

## 19<sup>th</sup> (SJ&QA) Sunday Ordinary Time Year A

While in the Holy Land, a group of tourists wanted to experience a boat ride across the Sea of Galilee, the sea on which Jesus walked. The boatman told them, *“The fare will be \$100 per person.”* *“One hundred dollars!”* exclaimed one tourist, *“No wonder Jesus walked!”*

Today’s readings usher us to a deeper knowledge of God through Jesus as he walked on the water; and our faith journey in the church as a community of believers. For many months covid-19, protests, riots, deaths, damage to lives & properties have dominated the news. There is also the tragedy of unemployment, people going hungry, becoming homeless, getting sick. *We might ask, where is God in all these painful events?* Yet it is also time for us to realize that in the midst of pain and suffering there are people who showed their concern - they are real heroes. In any turbulent situation flight may seem to be the only option as what Elijah did in our first reading but it was also a moment of surprise for him. *Where is God in all this?* Elijah couldn’t figure out anything until he was able to hear the voice of God in a tiny whisper. God’s voice came, not in the roaring thunder or in the mighty wind, but in a gentle breeze. Peter & the disciples found themselves to be in a similar situation when they were in an open boat facing a raging storm in the middle of the Sea of Galilee. *“Where is God in all this?”* they wondered. Peter spoke and doubtfully said, *“Lord, if it’s really you, tell me to come to you across the water.”*

These days we find ourselves facing turbulence that brings chaos to our social order. Besides the winds of change that blow through our society there is the uncertainty of our economy, the political bickering, the erosion of family values, and many more challenges that shake our stability. We cannot remain idle with all these events transpiring; this is now the time for us to work together. *What things in common can we think of between Paul, Peter, Elijah, Moses and the rest of the prophets?* Like Moses, they had deep feelings of concern for their flock. Paul preferred to perish if in that way his brethren were to be saved. *How willingly do we sacrifice for the spiritual or physical well-being of our own brothers and sisters?* Paul's anguish is such that he is willing to sacrifice his own spiritual life and inheritance for the sake of his Jewish brethren. *Moses was willing to have his own name stricken from God's list in the interest of his people.*

*"Help thy brother's boat across, and lo; thine own has reached the shore."*— says a Jewish proverb. *My heart pains for them!* Paul grieves deeply over his separation from his Jewish community. He expresses his profound regret that his Jewish brethren failed to recognize Jesus as Messiah & Lord. Although they are the people of the Promise they failed to accept the promised Messiah. They didn't believe in Jesus. *Why?* Because He was just like them. He was among them... so ordinary. What is lacking? 'Trust & Confidence' that leads to faith. These are the words we need to take into our hearts and soul today.

Confidence means, “*To believe with.*” We cannot have confidence when we’re isolated and all alone. This is the point of today’s readings. We can find confidence even in the worst storms, even in the most chaotic of times. But we can lose that confidence if we overlook the beauty of God’s goodness or take it for granted, believing we deserve to be His own because we accepted Him. *If you only pray when you’re in trouble... you’re in trouble!* You can get through the worst that life can throw at you if only you keep your contact with God. *No prayer?* No confidence. *Stop joining in the Mass?* No confidence. *No sharing in the life of the Church, in the Body of Christ?* No confidence. What will soon follow is we’ll take our eyes away from Jesus. Well, just like Peter we’ll sink. Just like the Jews we’ll miss the opportunity of being saved. Soon we’ll hear the gusting wind, the frightening noise and the deafening roar of the storm that will shake the very foundation of our lives. Without God’s voice and the eyes of Jesus we’ll be like Peter - blown down & drowned. Without God we can do nothing. *Is your life getting out of control? Is your faith slipping away from you?* Like Elijah, find a place of solitude & silence. Like Peter, look into the eyes of Jesus. Like Paul, bring Jesus to others. He’s there to help you.

We must wear this message of Scripture in our lives: *actions speak louder than words.* St. Pope Paul VI said, “*The world needs witnesses more than it does teachers.*” We don’t need to preach from the street corners. Rather, we need to live the faith in our hearts and in

our everyday lives. How we react to the driver who steals our parking space or the person who criticizes unjustly must be shaped by our love of God. **As Christians we are challenged to bring that faith to everyone through our values that continue to be shaped by our Lord's teachings. For our hearts to be filled with courage, fortitude and boldness, we need to be linked to Jesus so that with us he can pull our load through life. *Increase our faith Lord so that we may enter more fully into the life of your Church. Amen!***