

Faith that sees beyond the storm; Listen to Christ, look to Christ and lean on Christ:

Life is full of storms. We feel them on the outside: illness, unemployment, family tensions, economic hardship, violence, and the grief of losing someone we love. And we feel them on the inside: fear, anxiety, disappointment, guilt, and discouragement. This weekend's readings offer us a clear path through every storm with three simple invitations: Listen to Christ, look to Christ and lean on Christ.

The first reading introduces us to Elijah. After his courageous stand against idolatry, Queen Jezebel threatened to kill him. Fearful and exhausted, he fled to Mount Horeb and took refuge in a cave, hoping to encounter God. There, Elijah witnessed a powerful wind, an earthquake, and a blazing fire, but the Lord was in none of them. Instead, God revealed Himself in the sound of a gentle whisper. Elijah discovered that God's ways are often quiet, yet profoundly powerful.

Today, our phones, news and endless activity can easily drown out the voice of God. Yet God continues to speak. He speaks through Sacred Scripture, in the Eucharist, in prayer, and through the teaching of the Church. As Pope Benedict XVI reminds us, "Silence is capable of opening an inner space in our deepest selves, so that God can dwell there." Before we can trust God in the storm, we must first learn to hear His voice. Our first invitation is: listen to Christ.

The Gospel then takes us from a quiet mountain to a stormy sea. The Fathers of the Church describe the boat as a symbol of the Church and the sea as a symbol of the uncertainties of life. The strong winds trials that buffet us today: wars, secularism, family breakdown, loneliness, financial hardship, and growing indifference to God. At Jesus' invitation, Peter courageously steps out of the boat. As long as he keeps his eyes fixed on Jesus, he walks on the water. But the moment he shifts his attention to the wind and the waves, fear overtakes him, and he begins to sink. It is the same with us. When we focus on the problem more than on Jesus who is greater than the problem, we begin to sink. Faith does not remove every storm, but it gives us the strength to face them. St. John Chrysostom beautifully observed that "the sea was not calmed until Christ entered the boat." Peace comes not because we are strong, but because Christ is with us. Similarly, St. John Paul II challenged the Church and the world: "Do not be afraid. Open wide the doors to Christ!" When Christ becomes the focus of our lives, fear gradually gives way to trust. Thus, Our second invitation is: Look to Christ.

The second reading and the Gospel teach us what to do when we are weak. St. Paul knew what it was to pray with tears. Peter knew what it was to cry out, "Lord save me" Both remind us that faith does not mean never struggling; it means knowing where to turn in our struggles. The Gospel tells us that immediately Jesus stretched out His hand and caught Peter. That is how Christ continues to act in our lives today. He reaches out to us in the Eucharist, where He nourishes us with His Body and Blood. He reaches out in the Sacrament of Reconciliation, where He lifts the burden of our sins. He reaches out through the prayers of the Church, the love of our families, and the support of faithful friends.

A beautiful example of this trust is found in the life of St. Frances Xavier Cabrini. During one of her missionary voyages across the Atlantic, a violent storm terrified the passengers, many of whom feared the ship would sink. Mother Cabrini remained calm. She gathered her sisters to pray the Rosary and encouraged everyone on board to place their trust in Jesus. Her peaceful confidence inspired hope in those around her. The storm eventually passed, and the ship reached its destination safely. The storm did not disappear because of human strength but because frightened hearts learned to trust in God's providence. Faith does not always remove the storm, but it enables us to journey safely through it with Christ by our side. So our third invitation is: lean on Christ

Dear friends, every family experiences trials. Every parish faces challenges. But today's readings remind us that storms never have the final word—Christ does. When life becomes noisy, listen to Christ in

prayer. When fear begins to overwhelm you, look to Christ, with confidence. When your strength is exhausted, lean on Christ in the Eucharist, in the Sacrament of Reconciliation, and in His Church. Amen.