

## 9 August 2020 - Homily - 1 Kings 19: 9-13 - Matthew 14: 22-33

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In today's gospel reading Jesus, right after he feeds the 5000, tells his disciples to cross over to the other side into Gentile territory. Jesus in the meantime goes up on a mountain to pray by himself. This is a great example that Jesus sets for us. We need communal prayer with others, such as at a mass and periods of silent personal prayer in contact with nature.

Biblically most of the time, God can be encountered on a mountain. Mount Sinai/Horeb the mountain where Moses encounter God/Yahweh. Elijah escapes from Israel and reaches the foot of mount Horeb and hides in a cave. God asks Elijah: "What are you doing *here*, Elijah?" This implies that Elijah is not where he is supposed to be, he is to be in Israel. Elijah complains that he has been faithful while the people of Israel have not; the people used violence against Yahweh's liturgy; he feels isolated and in danger and no longer calls himself a prophet. In response God commands Elijah to climb mount Horeb and stand before Him. After the command the three traditional manifestations of divine presence appear: wind, earthquake, fire. Then great silence. Elijah obeyed God's command, veils his face, but he is not on the mountain nor in the right posture of being before God. What are you doing *here*, Elijah? repeats. Elijah gives minimal effort and therefore only completes one of the three commands that God entrusts him with, the investiture of his successor; Elisha. Elisha completes what Elijah did not.

In the gospel we see the wind, as in Elijah, which represent the hostile forces of the world. Jesus walking on water represent an OT teaching that the messiah overcomes the waves of death. Peter also wants to overcome the waves of death and feels confident to do it as long as Jesus is there. Peter's desire to walk on water represents the early church as being bold and stepping out into the unknown, yet vulnerable. The sea Biblically is understood from where the beasts and demons come from. It is dark, never ending, can't see the bottom, the abyss, chaotic, stealer of souls, uncontrollable, unpredictable. Peter manages to walk upon the chaos as long as he keeps his gaze on Christ. Once fear and doubt enter into his mind, he starts to sink. The weight of the trouble of the world makes Peter sink. The goal is to walk on water while carrying the heavy cross on your back. Jesus rescues Peter by fishing him out of the water. Prevents him from sinking into depression and despair.