

St. Frances Cabrini - Lebanon, TN
Nineteenth Sunday of Ordinary Time – Year A
August 13, 2017

1 Kgs 19:9A, 11-13A

Rom 9:1-5

Mt 14:22-33

Jesus and Saint Peter are walking along the beach one day when they see an oil rig out at sea.

Jesus asks Peter, "would you like to go and see that?" Peter replies that he would and so they start walking out to sea.

As they are walking Peter notices that the water is up to his knees, but is only at Jesus' ankles. He doesn't say anything and keeps walking. Sometime later the water is up to Peter's chest and yet it is still only around Jesus' ankles. Peter doesn't say anything and keeps walking.

Eventually, Peter is finding it difficult keeping his head above water and he asks Jesus, "How are you walking on water?"

Jesus replies, "Walking on water? I'm walking on the pipes"

When my dad would come home from work, he and my mom would drink a cup of coffee in the kitchen. This was my dad's way of unwinding from work. I remember as a kid, during a snow day, two friends of mine came to the house. We were playing slam dunk Nerf basketball. The room we were playing in was right above our kitchen. So as you may imagine, we were a bit noisy with our voices and with the jumping around. After putting up with all the noise he could, about 3 minutes' worth, he came to the base of the stairs and told us if we didn't stop, there would be a consequence. Use your imagination.

Upon hearing that, we three boys immediately froze, then jump to the nearest chair. Have you ever seen a cartoon where the person goes from one point to another all you see are the lines of wind following them? It was like that. Once in our chairs, we just looked at each other in a bit of shock, but started laughing at how quickly we stopped the chaos and were in chairs.

One of our themes today is that of chaos and how God brings order to the chaos. Back in the time of Elijah, those worshiping Baal thought it to be the god of storms. So the imagery we have with Elijah on the mountain top awaiting the appearance of God could be understood with the magnificence of the strong wind or an earthquake. Yet God wasn't there in the storm or earthquake. He was in the quiet.

We then have our gospel story where Jesus sends the disciples across the Sea of Galilee. While they are traveling, a storm comes about, which was very common and still is today. There is fear of the boat sinking. To make matters worse, they see what they think is a ghost walking on the water. Jesus tries to calm their fears in telling them "Do not be afraid, it is I".

Peter asks for proof. If it is you Lord, bid me to walk on the water. Peter has enough faith initially, but then starts to sink. And Christ is there to save him. He also calms the storm with a word.

In this story, Peter is us in a nut shell. We can start to have faith in God, but when a little trouble comes along, we lose that faith. Or we have faith in the wrong things. Let me go back to my story. When my dad

yelled at us, I had complete confidence, complete faith that he would fulfill his promise to us. Yet I don't put as much faith in God or in Christ.

The storms on the sea that Jesus calmed are more than physical storms. We have many storms in our lives. We have illnesses, broken relationships, addictions, death of loved ones. Who do we look to when these storms come into our lives? Do we look to God or do we look to someone else, something else? Do we initially turn to God, but lose faith quickly and turn elsewhere?

Maybe we aren't listening completely to God. We have to find that mountain top, that place of quiet and solitude to pray. We have to find that place where nothing else exists. Jesus sent his closest friends off ahead of him so he could be alone with the Father. If this is how Jesus would connect with the Father, do we think we can do it differently? Are we better he was? Are we able to hear God's voice amid the TV, the computer, Facebook?

Our message today is quite simple if we let it be. No matter how perfect we think our lives are, there will be storms in them. We have a choice on how we navigate through those storms. We can put our trust in our own abilities. We can put our trust, our faith in others. Or, can we put our complete trust in God. Listen carefully for his quiet instruction.