

HOMILY 19TH SUN OT YRA 2017

I am going to do something a little different today during the homily. We are going to pray a form of prayer called *lecio divina*. It is praying with something that is written. Today we are going to use Sacred Scripture, the Gospel. *Lecio divina* is using your imagination to put yourself in the Scripture passage, to go beyond the words that are written, and to discern what God is telling you through the passage. It does not matter so much what scripture scholars say the passage means, it is how it speaks to you. I am going to guide you through that today, but you can do it yourself with any Scripture passage. Right now I am going to read the Gospel passage, retell the story in my own words, and then ask some questions. If you hear something that resonates with you stay with that in prayer and block out what I am saying. I will then give you a couple of minutes of quiet prayer. So, relax, close your eyes, put your feet flat on the floor and your hands in your lap. Relax your arms and legs, relax your neck, unclench your jaw, relax and listen. [Read the Gospel].

Just yesterday we watched as Jesus fed 5 thousand people with five loaves and 2 fish. I was there. I saw it happen. I helped collect the leftovers. How did that happen? Was it just a coincidence? Was it Jesus that did it? If so, how did he do it? And then Jesus made us get into this boat and cross the Sea of Galilee while he goes off by himself to pray. We had quite a lively discussion. We have so many questions and none of us know the answers. Where is Jesus and why isn't he explaining it to us? I have to admit, much of the time I don't understand what Jesus is talking about. But for some reason, I have to stay with him.

Everyone is quiet now. Man its dark! There are no stars in the sky, no moon. It must be very cloudy. I can't see my hand in front of my face. And the water is getting pretty rough though. We are really being tossed about. I better move someplace where I can hold on or I am going to get thrown overboard, but I cannot see anything. The wind is picking up. I have to hang on. I have to stay in the

boat. Oh, I found the side. I can hang on to the side. It is really getting windy. Oh no, it's starting to rain. The rain drops are slapping me in the face. I am really getting cold! I am afraid I am going to drown. What's that up ahead? There is a figure that seems to be walking on the water. It is kind of glowing, so I can see it, but not very well. This is not a human being. No human being could do that. Someone screams: "It is a ghost!" I have never seen a ghost, but this must be what they look like. How it glows. How it hovers about the water. I am not sure if I am more afraid of drowning or more afraid of the ghost. Then I hear a voice say: "Take courage, it is I, do not be afraid." That sounds like Jesus. He is always saying that to us: "do not be afraid." But I am not sure it is him.

Now Peter is talking: "Lord, if it is you. Command me to come to you on the water." Peter must think that it is Jesus! Then the man says "Come." Peter is getting out of the boat. What is he nuts? He is sure to drown. But now he is walking on the water too. What is going on here? Is this Jesus? Is Jesus making all of this happen? Whoa, Peter just sunk into the water! Why did he get out of the boat? He is done for now. He is going to drown! Wait his head is above water. He is crying out: "Lord save me." And Jesus takes hold of Peter and helps him back into the boat. Jesus gets into the boat to, and everything gets calm. This must be Jesus. Jesus must be the Son of God.

Do you believe Jesus is with you in the storms of your life? What are the storms in your life? Do you believe that Jesus will take care of you? Who are you in the Gospel Story? Do you recognize Jesus? Do you have the courage to get out of the boat even if you are not sure what will happen? Or are you going to stay in the boat out of fear? What are you afraid of? Are you afraid of getting hurt? Are you afraid of being left alone? Are you afraid of failure? Are you afraid of success? Are you afraid to make any changes in your life? What is God calling you to do? Is fear preventing you from doing it? What would you be able to accomplish if you got out of the boat?