

Nineteenth Sunday in Ordinary Time



Jesus calls us out into deep waters of faith as we step into recovery and a new way of life. He calls us by name and invites us to journey with him as we enter our first meeting, find a home group, get a sponsor, work through the Twelve Steps, return to the sacraments of the Catholic Church, and entrust our experience to our fellow brothers and sisters. As we place our first foot forward and find safety, we begin taking the next few steps with confidence that we will be supported along the way.

Jesus imparts the words "take courage, do not be afraid" to us throughout our recovery from lust and sexual addictions, just as he did to Peter when calling him out of the boat and onto choppy waters in this Sunday's Gospel Reading:

*Peter said to him in reply,
"Lord, if it is you, command me to come to you on the water."
He said, "Come."
Peter got out of the boat and began to walk on the water toward Jesus.
But when he saw how strong the wind was he became frightened;
and, beginning to sink, he cried out,
"Lord, save me!"
Immediately Jesus stretched out his hand caught Peter, and said to him,
"O you of little faith, why did you doubt?"
After they got into the boat, the wind died down.
Those who were in the boat did him homage, saying,
"Truly, you are the Son of God."*

Trouble tends to come when we, like Peter, take our eyes off the Lord and become troubled by the strong wind and crashing waves around us. It is during those times when the temptation to take back our will is strong, although the hand of God is always within reach.

Speaking at World Youth Day in Paris in 1997, Saint Pope John Paul II shared words of encouragement relevant to us in recovery: "Remember that you are never alone, Christ is with you on your journey every day of your lives! He has called you and chosen you to live in the freedom of the children of God. Turn to him in prayer and in love. Ask him to grant you the courage and strength to live in this freedom always. Walk with him who is 'the Way, the Truth and the Life!'"

In moments both dark and bright, Christ is with us. We have been called to live freely. Lust addiction is isolating and keeps us hidden in our secrets and shame. When we seek the will of God and pursue it with vigor one day at a time, we can reach the depths of what we were made for.

As time passes and our focus shifts, we will need to continually be reminded of God's presence in our lives and how to find it. Consistent with the words of Saint John Paul II, this Sunday's First Reading notes:

*At the mountain of God, Horeb,
Elijah came to a cave where he took shelter.
Then the Lord said to him,
"Go outside and stand on the mountain before the
Lord;
the Lord will be passing by."
A strong and heavy wind was rending the mountains
and crushing rocks before the Lord—
but the Lord was not in the wind.
After the wind there was an earthquake—
but the Lord was not in the earthquake.
After the earthquake there was fire—
but the Lord was not in the fire.
After the fire there was a tiny whispering sound.
When he heard this,
Elijah hid his face in his cloak
and went and stood at the entrance of the cave.*

Sometimes we need to quiet ourselves to hear God in the whispers around us. Sometimes we need to cry out, "Lord, save me!" In every move, He is with us.

Reflection Questions

- How are you getting out of the boat and putting your trust in God?
- Can you recall the courage needed to overcome fear at pivotal points in your recovery (such as your first meeting, asking someone to sponsor you, beginning the Twelve Steps, etc...)?
- What are some of the challenges—strong winds and crashing waves—that are attempting to distract you from recovery and trust in God?

Living the Steps Meeting Starts August 15

Join the Catholic in Recovery community for a 22-week series working through the Twelve Steps

- Tuesday nights at 8p ET/5p PT starting August 15 and going through January 2024
- Grow in faith, freedom, and fellowship with others like you
- We will use *The Catholic in Recovery Workbook* as a guide
- Small group breakouts based on addiction type and gender
- Registration closes after group begins — sign up today at my.catholicinrecovery.com/living-the-steps-series/

Sunday Mass Readings this Week

First Reading: 1 Kings 19:9a, 11-13a

Responsorial Psalm: Psalm 85:9, 10, 11-12, 13-14

Second Reading: Romans 9:1-5

Gospel: Matthew 14:22-33