LORD, I KNOW YOU ARE NEAR!

This Sunday, the Lord strengthens our faith in him by inviting us to reflect on the fruits of his saving presence. We live in a world full of violence and dangers that often make us feel as if we are about to sink. But with Jesus by our side and holding us firmly by the hand, nothing should frighten us, for he is the source of our salvation and peace.

This certainty should accompany us both as individuals and as Church, no matter how uncertain or stormy the times may be.

At no other moment is the Lord nearer to us than during the celebration of the Eucharist when he speaks to us in the Liturgy of the Word and gives himself to us in Holy Communion. Let us reawaken our faith to this wonderful reality as we are about to start our Eucharistic celebration.

INTRODUCTORY RITES

Entrance Antiphon
(To be recited only when no Entrance Hymn is sung.)

Look to your covenant, O Lord, and forget not the life of your poor ones for ever. Arise, O God, and defend your cause, and forget not the cries of those who seek you.

Greeting

P – Grace and peace from God our Father, the Lord Jesus Christ, and the Holy Spirit be with you all!
All – And with your spirit!

Penitential Act

P – Brothers and sisters, to prepare ourselves to participate in the Eucharistic Sacrifice with a renewed heart, let us ask the Lord to purify us from all our sins. (Pause)

P – For the times we have been weak in faith and allowed discouragement to grip our hearts, Lord, have mercy!
All – Lord, have mercy!

P – For the times we have been a cause of apprehension and fear to others, Christ, have mercy!
All – Christ, have mercy!

P – For the times we have failed to acclaim you as our mighty Savior, Lord, have mercy!
All – Lord, have mercy!

P – May almighty God have mercy on us, forgive us our sins, and bring us to everlasting life.
All – Amen!

Gloria

All – Glory to God in the highest, and on earth peace to people of good will. We praise you, we bless you, we adore you, we glorify you, we give you thanks for your great glory, Lord God, heavenly King, O God, almighty Father.

Lord Jesus Christ, Only Begotten Son, Lord God, Lamb of God, Son of the Father, you take away the sins of the world, have mercy on us; you take away the sins of the world, receive our prayer, you are seated at the right hand of the Father, have mercy on us. For you alone are the Holy One, you alone are the Lord, you alone are the Most High, Jesus Christ, with the Holy Spirit, in the glory of God the Father. Amen!

Collect (Opening Prayer)

P – Almighty 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 in the unity of the Holy Spirit, one God, for ever and ever.
All – Amen!

LITURGY OF THE WORD

1st Reading 1Kgs 19:9-11-13

Persecuted because of his faithfulness to his prophetic mission, Elijah had a unique experience of the Lord’s consoling presence at the entrance of a cave on Mount Horeb. After such an experience, he felt strong enough to resume fighting the battles of God.
R — A proclamation from the First Book of Kings

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!
All — Thanks be to God!

Responsorial Psalm Ps 85

R — Lord, let us see your kindness, and grant us your salvation!

R. M. Velez

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.

2nd Reading Rom 9:1-5

In a rare moment of self-revelation, the apostle Paul manifests to his readers the great pain he is suffering because the Israelites persist in rejecting Jesus as the Messiah of God.

R — A proclamation from the Letter of Paul to the Romans

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!
All — Thanks be to God!

Gospel Acclamation Ps 130:5

All — Alleluia! Alleluia!
I wait for the Lord; my soul waits for his word.
Alleluia! Alleluia!

Gospel Mt 14:22-33

The presence of Jesus makes all the difference in the life of the Church and of all those who put their trust in him. This is verified especially in moments of danger. Such is the message of the account of what happened on a stormy night at the Lake of Gennesareth.

P — The Lord be with you!
All — And with your spirit!

P — A proclamation from the holy Gospel according to Matthew

All — Glory to you, O 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 Jesus homage, saying, “Truly, you are the Son of God.”

The Gospel of the Lord!
All — Praise to you, Lord Jesus Christ!

Homily

Profession of Faith

(Nicene Creed)

All — 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)* and by the Holy Spirit 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!

