SUNDAY IN ORDINARY TIME

There are seasons in life when the storms around us seem louder than the voice of God. We become consumed by uncertainty, setbacks, or fear, wondering whether He is still present or whether we have somehow drifted beyond His reach. The readings this Sunday remind us that God's presence is not measured by the absence of storms, but by His faithfulness within them.

In the first reading, the prophet Elijah waits for the Lord to pass by (1 Kings 19:9a, 11-13a). A powerful wind tears through the mountains, followed by an earthquake and a fire. Yet Scripture tells us that the Lord is not found in any of these dramatic events. Instead, God's presence is revealed in a tiny whispering sound. Elijah recognizes the Lord, covers his face, and steps out to meet Him.

Many of us hope recovery will be marked by dramatic breakthroughs. God can certainly work that way. More often, however, His grace is found in quieter ways: the encouragement of another recovering person, the peace that follows honest confession, the wisdom shared by a sponsor, the strength to make one healthy decision, or the willingness to pray when we would rather give up. These moments may seem small, but they are often where God is most clearly at work.

The gospel offers another familiar image of faith in the midst of difficulty (Matthew 14:22-33). As the disciples struggle against the wind, they see Jesus walking toward them on the water. Peter responds with courage, stepping out of the boat at Christ's invitation. Yet when he shifts his attention to the wind and waves, fear overwhelms him and

he begins to sink. His simple prayer, "*Lord, save me!*" is answered immediately as Jesus reaches out His hand.

Peter's struggle offers an important lesson for recovery. Jesus does not criticize him for stepping out of the boat. In fact, Peter is the only disciple willing to leave the safety of what is familiar and trust Christ enough to walk toward Him. The turning point comes when fear becomes louder than Christ's invitation. Recovery tends to unfold in the same way. Courage is not the absence of fear, but the willingness to keep turning back toward Jesus whenever fear begins to capture our attention.

Recovery does not ask us to ignore reality or pretend the storms are not real. Instead, it teaches us where to fix our attention. Step Eleven encourages us to seek God's will through prayer and meditation, not because life becomes easier, but because staying connected to God allows us to respond differently when difficulties arise. We learn to pause before reacting, to pray before panicking, and to ask for help before trying to carry everything alone.

This kind of faith grows through practice. Every time we return to prayer, every honest conversation with a sponsor or trusted friend, every meeting we attend when we would rather isolate, and every act of surrender becomes another way of keeping our eyes on Christ. The storms may continue, but they no longer determine the direction of our lives.

Peter's story reminds us that faith is not measured by never struggling. It is revealed by where we turn when we begin to sink. As we continue in recovery, we are invited

to listen for God's quiet voice, to keep our eyes fixed on Christ, and to remember that His hand is always reaching toward us. Even when our faith feels small, His grace remains steadfast.

REFLECTION QUESTIONS

- What "wind and waves" are most likely to draw your attention away from Christ in this season of recovery?

- Where have you experienced God's presence more in quiet faithfulness than in dramatic moments?

- What practical habit helps you keep your eyes on Christ when fear or discouragement begins to grow?

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