

Cycle A 19th Sunday in Ordinary Time

Reading 1, 1 Kgs 19:9a, 11-13a

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.

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

R. (8) Lord, let us see your kindness, and grant us your salvation.

I will hear what God proclaims; the LORD — for he proclaims peace. Near indeed is his salvation to those who fear him, glory dwelling in our land.

R. Lord, let us see your kindness, and grant us your salvation.

Kindness and truth shall meet; justice and peace shall kiss. Truth shall spring out of the earth, and justice shall look down from heaven.

R. Lord, let us see your kindness, and grant us your salvation.

The LORD himself will give his benefits; our land shall yield its increase. Justice shall walk before him, and prepare the way of his steps.

R. Lord, let us see your kindness, and grant us your salvation.

Reading 2, Rom 9:1-5

Brothers and sisters: I speak the truth in Christ, I do not lie; my conscience joins with the Holy Spirit in bearing me witness that I have great sorrow and constant anguish in my heart. For I could wish that I myself were accursed and cut off from Christ for the sake of my own people, my kindred according to the flesh. They are Israelites; theirs the adoption, the glory, the covenants, the giving of the law, the worship, and the promises; theirs the patriarchs, and from them, according to the flesh, is the Christ, who is over all, God blessed forever. Amen.

Gospel, Mt 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.”

Good morning [good evening]. Normally at St. Brendan, today, the 2nd Sunday in August, is our HaitiReach Annual Appeal weekend to get an update and raise donations for our HaitiReach ministry. This year however, not surprisingly, we are carrying on that tradition, but in a different way. With travel being impossible, this year Father Bordeau and Father Kenley of our sister parish, Our Lady of Fatima (OLF) in Bassin-Zim, Haiti couldn't come to St. Brendan, but they send their greetings with thanks and prayers. I will give a brief update about what's happening with our brothers and sisters in Haiti. Also, we did create two short videos for you to view online. In the 16 years we have known each other, this year more than ever, I can see the impact our relationship with OLF has made joining our two separate communities into one. More than ever, I see the challenges we experience in Georgia are similar, but amplified in Haiti.

The Scriptures today tell us that God loves us so much that He touches us physically and spiritually so we may grow in faith and come to Him. The readings tell us of ways to approach God...of ways to serve Him...ways to forgive others as God forgives us...about miracles attending to human needs...all of this happens in the normal place we meet God...in the whispers of our everyday life. Least we are lulled into thinking how ordinary life can be...we will see how extraordinary these lessons in the Scriptures are about experiencing God and following Jesus by doing God's will in all things we do.

Each day we have moments of grace when we might behold His glory and hear a voice proclaiming His identity. But we need eyes of faith and ears that are open to Him. Having a close family relationship with a Haitian parish definitely gives us perspective on the challenges we are facing. The good news is that Covid-19 probably has not yet reached Bassin-Zim, but it may be in Hinche 7 miles away...they don't really know...there is little testing. Like here, the school was closed since March and soon will reopen...there is no Paycheck Protection in Haiti, but our funding did pay their staff and teachers. There are no healthcare facilities in Bassin-Zim, but HaitiReach has leveraged our relationship with the Nashville, TN based Parish Twinning Program of the Americas (PTPA), and OLF is now 1 of 89 parishes participating in the Haiti Covid-19 Preventative Response program...we funded buying masks and printing instructions

for OLF. In Haiti “stay-at-home” doesn’t work...they are all essential workers, because if they don’t work, they don’t eat. Now I see how important the Agriculture Program was that we funded in 2018 and 2019...it continues on it’s own. Their latest report is posted on the HaitiReach Facebook page...I was humbled to read their words: *“The misery increases and becomes harder in the areaOne of the greatest hopes of the community is the continuity of the agriculture project at OLF parish.”* Please take 4 minutes to view one of the video interviews of Father Kenley or Mr. Rodson the school Principal, and a few folks from OLF that we posted on the St. Brendan’s and HaitiReach Facebook pages.

So how do we experience God? For sure it’s in prayer...Going off alone with God as Jesus did in the Gospel or during our silent spiritual whispers with God we have 20 times a day...but, it is also in responding with our physical senses throughout the day, recognizing that God is speaking to us...our faith grows and we come to know that He is with us always.

We experience God in the richness and in the limits of our lives: In the love of each other, in supporting ministries like HaitiReach, in the quarterly support we give OLF, in our visits to Haiti, in the Covid-19 Preventative Response program, in the Agriculture Program...you get the idea...God’s presence is tangible and our faith grows. We also can experience His Grace in the limitations of life as well by being vulnerable, in illness, in death, in failure, or even in loneliness being separated from loved ones... Only Jesus can transform our pain into blessings! We really will never know when God will choose to reveal a glimpse of His divine glory, but rest assured if we are alive with faith and use our 5 senses, God can be found in our ordinary areas of life.

Here’s the crux of our HaitiReach challenge....we are running out of money and our fundraising is limited. In the midst of the pandemic we had to tell Father Bordeaux to expect lower quarterly payments and we can’t fund any projects for now...that was one of the toughest things I heard this year. God knows our generosity keeps the St. Brendan’s community alive and vibrant...the business plan for St. Brendan’s depends on our donations... .. well, likewise without a doubt the business plan for OLF depends on us. If you were thinking of giving \$10 or \$20 to

HaitiReach, please consider \$50 or even \$100 this year. You can give online at the St. Brendan's website, or text to give, or use the HaitiReach envelope. Thank you....thank you, thank you for your generosity.

In closing, did you identify with Peter in today's Gospel?...He is a model of both strength and weakness of faith. Jesus said, "Come," and with his eyes on Christ his faith upheld him...But, when he looked around to his world, he doubted he could withstand the chaos...and he couldn't...so he sank...but faith won out because Peter cried out confident that Jesus was there. Jesus says to us, "Come." Look around...and savor how extra-ordinary is our experience of God in our lives!

It was great being here and seeing you today.