



### **NINETEENTH SUNDAY IN ORDINARY TIME –YEAR A**

Imagine that you are out at sea and a storm is blowing in. Would you rather be on a large cargo ship, or a small yacht? It is the very stability of the cargo ship which makes it safer in a storm, but the stability makes it less easy to manoeuvre. With the yacht it is the opposite. Its manoeuvrability makes it less stable.

As human beings we are the most adaptable of all in nature, but also the most unstable. Until a few months ago, we, living in the Western world experienced an unprecedented stability in relation to our physical needs. However, this doesn't necessarily make us feel secure. And now, the Coronavirus has made us realise how insecure we all are at this time.

How can our faith help us during these times of instability, where we are feeling less secure? In the first reading from the Book of Kings (Kgs 19: 9, 11-13), the prophet Elijah, has just confronted the pagan Queen Jezebel and is fleeing for his life. After a forty-day journey he reaches Mount Horeb (also known as Mount Sinai) where he seeks refuge in a cave. As he stands at the entrance to the cave, an earthquake passes by, then a flood and then a great fire. All can be seen as images of the human person; nature at its least stable, with the greatest potential for destruction. When we listen for the voice of God, the greatest danger is that we listen to our own voice. Then, there comes the sound of a gentle breeze. Elijah, recognises the presence of God in the gentle breeze, and so uses the creative word of God for building up the people of Israel.

Similarly, in Matthew's gospel (Mt 14:22-33), with the storm raging against Peter and the disciples in their tiny boat, it is the voice of Jesus who speaks out against the destructive voice of humanity saying: "Courage! It is I! Do not be afraid!" Just as Elijah found the voice of God in the gentle breeze, so Peter hears that same God in the voice of Jesus reassuring him have faith.

**Peter, encouraged by the invitation of Jesus, begins walking on the lake but the destructive force of the storm makes him lose faith and he begins to sink. It is the destructive voices which overwhelm him, but Peter calls out for help. He knows that in moments of weakness, he needed to reach out to Christ.**

**Like Peter, we need to remember that the voices of destruction do not have the last say on our lives, and that unless we listen for the voice of God and step out in faith, then how can we know what we really believe unless our faith is tested?**

**Yet in the moment of testing or weakness, Jesus reaches out to us as we sink beneath the waves, raising us up to be with him. From our little faith, small boats on a violent sea, Jesus can calm our instability and fear, and allow us to establish the voice of his presence in our hearts.**

**[Fr Kelvin](#)**