

Suggested Opening Song: Love Divine, All Loves Excelling, #155

How often do we cry out to God, wondering if we will be heard? How often do we look in vain for our Lord in the world? Well, we're not the only ones. In today's first reading, Elijah expected to sense the divine presence in strong winds, earthquakes, or fire, but God was not in any of them. In the Gospel, the disciples fail to recognize Jesus during a violent storm as he walks toward them across the churning waters. Let us take a moment and realize that God is with us right here and now as we worship together. God is with us whenever we celebrate the Mass. God is with us when we receive Christ in the Eucharist. We may not always be aware of it, but God is always near.

As we gather let us begin our service by professing what we believe.

Profession of Faith p. 142

I believe in one God, the Father almighty, maker of heaven and earth, of all things visible and invisible. I believe in one Lord Jesus Christ, the Only Begotten Son of God, born of the Father before all ages. God from God, Light from Light, true God from true God, begotten, not made, consubstantial with the Father; through him all things were made. For us men and for our salvation he came down from heaven, (bow as we say) and by the Holy Spirit he was incarnate of the Virgin Mary, and became man. For our sake he was crucified under Pontius Pilate, he suffered death and was buried, and rose again on the third day in accordance with the Scriptures. He ascended into heaven and is seated at the right hand of the Father. He will come again in glory to judge the living and the dead and his kingdom will have no end. I believe in the Holy Spirit, the Lord, the giver of life, who proceeds from the Father and the Son, who with the Father and the Son is adored and glorified, who has spoken through the prophets. I believe in one, holy, catholic and apostolic Church. I confess one Baptism for the forgiveness of sins and I look forward to the resurrection of the dead and the life of the world to come. Amen.

Introductory Rite:

Greeting:

In the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit. **Amen.**

Grace and peace to you from God our Father and from the Lord Jesus Christ.

Blessed be God forever. **Blessed be God forever.**

Penitential Rite: p. 10

Brothers and sisters, let us acknowledge our sins, and so prepare ourselves to participate in this sacred celebration.

I confess to almighty God and to you, my brothers and sisters, that I have greatly sinned, in my thoughts and in my words, in what I have done and in what I have failed to do, through my fault, through my fault, through my most grievous fault; therefore I ask blessed Mary ever-Virgin, all the Angels and Saints, and you, my brothers and sisters, to pray for me to the Lord our God.

May almighty God have mercy on us, forgive us our sins, and bring us to everlasting life. **Amen**

Opening Prayer:

Almighty and ever-living God, whom, taught by the Holy Spirit, we dare to call our Father, bring, we pray, to perfection in our hearts the spirit of adoption as your sons and daughters, that we may merit to enter into the inheritance which you have promised.

Through our Lord Jesus Christ, your Son, who lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit, God, for ever and ever. **Amen.**

Liturgy of the Word:

First Reading p. 60

A reading from the Book of First Kings

1 Kings 19:9A, 11-13A

At the mountain of God, Horeb, Elijah came to a cave where he took shelter. Then the LORD said to him, "Go outside and stand on the mountain before the LORD; the LORD will be passing by." A strong and heavy wind was rending the mountains and crushing rocks before the LORD—but the LORD was not in the wind. After the wind there was an earthquake—but the LORD was not in the earthquake. After the earthquake there was fire—but the LORD was not in the fire. After the fire there was a tiny whispering sound. When he heard this, Elijah hid his face in his cloak and went and stood at the entrance of the cave.

The word of the Lord.

Thanks be to God

Responsorial Psalm

Psalm 85 :9,10,11-12,13-14

R/. Lord, let us see your kindness, and grant us your salvation.

R/. Lord, let us see your kindness, and grant us your salvation.

I will hear what God proclaims; the LORD — for he proclaims peace. Near indeed is his salvation to those who fear him, glory dwelling in our land. **R/.**

Kindness and truth shall meet; justice and peace shall kiss. Truth shall spring out of the earth, and justice shall look down from heaven. **R/.**

The LORD himself will give his benefits; our land shall yield its increase. Justice shall walk before him, and prepare the way of his steps. **R/.**

Second Reading

A reading from the Letter of Saint Paul to the Romans

Romans 9: 1-5

Brothers and sisters: I speak the truth in Christ, I do not lie; my conscience joins with the Holy Spirit in bearing me witness that I have great sorrow and constant anguish in my heart. For I could wish that I myself were accursed and cut off from Christ for the sake of my own people, my kindred according to the flesh. They are Israelites; theirs the adoption, the glory, the covenants, the giving of the law, the worship, and the promises; theirs the patriarchs, and from them, according to the flesh, is the Christ, who is over all, God blessed forever. Amen.

The word of the Lord.

Thanks be to God.

