

19th Sunday in Ordinary Time – Year A “Fear or Faith?”

1 Kings 19:9, 11-13 Romans 9:1-5 Matthew 14:22-33

If you get a chance to take in some of the latest photos by NASA that REVEAL THE PLANETS OF OUR SOLAR SYSTEM, you'll walk away with a sense of Awe and Wonder when it comes to looking at the **Majestic Blue Marble** like composition of planet Earth VERSUS the **STERILE and at times even HOSTILE** look of the other planets...

The Scriptures tell us that when: “**God first created the Heavens and the Earth, the earth was a formless void and darkness was over the surface of the deep...**” In the beginning, our blue ball planet wasn't so blue after all! Science has revealed that at one point in time, the waters found on earth were that of a toxic looking greenish brown. It was through the wonder of tiny organisms working their **MAGIC OF PHOTOSYNTHESIS** that then led to the release of oxygen into our waters, which then transformed the colors and the contents of the planet we now inhabit.

WATER... For all intensive purposes, every living thing on this planet, us included, are WATERBORNE CREATURES! I mean, just the fact that **OUR IMMORTAL SOULS** originate within a woman's womb surrounded by **Amniotic Waters** in which we live for 9 months of time prior to being born reminds us of this. **Our bodies are made up of 60% water!**

NOW – most of us who like to get away in life for a little break do what Jesus did this day: we go away with our families and we hang out at the water... Whether it's by **THE BEACH, A LAKE, A RIVER, OR EVEN THE OCEAN** – there's SOMETHING soothing and relaxing – almost a Silent Language that reaches the inner depths of our being as we sit there and take in the beauty of a day spent near or on the waters...

For Jesus, that place was the **Sea of Galilee!** There, the **Primordial Element** of **WATER** refreshed and soothed the Spirit of our Savior over the course of his three years of Public Ministry. Were told that after working a **MIRACLE** **which entailed feeding 5000 people with 5 loaves and 2 fish** – **Jesus MADE HIS DISCIPLES GET INTO A BOAT.**

The point being for us is this: along our life's journey, when we witness for ourselves something that is so profound that it **SHAKES US TO THE CORE, AN EVENT, A MIRACLE, AN ACT OF GOD** – following that experience – the Saviour instructs us to **board the Ship of Faith in Him** and allow for it to take us over uncharted waters!

The DISCIPLES OBEYED – and that's when things started getting interesting – **the boat ends up being battered by the waves as the wind wages war against them.** Does that sound familiar to anyone? Following Christ and living a life of Faith is not THE EASY PATH.

Take the life example **Ernest Simoni** who back in April of 1956, was ordained a priest and said his **FIRST MASS.** He served the people of God in **ALBANIA** – a Communist country – and on Christmas Eve of 1963, right after finishing celebrating **Midnight Mass**, the police came, handcuffed him and took him away.

At first, he was sentenced to **DEATH BY FIRING SQUAD**, but then they amended the sentence 18 years of intense labour in the Coal Mines. He recalls how the temperature was so cold, that many prisoners died because of the temperature alone. The only **WATER** they had that was available to drink had a reddish hue to it due to it being polluted with copper.

Because of his life's Heroic Witness, back on November 19th of 2016 – **Pope Francis elevated Fr. Ernest to the state of Cardinal at 88 years of age!** Cardinal Ernest stands before us as a living example of what it means to **BOARD SHIP OF FAITH** in Christ and allow for it to take us **OVER TROUBLED WATERS...** He stands before us like Peter did so long ago before the other 11 disciples in the boat when they saw the Lord walking towards them on **TOP OF THOSE TROUBLED WATERS** – cause you see – out of the 12, it was Peter who first believed in the presence of God in Christ standing before him while others cried out: "**It is a ghost!**"

He put HIS FAITH into action by saying: "Lord, if it is you, **COMMAND ME to come to you on the waters!**"
In other words:

"Lord – we who have boarded THE SHIP OF FAITH are being assailed by the waves of our times and we are in danger of perishing – you who have created all things and sustain all in being – IF IT IS YOU standing on top of Life's Storms then command me to stand alongside of you!"

