

CONNECT! SUNDAY REFLECTION

19th Sunday in Ordinary Time | For Sunday, August 9, 2020

A Whispered Invitation

Written by Angie Windnagle

1 Kings 19:9A, 11-13A

Romans 9:1-5

Matthew 14:22-33



This week in our home, I told my husband we need to work on using softer voices, so our four kids have to be quieter in order to hear us. It was an effort to gently work with them on their magnanimous yet boisterous voices, in order to bring a little more peace and calm to the house. Having four children is literally the most fun I've had in my life, but it comes with plenty of crosses, like trying to teach a toddler what the word whisper means. The problem is working with young minds that don't grasp the need for silence quite yet. It's something we have to curate and create in the space of our home so they can grow to understand its value.

As I've been reflecting on the state of our nation in the past weeks, I often sense that as adults we've sometimes been reverting to these same behaviors as we work out the stress of the state of the world we now live in. The loudest voices draw the most attention, even if they lack true charity or wisdom.

I find the readings this weekend so providential for this reason. The message for us is clear: God does not operate in chaos. His movement and healing can only take place in the context of a heart of faith and a willingness to find him in the whispers and the small hidden stuff.

Elijah is our first example of this disposition of heart. As he's sheltering in a cave, God literally speaks to him to let him know that He will be visiting him so Elijah can be on the lookout. The magnificent signs that most people would feel certain are from God are simply minor distractions. Elijah knows the Lord. He isn't seduced by earthquakes and fire, yet when he hears a whisper, he knows it is God. Knowing someone enough to recognize their voice in a whisper is the level of intimacy Christ calls us to today.

That intimacy is lived out in the example of Peter in the Gospel this weekend. Much like Elijah, the apostles are given two contrasting moments on which to fix their attention — the wind and waves or the peaceful presence of Christ. When Jesus comes to them, Peter sees the hidden presence of God, like Elijah in the whisper. Peter makes his first act of faith when he says “Lord, if it is you, command me to come to you.” The Catechism reminds us of this when it teaches that “man is in search of God” but it is “God [who] calls man first” ([Catechism of the Catholic Church 2566-2567](#)). It is only after responding to the first call of Christ hidden in his simple presence that Peter is able to respond to the even greater grace of walking on water towards him.

Something that I've often reflected on is the fact that even though he may be filled with fear, Peter is the only apostle to actually get out of the boat. That takes massive faith. When he starts to sink, Jesus' response that he has little faith reminds me of the parable of the mustard seed. Having a little faith is often a big thing. That small act of faith, though imperfect, prepared Peter for his future calling as the head of the Church on earth. Again, by responding to Christ in the small moments, Peter is prepared for a greater destiny.

In many ways God is calling to us today, like Peter, to respond to His presence. The winds and waves come to us in the form of politics, riots, and disease. Yet they remain the big and loud things seeking to get our attention. Underneath it all God is speaking in a whisper, still inviting each one of us to recognize Him amidst the trials and have just a tiny bit of faith to come to Him. The challenge for us today is to quiet our hearts enough to hear this and respond. For me, this looks like deleting social media apps and immersing myself in Scripture. For others, it may mean turning off the news for a set time each day and opening the Catechism. The important thing is that we recognize that God has already revealed to us in Scripture how he comes to us: through silence, in poverty, and in unexpected ways that are not the ways of the world. Let's take back the parts of our hearts we've given away in our worry and anger and turn back to God. He has already invited us and is saying again this weekend, “come.”

Angie Windnagle

PRAYER

Take, Lord, and receive all my liberty,
my memory, my understanding,
and my entire will,
all that I have and possess.
You have given it all to me;
to you, Lord, I return it.
Everything is yours;
dispose of it according to your will.
Give me only your love and your grace.
That is enough for me.
Amen.

[-Prayer of St. Ignatius](#)