

## *Ordinary Time 19A 2017*

### *The Tiny Whispering Voice*

The prophet Elijah was in a difficult situation. His own people, the people of Israel, were abandoning their faith in the God of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, and were worshipping other gods instead. And so Elijah confronted the people and their false prophets, and in a dramatic struggle at Mount Carmel he showed the power and glory of God. Elijah had won the day, but as soon as he overcame the false prophets, the king of Israel, who had also abandoned his own faith, determined to destroy Elijah. And so Elijah was on the run. Indeed he had been on the run for a long time. He was running to the desert, to Mount Sinai, where God had appeared to Moses long ago. Elijah was looking for another display of God's power. He was hoping that just as God once appeared in thunder and lightning to Moses, so God would appear to him again.

Elijah was tired and discouraged, waiting in a cave, waiting for a sign from God; he was waiting for a powerful display of God's power. Suddenly, there was a strong driving wind, crushing all the rocks of the mountain, but God was not in the wind. Next, there was a powerful earthquake, but God was not in the earthquake. Then there was a great display of consuming fire, but God was not in the fire. Finally, there was the tiniest whispering sound that Elijah could barely hear, and when Elijah heard that whispering sound, he covered his face in fear and awe

because God was present. God was present in the tiny whispering sound, not in the fire, not in the earthquake, not in the wind, but in the tiny whispering voice.

We often find ourselves, like Elijah, in the eye of the storm. We look around us, and it seems that everyone has abandoned their faith, even the members of our own family. We look for, and we ask for, a display of God's power that will make all things right, but it does not come. We find ourselves like the disciples of today's gospel, battered by the storms of life, and we cry out, "Lord save us," and the Lord is asleep. The story of Elijah and the story of the disciples is our story because we are always in the eye of the storm. We are always looking and hoping for a new display of God's power.

But God does not answer our prayers in that way. God does not exercise power in the way the world does. God's power is seen in the crucified Jesus, in the cry of Jesus from the cross, "My God, my God, why have you abandoned me." God appears in the tiny whispering voice. God speaks in silence. If we do not hear the tiny whispering voice, perhaps we are consumed and overcome by the unending noise of the world about. Perhaps we cannot hear because we are not listening to the silence in which God's speaks.

God shows power in weakness. God speaks in silence. To hear God's voice and to see God's power we must be silent.