

## NINETEENTH SUNDAY-CYCLE A

Theologian Father Alfred McBride wrote: “People fear love because it requires them to be open and vulnerable. It demands a passion, a fire and a commitment. This makes people (fearful), whereas joyful abandonment is to be preferred to the cautious, timid commitment of ourselves to God.”

Given this seeming primacy of fear in human life and sometimes our relationship with Jesus Himself, it is no surprise that throughout the Bible we often hear the refrain, “Do not be afraid,” as we did today from the lips of our Savior.

Today’s Gospel graphically illustrates our experience of that “sinking feeling” we have when we suddenly realize we are not in control. We sometimes feel we are drowning in an ocean of fears. We can wonder, “Where is Jesus *now* that I really need Him?”

Our Mass today affirms the need to look for Jesus in the quiet times, as well as the more stormy times. Dramatic moments in our liturgical life as Catholics, such as the lighting of the new fire at the Easter Vigil; the unveiling of the cross on Good Friday, are thrilling. But, it is in a moment of sublime quiet that our Eucharistic encounter with the Lord Jesus reaches its climax.

In the most intense and still moment of the Mass, the priest speaks the words of Christ...*This is My Body...This is My Blood...Do this in memory of Me.* Jesus Christ is, right *here*; right *now*!

No sooner do the terrified Apostles cry out in fear than Jesus at once tells them, "Take courage; it is I; do not be afraid." St. Peter lets fear, not love, determine his response. As he starts to sink beneath the waves he cries out, "Lord, save me!" And, Jesus responds immediately to his plea.

Yes, Jesus Christ comes again and again in the Holy Eucharist to free us from fear, to respond to our cry, "Lord, save me!", to catch us by the hand, to bring our little boat back into calm waters, to call us to love.

Take time now, at this Mass, to be still. Let the noise and the storms of your week and life fade away in the quiet solemnity that the Mass offers us. Let us listen. Listen, like Elijah and like the Apostles did, for the message of Christ's love that we can hear in the quiet of our hearts. God, may it be so!