19th Sunday in Ordinary Time, August 9, 2026

BELIEVE, TRUST, AND BE STILL

1 Kings 19:9a,11-13a - The Lord appears to Elijah in a gentle whisper.

Romans 9:1-5 - St Paul speaks of the blessings that have come to the Israelites.

Matthew 14:22-33 - Jesus walks on water, and the disciples acknowledge him as the Son of God.

The Prophet Elijah walks on a sacred and ancient path, one taken only by Moses. This path points to that of Jesus Christ. The three (Jesus, Moses, and Elijah) fasted for 40 days in the desert, provided for by angels, and centuries later, they would meet together on a mountaintop.

Elijah was the most famous and dramatic of Israel's prophets. After his great victory at Mount Carmel, he was arrested by fear of Jezebel's threats and became lonely, discouraged, disappointed, and frustrated. Elijah had to run for his life; he came to Mount Horeb. This was a return to the sacred place where God had earlier met Moses and given his Laws to the people. Horeb (another name for Sinai) became for Elijah a mountain of divine revelation. Paralyzed by fear and frustration, the prophet did not turn away from God; rather, he went looking for the face of God. He made the rough, long journey of 200 miles to the Mountain of God. There, in the cave, God spoke to Elijah and revealed himself. Elijah knew that the sound of a gentle whisper was God's voice. He realized that God does not reveal himself only in powerful, miraculous ways. Looking for God only in something big and dramatic may be to miss him, because God is often found gently whispering in the quietness of a humble heart.

Jesus dismissed the crowd and went up on a mountainside to pray. Seeking quiet moments was an important priority for Jesus. He made room in his busy schedule to be alone with God the Father. Spending time with God in prayer nurtures a vital relationship with him and equips us to face life's struggles and challenges. Let us take time in our lives to be silent and listen to what God has to say.

'Tell me to come to you on the water' … Peter was afraid and began to sink:
Was Peter not putting Jesus to the test? Peter rather was only reacting in faith. His spontaneous request led him to experience an unusual demonstration of God's power. Peter started to sink because he took his eyes off Jesus and focused on the strong wind and high waves around him. We might not walk on water, but we do walk through tough and difficult situations in life. If we focus on the wind and waves of difficult circumstances around us without looking to Jesus for help, we, too, may despair and sink. To maintain our faith in difficult times, it is good to focus on the power of Jesus Christ rather than on our inadequacies.

The old Jewish theology of the sea has it that the sea is the predominant abode of Lucifer and his evil angels - the marine spirits. These are taken to be behind every turbulent mishap and

malign waves in the ocean. Therefore, for Jesus' disciples, it could only be this malicious spirit that now walks on the water, approaching to destroy them at this ungodly time of night; hence they were petrified. How often that happens to us. When life becomes difficult, we sometimes fail to recognize the Lord's presence in our lives. In sickness, in conflicts, in loneliness, in discouragement, we think God has abandoned us. Yet often He is already walking toward us. The good news is that, in Jesus, all evil powers and the negative forces of the underworld submit, and He holds every power in check. Jesus comes into this world to undo the works of the devil. *"Take courage, it is I; do not be afraid."* ALL powers and forces are under the control of Christ, and He decides to walk on the sea (the abode of Lucifer and his evil angels) to show His supremacy over ALL demonic and marine forces. Certainly, the devil does not have the last word; the last word lies in Jesus, who walks in supremacy over the water.

"Lord, save me." Although we start out with good intentions, sometimes our faith falters. This does not necessarily mean we have failed. When his faith faltered, Peter reached out to Jesus, the only one who could help. ***"Lord, save me!"*** This becomes one of the most beautiful prayers in the gospel. Peter is sincere. He does not pretend to be strong. He does not hide his fear and weakness. He simply cries out and Jesus immediately stretches out His hand. ***'And immediately Jesus stretches out His hand'.*** That word ***"immediately"*** is important. Jesus does not wait until Peter has completely drowned. No delay. No judgments. No criticisms. This is the mercy of God. Sometimes our faith will be weak. Sometimes we will begin to sink. Sometimes fear will overcome us. But when we cry, ***"Lord, save me," Jesus Christ is near.***

The saints are not people who never sank. They are people who always reached out for God's hands when they noticed that they were sinking. When fear, tension, anxiety, and pressure pile high against you in waves, causing you to doubt whether Jesus is near or willing to help you, remember that Jesus is always with you, and He is the only one who knows how best to help you.

Jesus says, "Take courage! It is I. Do not be afraid".
Christ went beyond reassuring the disciples; He also confirmed his divine identity and authority for Himself. No wonder this gospel ended with: "And when they climbed into the boat, the wind died down. Then those who were in the boat worshiped him, saying, "Truly you are the Son of God."

Elijah carries his frustrations to God. Paul carries his sorrow and anguish to God. Peter carries his fear to Jesus. And each one encounters God. Sometimes the most courageous thing a Christian can do is to remain still in the presence of God. May we learn the holy art of remaining with God. The Catechism teaches that prayer requires recollection, silence, and an attentive heart (cf. CCC 2717–2719). The dynamic disciples' prayer is not simply speaking words; it is entering into communion with God.

Fr. Martin Homily, 19th Sunday in Ordinary Time, August 9, 2026

Psalm 46:10 says, ***"Be still, and know that I am God."***

Friends, before embarking on another project, pray and be still. Before making a decision, be still. Before responding in anger, be still. Before concluding that God has abandoned you, pray and be still. Before allowing fear to dictate your choices, be still. Before speaking, listen. Before complaining, pray. Before running away, look again. God may not be asking us today to do something extraordinary. Perhaps He is asking us simply to be still and trust Him. The storm may not end today. The answer may not come instantly. The situation may not change right away. However, Christ is saying: ***"Take courage. It is I. Do not be afraid." And that is enough.***

Friends, the Christian life is not a promise that there will be no storms. It is the promise that Christ will be with us in every storm. Elijah found God in the cave. Peter discovered Christ not when the sea was calm, but when the waves were raging. Paul discovered that even his deepest sorrow could become an offering of love. Therefore, do not be afraid of the silence. Do not be afraid of the storm. Enter the silence. Remain with Christ. Listen for His voice. Let us keep our eyes fixed on Christ. And when we feel ourselves sinking, do not despair. Simply stretch out your hand and say: ***"Lord, save me."*** And the hand that reached out to Peter will reach out to you. Just believe. And may Christ give us the courage of stillness amidst every storm, so that when the winds rise, and the waves become violent, we may hear His voice: ***"Take courage, it is I; do not be afraid."*** Amen and Amen.