

## 19<sup>th</sup> Sunday in Ordinary Time – Year A

When President Jimmy Carter occupied the Oval Office, he kept a plaque nearby that a military friend gave to him. Inscribed on the plaque were these words, “O Lord, Thy Sea is so great and my boat is so small.”

Indeed, there is a huge difference between a small boat and a vast sea. The Church is often viewed as a boat sailing on the sea of life. Sometimes the waves of the world can overwhelm the boat of the Church and cause fear and doubt as in the case of today’s Gospel.

Today we find the disciples in the boat together when, lo and behold, the winds intensify, causing high waves. In the midst of the storm Jesus appears, walking on the water and says, “Take courage, it is I; do not be afraid.” Peter, the impulsive one, challenges Jesus and says, “Lord, if it is you, command me to come to you on the water.” At the behest of Jesus, Peter approaches the waters, but becomes frightened as the wind kicks up and then he begins to sink. Peter calls out, “Lord, save me!” Sure enough, Jesus saves Peter.

As we sail the waters of life, with all of its fears and doubts, Jesus is ever present to save us. Although we may not see him, he is present nonetheless. More often than not, this presence does not emerge in the extraordinary, like wind, earthquake, or a fire, but in the ordinary, like a gentle whisper. That’s how Elijah found God. God was not in something dramatic, but rather in something as subtle as a whisper. But it takes a faithful posture of prayer to sit, wait, and hear that whispering voice who says, “It is I, do not be afraid.”

While the waves of the world can be overwhelming and evoke all kinds of emotions from fear to doubt to despair, it is heartwarming to know not only that we are together in the boat of the Church, but that Jesus is our traveling companion who is always present to save us. He is, in a real sense, our life preserver. So while the sea seems so vast and our boat may appear so small, we need not worry because we have Jesus. Thank you, Jesus! Let us not forget his words, “Take courage, it is I; do not be afraid.”

You know, the waves may indeed be overwhelming, but if we stay and look with eyes of faith, we can see Jesus.