

19th Sunday per Annum - A
I Kings 19:9a, 11-13a;
Romans 9:1-5;
Matthew 14:22-33
Little Flower - 8/9/20

My Brothers and Sisters,

I have often said that we spend our whole lives trying to make sense of our lives. What this means is that we spend our whole lives searching for God. However, most of us make the mistake of wanting and looking for a dramatic sign of God's presence, power, and activity that would make faith or belief easy.

Today's first reading offers us a profound insight into where God is to be found. At the mountain of God, Horeb, God was not to be found in the strong and heavy wind or in the earthquake or in the fire. "*After the fire there was a tiny whispering sound,*" and it was in the tiny whispering sound that God was found. Perhaps we need to change the very familiar words of the song from "looking for love in all the wrong places" to "looking for God in all the wrong places."

Where do we find the tiny whispering sound in which we find God? We find God, first of all, in the very human Jesus. "*The Word became flesh and lived among us*" [Jn. 1:14]. As the angels announced to the shepherds, "*this will be a sign for you: you will find an infant wrapped in swaddling clothes and lying in a manger*" [Lk. 2:12].

During Jesus' ministry, people often asked Jesus for a sign. Like us, the signs they were looking for were dramatic signs. The Gospels tell us that the Pharisees asked for a sign from heaven in order to test him. Even when Jesus was being crucified, they promised to believe in him if he came down from the cross.

Where do we find the tiny whispering sound in which we find God and Jesus today? Today we find God and Jesus in his Word. The Scriptures, which we read in our homes, proclaim in our Liturgies, and study in our Bible Study and Faith Sharing groups, are ordinary human words that have become the Word of God. God is also to be found in the simple words of our prayers, especially the Lord's Prayer. In human relationships, God is to be found in softly spoken words of affirmation, thanksgiving, forgiveness, need, and love.

Today we find God and Jesus in the sacraments of our Church. Ordinary human words and simple elements are at the heart of each of the sacraments. In the Eucharist, for example, through the words of consecration, a little bread and a little wine become the very Body and Blood of Christ. God and Jesus are also to be found in the simple gifts we give to those in need, for example, canned goods on Thanksgiving Day and the Giving Tree gifts at Christmas.

My brothers and sisters, today we also find God and Jesus in human experience and human relationships. In Matthew's Gospel, Jesus promised, "*Where two or three are gathered in my name, there am I in their midst*" [18:20]. At the Last Supper, Jesus promised to send his Holy Spirit to live within us. According to the Second Vatican Council, conscience is the most secret core and sanctuary of a person where we are alone with God.

Finally, God and Jesus are to be found especially in the heights and depths of our human experience. In today's Gospel, for example, on a stormy night, Jesus was present to his apostles in their fear and terror. Sometimes our most profound experiences of God and Jesus are when we feel most alone and surrounded by darkness. However, St. John's First Letter is also a powerful reminder that because God is love, wherever there is love, there is God. Therefore, some of our most profound experiences of God and Jesus are when we feel most connected with others and surrounded by light.