



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

Catechist's Context

How do you perceive God's voice and respond to God's call? In this Sunday's Gospel, Peter encounters Christ's magnificence and steps out in faith, only to find his momentary courage eclipsed by fear. Christ tells us to have courage and walk in faith regardless of the waves of doubt, confusion, or fear we may experience.

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.**

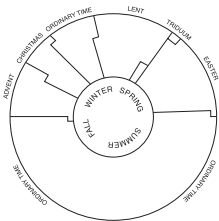
Alleluia

See Psalm 130:5

Alleluia, alleluia.

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

Alleluia, alleluia.



Liturgical Calendar Connection

Help the young people find the Nineteenth Sunday of Ordinary Time on the liturgical calendar. Have them look to see what feasts and memorials occur this week. This week we celebrate the memorial of Saint Clare, whose simple and trusting faith is a model for us. Clare lived as today's Gospel tells us to live, taking courage and finding hope in Christ in all things.

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

Walk or Sink?

This Sunday’s Gospel is a story of faith in the making. The disciples were just with Jesus as he multiplied the meager meal of loaves and fishes to produce a banquet. Now they see Christ walking on water and see his power as the waters around them are calmed. Peter boldly declares his faith and asks to be given a share of the grace of Christ, yet his faith wavers even as he walks on the water and he turns his eyes from the Lord, sinking in fear and doubt. Jesus comes to Peter’s rescue, and

all declare their faith in Jesus as the Son of God.

☉ What are the waves that toss you about?

☉ Do you get caught up in arguments among friends, or do you fight with your parents or siblings?

☉ Do you or does someone close to you face serious illness or depression?

☉ Does someone in your family lack adequate employment?

Regardless of our age or stage of faith, our lives are often tossed about like the boat in the stormy waters the disciples experienced in today’s Gospel.

☉ In what ways do you walk in faith with the Lord?

☉ Do you trust that God will come to you when you most need God’s love and care?

☉ Do you trust that God’s way is the true way, even though it may seem frightening or uncertain when you do so?

☉ Do you find the grace and strength to keep your eyes on the Lord, even when there is much else that distracts or pulls you?

We know that God comes to us. God seeks a relationship with us that is the meeting place between God’s love for us and our faith in and love for God. Christ calls us as Peter was called, “Come!” We must find and cultivate an open and willing mind, heart, and spirit, to perceive God’s voice in the small quiet moments of our lives and in the stormy, frightening ones as well. God comes to us! We know this through the inspired word of scripture, through the teaching and tradition of the Church, and in the still, small quiet moments of our lives.

☉ In what ways do you respond to the prompting of your heart and conscience?

☉ In what ways do you take courage and place your faith in the voice of God?

The Faithful Witness of the Saints

Many of us have favorite saints or saints whose stories we know well. Often we are inspired by the example of these saintly people who followed God's ways in their lives in spite of persecution, torture, and grave difficulty. Go around the room and invite each young person to name a saint that he or she admires. If some of the young people cannot think of saints, you might tell them the name of a saint that has qualities that they have, or you might tell them a little bit about their name saint, if they have one.

Focus on Church Teaching

God comes to us! We know this through the inspired texts of Sacred Scripture, which record God's seeking out humanity throughout salvation history. We also know this through the teaching and tradition of the Church, which preserves the wisdom of centuries of theological reflection and insight of our Church fathers. Furthermore, we know this through the small, quiet ways in which we as individuals perceive God's voice in our hearts in prayer and through participation in the sacramental life of the Church (*Catechism of the Catholic Church*, 715, 2700, 75–82)

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 young people 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?

Eyes Fixed on Christ

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

Divide the young people into two groups. Invite one group to brainstorm a list of things that distract us or tempt us to turn our eyes away from Christ. Invite the other group to brainstorm a list of ways in which we can fix our eyes on Christ and not waver or fall to temptation. Once the groups have finished, have them share their lists with one another. See how many of the temptations and distractions named by the first group can be answered by the methods for resolve named by the second group.

Prayers and Blessings at Home

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Lectionary Readings

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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

Draw your family members together, perhaps holding each other's hands or forming a family huddle. Invite your family members to offer prayers or petitions, to which the response will be: **Jesus says, "Do not be afraid."**

Living the Liturgy at Home

This week, talk with your family about any fears that your family members have, and about how God will come to us, giving us the strength and courage we need to face all our fears. Encourage each family member to write a brief reflection about a time in which his or her fears have been dispelled by faith or by the companionship of another. Younger children may need to talk about this with a parent. Older children or teenagers may simply want to write in a journal or to think about this quietly during the week. Put a little reminder somewhere in your house that Christ says, "Take courage; do not be afraid."