

CELEBRATE SABBATH

Nineteenth Sunday in Ordinary Time

Sometimes, being still is the best thing you can do for yourself because being still brings peace and serenity.

1 Kings 19:9a, 11-13

Elijah became desperate, disturbed by the evil designs of Jezebel and the weakness of Ahab, king of Israel. Threatened by Jezebel, he fled to the desert and prayed for death and said to the Lord, “this is enough...take my life...I am no better than my fathers”. He came to a point where he saw no direction and no escape from his struggles. He cried his pains and frustrations and hunger and was fed by God. He became strong in his trust and continued his journey and persevered in his efforts to fulfill his prophetic mission.

Elijah came to a cave on Horeb and took shelter. This excerpt tells us that the Lord asked him to go outside and stand on the mountain and wait for him. Elijah was used to the visits of the Lord in extraordinary events of nature. He looked for God in the strong wind, earthquake and fire and failed to find God. Finally, he found God and heard his voice in a gentle whispering sound.

Elijah had to learn to listen to the gentle voice from inside and trust that voice. Learn to listen to your heart.

The Lord’s voice comes to us through many unexpected and surprising events and experiences. Wait for the Lord...wait with courage...listen to his voice!

Psalms 85

The long journey home from Babylon to Zion was an important part of Israel’s history. God had forgiven them and brought them back home. The Psalmist says, God has not just brought them home from exile, but has now rehabilitated them. He tells them that they are listening to wrong voices and calls them to listen to the voice of God. God speaks peace to His people, not anger or hatred. God’s *hesed* and *emet*, His love and faithfulness have embraced. His love and fidelity have become one...they have fused into one. He cannot but love.

Discovering the unfailing, steadfast nature of Covenant love gave the returnees of exile the confidence they needed. They could now sing and shout: Faithfulness will spring from the ground...the Lord will give what is good...earth will yield”.

**I will hear what God proclaims;
The Lord – for he proclaims peace.
Near indeed is his salvation for those who fear him,
Glory dwelling in our land.**

Romans 9:1-5

Paul makes bold claims that he spoke the truth about Jesus as the Messiah and invited all to accept Jesus as their savior and Lord. The fact that many did not recognize Jesus as their savior was for Paul a constant grief and pain in his heart for the Christian community. He affirmed that he was willing to die for them; that he would even be parted from Christ if it would help them. He loved his community and was willing to sacrifice himself for them.

Be generous and be prepared to make the necessary sacrifices in fulfillment of God's plan for you.

Mathew 14:22-33

After feeding five thousand with five loaves and a couple of fish, Jesus withdrew to the mountain alone for prayer. He sent the disciples ahead of him to the other side of the lake and they had to face strong headwinds. Jesus came to them on the troubled waters.

The Lord reaches out to us when we are in troubled waters and are facing strong headwinds. Be confident....stand strong....hold your heads high!

The disciples were so frightened that they did not recognize the Lord reaching out to them. **Fear has a way of blinding our eyes while simple faith opens our eyes.**

Peter saw his master and wanted to walk across to him over the troubled waters and he did, at the word of his master. Then Peter lost his focus, saw how headstrong the wind was, became frightened, lost his strength, and began to sink into the deep water!

Even as he began to sink, Peter cried out, "Lord, save me". And the Lord heard his cry and pulled him to a safe place. With Jesus in the boat, they found new strength and courage. **In Jesus there is hope for the hopeless!**

Faith gives us a new vision...a vision of strength, of the presence of something and of someone far greater than ourselves in whom we can put our trust and face what must be faced..... Stay focused! Keep your eyes on the Lord and his strength!

Saint of the Day, August 9 – St. Edith Stein and 20 other saints are remembered this day.

Edith was born on October 12, 1891 in Breslau (now Wrocław, Poland), into an observant Jewish family. She was the youngest of 11 children and was born on Yom Kippur, the holiest day of the Hebrew calendar. When she was 14 years old, she abandoned her faith in God and became an atheist.

She had a brilliant mind, went to college, and eventually earned a doctorate in Philosophy under the famous philosopher Edmund Husserl. In 1917, she visited a Jewish friend who converted to Christianity as a Protestant. After this visit, she started to read Christian literature, including the New Testament and St. Ignatius of Loyola's writings. She read the autobiography Saint Teresa of Avila and found God again. On January 1, 1922, Edith was baptized. She wanted to become a Carmelite nun immediately; however, her spiritual advisors persuaded her against it. For nine years she taught school, and in this experience, she recognized that God wanted her in the world to carry His divine life into it.

In 1933, she had to leave her teaching position, as the Nazis forbid Jews from teaching. Edith sought admittance into the Carmelite Order and was accepted. She took the name Sister Teresa Benedicta of the Cross. Sr. Teresa never forgot her Jewish roots and she continually prayed to God on behalf of the Jewish people and thanked Him for his greatness and mercy. On August 2, 1942, the German Gestapo arrested Sr. Teresa along with more than 200 other Jewish converts. On August 9, 1942 Sr. Teresa and many others were killed in the gas chamber inside the concentration camp at Auschwitz. She was canonized on October 11, 1998 by Pope John Paul II.

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