

ENTRANCE ANTIPHON (or a hymn) Look to your covenant, O Lord, and forget not the life of your poor ones for ever. Arise, O God, and defend your cause, and forget not the cries of those who seek you.

RESPONSORIAL PSALM (Ps 84)

ANTIPHON: Lord, show us your mercy and love, and grant us your salvation.

RESPONSE: Lord, show us your mercy and love, and grant us your salvation.

LECTOR: I will hear what the Lord God has to say, a voice that speaks of peace. His help is near for those who fear him and his glory will dwell in our land. **R.**

LECTOR: Mercy and faithfulness have met; justice and peace have embraced. Faithfulness shall spring from the earth and justice look down from heaven. **R.**

LECTOR: The Lord will make us prosper and our earth shall yield its fruit. Justice shall march before him and peace shall follow his steps. **R.**

GOSPEL ACCLAMATION Alleluia, alleluia! I hope in the Lord, I trust in his word.

COMMUNION ANTIPHON (or a hymn) O Jerusalem, glorify the Lord, who gives you your fill of finest wheat.

Or

The bread that I will give, says the Lord, is my flesh for the life of the world.

TODAY'S READINGS 1 Kings 19:9, 11-13; Romans 9:1-5; Matthew 14:22-33

NEXT WEEK (20th Sunday of Year A) Isaiah 56:1,6-7; Psalm 66; Romans 11:13-15, 29-32; Matthew 15:21-28

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Where is God?



13 August 2023 19th Sunday Year A

We are told in the Catechism that “God is everywhere”. However, the question of how God reveals the divine presence to each of us – how God becomes real for us, or speaks to us – is not so simple. In today’s first reading, the prophet Elijah is told to go to the mountain so he will see the Lord passing by. However, Elijah only experiences earthquake, wind and fire which do not reveal the Lord to him.

Then, after this failure to see or find God, Elijah experiences the presence of the Lord in the “still small voice of a gentle breeze”. This voice of God, which Elijah hears in his heart and soul, calls on him to set out from the mountain to become the Lord’s spokesperson. Elijah sets out and meets Elisha who becomes his fellow disciple in promoting the Lord’s covenant with the people of Israel.

In today’s gospel story, Peter comes to believe in Jesus as ‘the Son of God’ through the experience of almost drowning. Like so many of us, Peter is a person of ‘little faith’ who meets the God of Jesus in a situation of distress. Peter is fishing when he sees a ‘ghost’ walking towards him on the water. But the ghost turns out to be Jesus telling the disciples not to be afraid.

So, Peter, following Jesus’ invitation to come to him across the water, begins to do so before the winds arrive and he begins to sink, crying out “Lord, save me!”

Jesus stretches out his hands to catch Peter before chastising him: “O you of little faith,

why did you doubt?”

Peter and the disciples then cry out together: “Truly you are the Son of God”.

The question then becomes, how God speaks to us in our daily lives? As with Elijah and Peter, we may find ourselves searching for the voice of God in the wrong places, or without sufficient trust. Moreover, it is especially when we are in situations of challenge and distress that the Lord may pierce our defences to tell us not to be afraid, but to believe in his divine forgiveness, love and mercy.

Our contemporary secular culture has been described as a culture where ‘God has gone missing’. So many people appear to be able to live without any notion of God. But we should not think this is a particularly modern issue. The prophet Isaiah speaks of “a God who lies hidden” (45:12); for St Paul, Christ is “the image of the unseen God” (Col. 1:15). Indeed, St Augustine tells us “if we think we understand God, it is not God we understand”.

So, we are left with the paradox that, while ‘God is everywhere’ – present in every created reality – this God is always present as Mystery. There is no human experience from which God is absent. Yet, our faith is constantly tested, like Elijah and Peter, that we may find the God of Jesus Christ in places we may least expect.

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