**19th SUNDAY IN ORDINARY TIME [10th August, 2014]**

READINGS: 1 Kings 19:9, 11-13 / Romans 9:1-5/ Matthew 14:22-33

THEME: “BE STILL, AND KNOW THAT I AM GOD” (Ps. 46:10).

By Very Rev. Fr. John Louis ([http://frlouis.com](http://frlouis.com/))

In the midst of troubles and trials, can we remain calm? Yes, we can if we know that there is someone around who has control of the troubling situation. Today, the Lord God reminds us that He is Almighty and All-powerful, and so He has control over whatever may trouble us. In the midst of our troubles, He assures: “Be still, and know that I am God” (Ps. 46:10).

According to the first reading, the prophet Elijah experienced a great stormy wind and a powerful earthquake, and he saw a raging fire at the mountain of the Lord God (*cf*. 1 Kgs. 19:11-13). God was, however, **not in** the storm, earthquake or fire. Rather the calming voice of God was heard by the prophet Elijah at the end of the troubling activities of these elements. This means that however terrifying the storm, earthquake and fire were, God was in control of them. This was the faith of the prophet, and so he remained calm and experienced God’s all-powerful protection!

The great stormy wind, powerful earthquake and the raging fire in the first reading are symbolic of the various troubles and trials we experience in our daily lives. In the first place, the stormy wind is invisible and yet powerful and destructive. It could therefore represent an (invisible) evil spirit that troubles us. But God is not only more powerful than any evil spirit, He is indeed All-powerful! So, like Elijah, let us trust in God’s powerful protection and deliverance should any evil trouble us. In other words, let us be still and know that He is God!

Secondly, an earthquake shakes and breaks the ground and other things along its path. Therefore, anything (e.g. disappointment, divorce, loss of a dear one, etc.) that shakes or breaks our life to its very foundation could be seen as a spiritual earthquake. This notwithstanding, as the prophet realized, God was not in the earthquake; He was above it. He is in control of it! Let us, therefore, trust in the redeeming hand of God whenever we experience a spiritual earthquake.

Thirdly, fire has a burning effect. Thus, the “burning” of our life-time savings (e.g. business) or achievements, or any experience (e.g. sickness) that causes us pains could be seen as a troubling spiritual fire. But God-the-Living-Water can quench every troubling fire! All we need to do is to be still and know that He is God!

Furthermore, however, powerful the storm, earthquake and fire were, Elijah did not consider them as divine; for in each case, he said **God was not in it**. Unfortunately, in the history of humankind, some people have attributed supernatural powers to certain elements of creation, e.g. rivers, lakes, forests, etc. Beloved, Elijah’s story reminds us that **God is the Creator of all these things; they are only works of His hands and not gods**!

In the gospel reading, St. Peter and the other disciples were likewise threatened by a stormy weather of the sea. However, in the midst of their trouble they, unlike Elijah, could not calmly trust in the Lord. They were rather afraid. Fear had so blurred their vision that, instead of seeing the Lord (they had known) walking on the sea as the Master of the stormy sea, they saw Him as a ghost (Mt. 14:26). This is what happens when our troubles create fear in us. Thus, Jesus told them: “it is I; have no fear” (Mt. 14:27).

Beloved, let us therefore not focus on or brood over our troubles; rather, let us focus on Jesus who has power and control over them. Consider this: as long as St. Peter focused on the Lord, he was able to walk on the water, but immediately he looked again at the frightening storm he began to sink, until he turned to the Lord again, saying: “Lord, save me” (Mt. 14:30)! Once again, beloved, in the midst of our troubles let us not brood over them (for then they will appear bigger and bigger like a growing storm); let us rather focus on the Lord with trustful prayers and we shall be saved! Amen!