

Nineteenth Sunday in ordinary Time

One day a little girl went up to her mother and said, "Mommy I have a stomachache!" Her mother replied, "That's because it's empty dear, you have to put something into it." Later that night when they had the pastor over for dinner he said, "I have a headache!" The little girl smiled and replied, "That's because it's empty you have to put something into it!"

Dear Friends,

We all must have played hide and seek game in our childhood. I have seen kids even play the game. There are good and bad elements in that. Imagine that God plays this game.

Today's readings tell us that God strengthens us when we are in a low state. Both the first reading and the Gospel highlight that God helps us in our helplessness.

In the first reading, prophet Elijah was afraid, because Queen Jezebel sent murderous men to kill him for disproving the idol God Baal and brining the true worship to people of Israel. He was looking for salvage from God. Elijah, sustained by food provided by God through an angel, fled for forty days and nights. He finally reached Horeb, the mountain where God had earlier established His covenant with Israel under Moses. Elijah might have expected a spectacular miracle from God to protect and vindicate him, or an appearance of God with great power in thunder and lightning to bolster his Faith, like the one Moses had been granted on that very spot ([Exodus 19:16-19](#)). But God came to rescue him in a whispering sound. He was consoled, comforted, and strengthened.

In the gospel, Mathew narrates the event elaborately than other Gospels. When Jesus walked on the sea, the disciples were terrified and shouted in fear. God revealed his divinity through Jesus telling, "It is I. take courage. Do not be afraid." The same message has been told after Jesus' resurrection. To take the fear out, Jesus did two things. He calmed the storm and he held the hands of Peter.

Today the apostles and Peter as individual teach us to reach out to God in our helplessness who will calm us in mysterious ways. St. Dorothy Day's life tells us the same thing. In her helplessness, she went to the national shrine of Immaculate conception church in Washington. Her prayer that day was one of utter helplessness. She said to God: "I've given up a lot for you, and you haven't done anything for me! I am lost, alone, unsure of what to do, and running out of energy and patience. I need help—need it now, not in some distant future! Help me! Help me now! I can't go on like this!" We know the rest of the story.

Like Elijah, we can miss God's presence by limiting our experience of Him to certain places and persons and forgetting that He is everywhere. The first reading reminds us that we have to experience God's presence in our lives and listen carefully to everything going on around us because we encounter God in insignificant, as well as spectacular events. Failure, as well as success, offers us the opportunity for growth in trusting Faith in a loving and providing God.

God is manifest himself in hidden and mysterious ways. He never abandons anyone. He helps us during confusion and danger. We need to trust in him.

Questions for Reflections:

1. Do I recognize God's presence in my midst every day?
2. Have I felt the time of helplessness in my life? Where did I go?
3. How many times have I recognized God's intervention in my life?