



Nineteenth Sunday in Ordinary Time

August 7, 2011

God Comes to Us

Focus: To find God in unexpected places.

Lectionary #115

1 Kings 19:9a, 11–13a

Psalms 85:9, 10, 11–12,
13–14

Romans 9:1–5

Matthew 14:22–33

Leader's Context

This Sunday's Gospel tells the familiar story of Jesus walking on water. Teens, who may at times need proof of Jesus' presence and falter when they try to walk in faith, will find special meaning in this Gospel passage.

Sign of the Cross

All make the Sign of the Cross.

**In the name of the Father, and of the Son,
and of the Holy Spirit.**

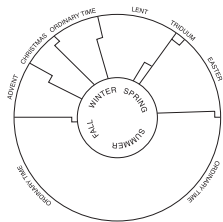
Alleluia

See Psalm 130:5

Alleluia, alleluia.

I wait for the Lord;
my soul waits for his word.

Alleluia, alleluia.



Liturgical Calendar Connection

Help the teens to find the Nineteenth Sunday of Ordinary Time on the liturgical calendar.

The teens may soon be preparing to head back to school, if they have not headed back to school already. Mark the first days of school of the various teens in your group on your liturgical calendar and tell them that you will be praying for them as they begin a new school year.

Gospel

Matthew 14:22–33

After he had fed the people, Jesus made the disciples get into a boat and precede him to the other side, while he dismissed the crowds. After doing so, he went up on the mountain by himself to pray. When it was evening he was there alone. Meanwhile the boat, already a few miles offshore, was being tossed about by the waves, for the wind was against it. During the fourth watch of the night, he came toward them walking on the sea. When the disciples saw him walking on the sea they were terrified. "It is a ghost," they said, and they cried out in fear. At once Jesus spoke to them, "Take courage, it is I;

do not be afraid.” 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 and 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.”

Gospel Reflection

Take Courage

This Sunday’s Gospel takes place right after the reading that we heard last Sunday. What a day the disciples had! They had just witnessed the miracle of the loaves and the fish, and then Jesus sent them to the boat while he goes up to the top of the mountain to pray. This wouldn’t have been unusual for Jesus. Prayer was very important for Jesus, and he prayed into the evening. The disciples headed away in their boat, but later in the night the wind picked up, and the boat started rolling on the waves, water splashing everywhere.

☉ Have you ever been on a boat during a storm? What is it like?

☉ How do you think the disciples felt?

Imagine what the disciples were going through: the wind is strong, the boat is rolling around, everyone is a bit scared. They have already had a really long day.

☉ What do you think would be going through your head if you were one of the disciples?

Suddenly, the disciples look out into the distance and see a figure moving toward them as if it were walking on the water.

☉ How did they respond?

☉ How do you think you would respond in a similar situation?

The disciples are really scared until Jesus tells them not to be afraid because it is him. The disciples are still not sure, so Peter responds with a test.

☉ What does Peter ask Jesus to do?

☉ How does Jesus respond?

☉ What happens to Peter when he tries to walk on the water?

☉ If you were Peter, do you think that you would have stepped out of the boat?

Once Jesus has helped Peter walk on the water and has saved him when he faltered, Peter does not doubt him anymore. Jesus asks Peter why he doubted, comments that Peter has little faith, and they get in the boat. Once they are in the boat the wind dies down and all is calm.

While everything was going on with Peter, the rest of the disciples are watching it all unfold from the boat.

What do you think the other disciples were thinking? What do you think they were feeling?

This event had to confirm for the disciples what they already knew. Jesus was the Son of God. He revealed more of his identity by showing the disciples that he could even control water and wind.

We have things that happen in life that feel like storms. Jesus doesn’t want us to have to go through the storms in our lives alone. He will be right there if we call out and are not afraid to ask him to catch us. He always will. What we need most is a faith that keeps us from the fear that leads to self pity or feeling sorry for ourselves. Self pity weighs the heart and soul down and, like Peter, we may feel like we are drowning.

☉ What storms do you have in your life?

☉ Do you ever feel like you are drowning?

☉ How does it make you feel to know that Jesus will always come to be with you?

Focus on Church Teaching

Each of the Gospel passages lately has focused on how Jesus reveals his divine nature to his disciples and us today. The Church teaches that the Word of God was made human so that he could save all humanity (*Gaudium et Spes*, 45). In this Sunday's Gospel, by showing mastery over nature, Jesus reveals he has the power to save the world.

Responding to Church Teaching: How is the person of Jesus also God coming to us humans?

Journaling through the Waters of Fear

You will need paper and writing materials to do this activity.

In this Sunday's Gospel, the disciples did not recognize Jesus when he approached them in an unusual way. Invite the teens to journal on the following questions.

☉ In what ways do you expect God to come to you?

☉ How do you recognize God when he comes in an unexpected way?

☉ Are you ever afraid of things that you can't really know or understand, like the future or death? How does Jesus calm your fears?

☉ Do you ever doubt that the Lord can give you the power to accomplish the things that you are called to do? How does God give you strength in these times?

Jesus Is . . .

You will need paper and writing materials to do this activity.

Divide the teens into two teams. Have the teams take turns coming up with epithets or other names that we sometimes use for Jesus. The team that comes up with the most examples wins. If the teens are having trouble, get them started by giving them a few of the following examples. As an alternative to this activity, you might go through the following list and talk as a group about what each name tells us about Jesus.

☉ Christ

☉ Savior

☉ Lord

☉ Master

☉ Teacher

☉ Son of God

☉ Emmanuel

☉ Messiah

☉ King of the Jews

☉ Lamb of God

☉ Light of the World

☉ Bread of Life

Prayers and Blessings at Home

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Lectionary Readings

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Psalm 85:9, 10, 11–12, 13–14

Romans 9:1–5

Matthew 14:22–33

Our Father

**Our Father, who art in heaven,
hallowed be thy name;
thy kingdom come,
thy will be done
on earth as it is in heaven.
Give us this day our daily bread,
and forgive us our trespasses,
as we forgive those who trespass
against us;
and lead us not into temptation,
but deliver us from evil.**

Prayer for the Nineteenth Sunday in Ordinary Time

**Not in the wind, and not in the
earthquake, and not in the fire
were you present, O God,
but where we least expect you:
in a voice that whispers in the heart's
deepest silence,
in a call to venture forth against all reason
and odds.
Reach out your hand to us of little faith,
that we may take heart and not be afraid.
We ask this through your Son,
Jesus Christ,
who lives and reigns with you**

**in the unity of the Holy Spirit,
one God forever and ever.
Amen.**

Family Blessing

This week, bless each other by tracing the Sign of the Cross over your teen's heart or throat (and vice versa), as a reminder that Jesus tells us not to be afraid. This can be done at regular times, or before stress-inducing events such as a first day of school, trying out for a team, or giving a presentation at work.

Living the Liturgy at Home

Use chalk to mark the doorway into your house with a cross (or another symbol) to remind you that God comes to us. Whenever you see that symbol upon entering or leaving the house, say a simple prayer, such as the following: **Jesus, come to us.** As a family, you may want to discuss the ways Jesus appeared in unexpected ways during that day.