

## Homily by Fr. Anthony Davis

**“...On this Rock I will build my Church, and the gates of hell, shall not prevail against it...” (Matt.16:18)**

August 09, 2020

19<sup>th</sup> Sunday in Ordinary Time (Year A)

1 Kg 19:9, 11-13; Rom 9:1-5; Matt 14:22-33

**A story about trustful faith:** In the middle of a dark winter’s night in a small Midwest farming community, the two-story home of a young family caught fire. Quickly, parents and children followed their well-practiced emergency plan and made their way through the smoke-filled home out into the front yard. There the father quickly counted heads and realized that their 5-year-old son was not among them. Suddenly he heard a wail and looked up to see the boy at his bedroom window, crying and rubbing his eyes. Knowing the danger of reentering the house to rescue his son, the father called, “Jump, Son! I’ll catch you!” Between sobs, the boy responded to the voice he knew so well. “But, I can’t see you, Daddy!” The father answered with great assurance. “No, Son, you can’t see me, but I can see you! Jump!” At that, the boy jumped into the smoky darkness and found himself safely cradled in his father’s arms.

Our scripture today is about trusting – about having faith – about being able to discern the fact that our God is always with us, even in storms of life.

So the first reading tells us of how Elijah the prophet who had defeated the 450 false priests of Baal with the help of just such a trusting faith in the power of Yahweh (and then had fled for his life), encountered the Lord God on Mt. Horeb.

In the second reading, Paul laments and mourns over the Jews who, having lost their faith in Yahweh and His prophets, had rejected their promised Messiah, Jesus.

The Gospel episode explains how Peter lost his trusting faith in Jesus for a few seconds and consequently failed during his attempt to walk on water. He could succeed, only when he had refocused, and reposed his faith in Jesus.

Call Jesus in the storms facing the Church and our lives! Let us approach Jesus with strong faith in his ability and availability to calm the storms in the life of the Church and in our lives. Church history shows us how Jesus saved his Church from the storms of persecution, spiritual and physical attacks in the beginning of the Church’s life, up to the present times. Remember what

Christ said: "...On this Rock I will build my Church, and the gates of hell, shall not prevail against it..." (Matt.16:18).

Indeed it is the presence of Jesus which gives us peace even in the wildest storms of life: storms of sorrow, storms of doubt, tension and uncertainty, storms of temptations and storms in family relationship.

Admittedly, in our daily lives, sometimes we feel we are afraid of everything. We are tossed by storms of fear. We are afraid of ourselves. We are afraid of people. We are afraid of the future. We are afraid of the past. We are afraid of life. We are afraid of death.

Yet Peter knew by his little faith, that the Lord can sustain him. Even in the midst of the storm, when there is nothing but uncertainty, He will take care of us. So he shouted: "Lord, save me." And Jesus stretched his hands and saved him, saying, "Oh you of little faith, why did you doubt?"

But I want you to know that faith is a risk-taking enterprise. By this I mean that this demands a personal relationship with God, with Jesus, enhanced through prayer, meditative reading of Scripture and active participation in the Holy Mass.

In other words, we are expected to pray to God every day with trusting faith for strengthening our personal relationship with Him and for acknowledging our dependence on Him.

And so even when we have no time or mental energy for formal prayers, let us use the short prayers in the gospels like Peter's prayer: "Lord, save me"; or the prayer of the mother of the possessed girl: "Lord, help me"; or the blind man's prayer: "Son of David, have mercy on me"; or the sinner's prayer: "Lord, have mercy on me a sinner."

The only Faith Jesus expects of his followers is a Faith which concentrates solely on him. In other words, when we simply heed Our Lord, we can do great things.