

August 13, 2023

Written by
THE
FAITHFUL
DISCIPLE

Nineteenth Sunday in Ordinary Time

1 Kgs 19:9a, 11-13a | Rom 9:1-5 | Mt 14:22-33

GROW AS A DISCIPLE | PRAY, STUDY, ENGAGE, SERVE

Unlike with our other important relationships, God isn't exactly someone we can meet for coffee and look into his eyes while having a conversation. Whether we talk to God in our mind or out loud, we recognize that even with a good prayer life it can sometimes be difficult to cultivate and maintain a relationship with God. Doubters and unbelievers are quick to remind us how impossible it is to believe what we cannot see or hear, but today's readings also remind us that God doesn't speak to us as another human being would. Maybe he doesn't speak with the booming voice of a preacher or a politician, and maybe he doesn't write direct messages for us in the sky or sand, but God does speak. Perhaps, like Elijah, we tend to expect God to communicate with huge gestures, such as strong wind that crushes rocks, or earthquakes or fires; but we hear today that God spoke to Elijah in a "tiny whispering sound." It's not unlike a very good teacher who doesn't need to raise her voice to get her students' attention when they lose focus - she has their respect and simply needs to speak normally and calmly and the students quiet down, pay attention, and listen. When we still our hearts and minds and listen, in prayer, let us be confident we will hear God's voice.

GO EVANGELIZE

PRAYER, INVITATION, WITNESS, ACCOMPANIMENT

Perhaps in order to hear God's voice in our lives we need to fine-tune our "hearing." First, how can we hear if we do not have faith? Jesus called Peter out of the boat and into stormy waters, and though he was able to walk on water for a time, Peter began to sink because he became afraid. Doubt or fear can hamper our ability to listen to the Lord clearly; don't let it cloud your love for Christ! Second, we must keep in mind the many ways God speaks to us: his Word (the Bible), the writings of the saints and Church Fathers, our Catholic Tradition, other people God has placed in our lives, and the "tiny whispering sound" we might hear only within our heart. Stay attuned to God's voice; the rewards are heavenly.

INVITATION Ignatian spirituality - meditations, prayers, and contemplative practices - may help us recognize and truly hear the still small voice of God in our lives. The Daily Examen is a prayerful reflection on the events of the day which might help us identify the movement of the Holy Spirit in those moments. Give it a try.