It's important that we **pay attention to the kind of petition** Peter placed before our Lord. He didn't ask God to make the storm go away, to make the wind cease blowing, to make the boat suddenly appear on solid ground – NO – he asked the Lord for the grace to stand beside him amidst the storm and to walk over **THAT WHICH MEANT HIS CERTAIN DEATH...**

As I speak, we're all floating atop the OCEAN OF TIME being assailed by passing storms in our day and age: whether **it's sickness, injury, the economy, the weather, or the breakdown of relationships** – whatever STORM we're passing through – **Peter** and the life example of **Cardinal Ernest** remind us to reach out for the Lord in prayer and ASK HIM FOR THE GRACE to stand by His side and through it all!

I love the image of Peter finding himself walking surefooted on the water when all of a sudden, he notices the strong wind becomes frightened and starts to sink... In a moment of panic he cries out: "**Lord, save me!**" Were told that **IMMEDIATELY**, immediately Jesus reached out his hand and caught him and while pulling him atop the waters once again, he says: "**You of little Faith, why did you doubt? Why did you doubt???**"

Imagine for a moment what that must've been like for Peter... imagine him sinking into the waters and as the darkness is about to engulf him – he looks up as the waters are closing in over his head and **HE SEES THROUGH THE THIN SURFACE OF A WATERY GRAVE the Hand of God taking HOLD OF HIM!!!**

It's a POWERFUL IMAGE – and it's one that I invite you to transpose onto the image I shared with you earlier of planet Earth seen from space in a **BEAUTIFUL ARRAY OF MARBLE BLUE**. Because you see, the only thing that separates us on earth from The Presence of God in Heaven **IS THE THIN SURFACE of a lack of Faith...**

Every day, from the **Vantage Point** of where we stand amidst the TROUBLED WATERS OF LIFE'S STORMS on earth, while billions of people are being assailed with passing storms, THE POWERS THAT BE are screaming in our faces: "**This idea that Jesus Christ is God is nothing but a Ghost, an Illusion, a belief in something that provides you Christians with a CRUTCH TO LIMP ALONG.**"

COME WHAT MAY – Don't ever take your Eyes off Christ! Not even for a second – rather through the Gift of Faith we received by passing through the **AMNIOTIC WATERS OF BAPTISM** – **CRY OUT TO HIM IN PRAYER!!! "Command me Oh Lord to stand alongside of you through this storm!"**

With the **EYES OF FAITH**, God commands us every day to see through THE THIN SURFACE OF THIS PASSING WORLD of ours and allow for his **Powerful Hand** to take hold of us. Will we let him? That's the question... do **WE SEE** the Saviour reaching out to us each and every day in love? Or are we too caught up in the storms and trying to do everything ourselves.

Cause I'll tell you right now, we've **crossed OVER and INTO the THRESHOLD OF DARKNESS** and we are now sailing headlong towards setting foot on the Shores of a Land that is **BLIND TO THE TRUTH**.

I leave the Final Word to **Cardinal Ernest** – a man who like Peter knows exactly what it's to sink while crying out: "**Lord, SAVE ME!**"

"**MORALITY** has been thrown out and Christ has been forgotten. **God has been substituted with pleasure.** As Christians, we have forgotten that Christ is our Judge and the Saviour of souls!

Without Christ **we can do nothing...** We have abandoned praying the Rosary and going to Mass...

The Mass, MORTIFICATION, and the Rosary are the **most powerful tools we can use against the devil**. It is with these three weapons that we can crush the head of the devil.

We see the prophecy of Fatima revealing itself today... If the people do not turn towards Christ, ***DARKNESS and ERROR WILL CONSUME THE WORLD***.

If we **TRUST IN GOD** and turn towards him, we should have no fear.”

And Jesus IMMEDIATELY reached out His hand and caught him saying: “***You of little faith – why DID you doubt?***”