Gospel

A reading from the holy Gospel according to Matthew

Matthew 14:22-33

Glory to you, Lord

After he had fed the people, Jesus made the disciples get into a boat and precede him to the other side, while he dismissed the crowds. After doing so, he went up on the mountain by himself to pray. When it was evening he was there alone. Meanwhile the boat, already a few miles offshore, was being tossed about by the waves, for the wind was against it. During the fourth watch of the night, he came toward them walking on the sea. When the disciples saw him walking on the sea they were terrified. "It is a ghost," they said, and they cried out in fear. At once Jesus spoke to them, "Take courage, it is I; do not be afraid." Peter said to him in reply, "Lord, if it is you, command me to come to you on the water." He said, "Come." Peter got out of the boat and began to walk on the water toward Jesus. But when he saw how strong the wind was he became frightened; and, beginning to sink, he cried out, "Lord, save me!" Immediately Jesus stretched out his hand and caught Peter, and said to him, "O you of little faith, why did you doubt?" After they got into the boat, the wind died down. Those who were in the boat did him homage, saying, "Truly, you are the Son of God."

The Gospel of the Lord.

Praise to you, Lord Jesus Christ.

Reflection on the Word:

- Storms, fires, and earthquakes were often thought of as divine manifestations; even today we may refer to a natural disaster as an act of God. Therefore, it's hard to imagine that Elijah did not venture to the opening of the cave to look for God in the heavy wind, the earthquake, or the fire, especially after he had been told, "Go outside . . . the LORD will be passing by" (1 Kings 19:11). But he waited patiently until he heard a tiny whispering sound. Standing at the entrance of the cave, he then hears the LORD's voice. (This occurs immediately after the end of today's first reading.) May the wisdom of the prophet provide a lesson for us as well. We may wait in vain for a big event to hear God's voice, expecting to recognize it during the trauma of the moment. But like the compassionate souls reaching out to rescue and aid a storm's survivors, our God can often be found in the quiet moments and days as we recover from life's storms.
- Paul's heart broke when he considered that most of his own people—the Chosen People—could not see Jesus as the Messiah. But up until his journey to Damas-cus, he too was in that state. In fact, he was dedicated to persecuting those, like Stephen, who saw Jesus as the Christ. He feels the anguish so deeply because he regrets the actions of his old self so deeply. Seeing through eyes of faith can challenge us, for we cannot return to our old imperfect way of seeing things.
- Fear is a great threat to faith in the Bible, from the Chosen People's fear of starvation in the desert to Peter's fear while walking on the water in today's Gospel. It is no wonder that whenever an angel visits, the first words out of their mouth are, "Do not be afraid." Overcoming fear, as Abraham did when bringing Isaac up the mountain, or David in facing Goliath, takes faith. Peter fails on this count today. His "little faith" leads to doubt, which allows his fear to overtake him (Matthew 14:31). Peter is literally drowning in fear. Faith allows us to walk above our fears.

Question of the Week

When has my faith helped me to cope with my fears or overcome them?

Prayer of the Faithful:

Trusting that the Lord is with us in times of turmoil and storms, we bring to mind our needs and the needs of those around us as we call upon God to calm our anxious hearts.

- For the Church, that by stretching out our hands to assist those who are struggling to weather the storms in their lives, we may strengthen both their faith and ours in a merciful and compassionate God, let us pray to the Lord. **Lord, hear our prayer.**
- For refugees fleeing war, danger, and adversity, who have had to battle trials and storms to reach a land of promise, let us pray to the Lord. **Lord, hear our prayer.**
- That we may work toward building a world where using nuclear weapons is unimaginable and that the peace the Lord proclaims may be achieved without fearful threats of mutual destruction, let us pray to the Lord. **Lord, hear our prayer.**
- That kindness and truth shall meet and that justice and peace shall kiss as we respond to Jesus' call by courageously giving witness to our faith, let us pray to the Lord. **Lord, hear our prayer.**
- For those whose lives have been upended by dangerous storms, fires, and earthquakes, that they may find promise and hope in the compassion and assistance of those who come to their aid, let us pray to the Lord. **Lord, hear our prayer.**

- For what else should we pray? Let us pray to the Lord. **Lord, hear our prayer.**
- For all the prayers that we hold in the silence of our hearts; for all our intentions spoken and unspoken, let us pray to the Lord. **Lord, hear our prayer.**

Lord our God, you are the source of kindness and truth, of justice and peace. May our tenacious pursuit of these virtues lead back to you, revealing your grace for all to see. We ask this as we do all good things, through your Son, our Lord Jesus Christ.

Communion Rite

The Lord's Prayer: p. 176

Let us pray with confidence to the Father in the words our Savior gave us.

Our Father, who art in heaven, hallowed be thy name; thy kingdom come, thy will be done on earth as it is in heaven. Give us this day our daily bread, and forgive us our trespasses, as we forgive those who trespass against us; and lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from evil.

Rite of Peace:

The sign of peace outwardly expresses a deep spiritual reality; through this sign we acknowledge Christ's presence in each other and share the peace we have received from Him. Let us offer each other the sign of peace.

Communion:

Behold the Lamb of God, behold him who takes away the sins of the world. Blessed are those called to the supper of the Lamb.

Lord, I am not worthy that you should enter under my roof, but only say the word and my soul shall be healed.

The body of Christ. **Amen.**

Prayer after Communion:

May the communion in your Sacrament that we have consumed, save us, O Lord, and confirm us in the light of your truth.

Through Christ our Lord. **Amen.**

Concluding Rite:

Final Blessing:

May the Lord bless us,  protect us from all evil and lead us to everlasting life. **Amen**

Go in peace! **Thanks be to God.**

Suggested Closing Song: We Walk By Faith, #212