Prayer of the Faithful

P —Buffeted by the storms and difficulties of life, we confidently turn to the Lord, seeking in him protection and deliverance. In faith we pray:

All —Lord Jesus, save your people!

C —That the Catholic Church may find in her Lord the strength and consolation she needs to overcome the storms of persecution, defections, and betrayals, let us pray! R.

C —That the Holy Father, Francis, and our bishops may continue to enjoy the enlightenment and strength they need to lead the Church in these times of moral confusion and rampant violence, let us pray! R.

C —That the UN peacekeeping forces in the different trouble spots of the world may succeed in keeping violent groups in check and protect innocent civilian populations, let us pray! R.

C —That the families whose members are at odds among themselves may achieve a lasting reconciliation and learn to live in harmony, solidarity, and sincere love, let us pray! R.

C —That all of us may focus on the greatness and goodness of the Lord and not on the enormity of our problems, let us pray! R.

C —Let us pray in silence for our personal intentions. (Pause)

Let us pray! R.

P —Lord Jesus, source of all courage and salvation, help us to face the challenges of life with a brave heart, trusting in your constant presence by our side till we reach the haven of peace where you live and reign for ever and ever.

All —Amen!

P —Pray, brethren . . .

All—May the Lord accept the sacrifice at your hands, for the praise and glory of his name, for our good and the good of all his holy Church.

Prayer over the Offerings

P —Be pleased, O Lord, to accept the offerings of your Church, for in your mercy you have given them to be offered and by your power you transform them into the mystery of our salvation.

Through Christ our Lord.

All —Amen!

Preface V

P —The Lord be with you!

All —And with your spirit!

P —Lift up your hearts!

All —We lift them up to the Lord!

P —Let us give thanks to the Lord our God!

All —It is right and just!

P —It is truly right and just, our duty and our salvation, always and everywhere to give you thanks, Lord, holy Father, almighty and eternal God.

For you laid the foundations of the world and have arranged the changing of times and seasons; you formed man in your own image and set humanity over the whole world in all its wonder, to rule in your name over all you have made and for ever praise you in your mighty works, through Christ our Lord.

And so, with all the Angels, we praise you, as in joyful celebration, we acclaim:

All —Holy, holy, holy Lord, God of hosts. Heaven and earth are full of your glory. Hosanna in the highest!

Blessed is he who comes in the name of the Lord. Hosanna in the highest!

Memorial Acclamation

P —The mystery of faith!

All —Save us, Savior of the world, for by your Cross and Resurrection you have set us free.

All —Our Father . . .

P —Deliver us, Lord . . .

All —For the kingdom, the power, and the glory are yours, now and forever.

Sign of Peace

Breaking of the Bread

All —Lamb of God, you take away the sins of the world: have mercy on us. (2x)

Lamb of God, you take away the sins of the world: grant us peace.

Communion

P —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.

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

Communion Antiphon

(To be recited only when no Communion Hymn is sung.)

O Jerusalem, glorify the Lord, who gives you your fill of finest wheat.

Prayer after Communion

P —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.

All —Amen!

CONCLUDING RITES

P —The Lord be with you.

All —And with your spirit!
The unexpected violent storm was frightening enough as it tossed the fragile boat with the twelve gasping disciples. Then the apparition of a man walking on the water as on solid ground just made things worse. It could only be a spirit – death itself, perhaps, coming to get them! . . .

The reassuring words of Jesus, “It is I. Do not be afraid” needed to be verified. Peter thought he could put the Lord to the test. He did not realize that now he was the one being tested. His faith was tested. And it was soon obvious that he was failing the test. His daring request “Tell me to come to you across the water!” was about to cost him his very life. Good for him that Jesus was at hand. So Peter was saved – a seasoned, strong fisherman rescued by a carpenter/preacher who had seldom seen the sea in his life!

The moment Jesus climbed the boat, “the wind died down” (Mt 14:32) Thus, that night Peter and his partners added yet another memorable, incredible event to the already long list of unforgettable experiences they had gone through since the day they had met the young rabbi from Nazareth . . .

There is so much of Peter in each one of us. He is the head of a huge crowd to which we all belong. Though most of us are not fishermen we may have been at sea in a fragile boat during a hellish night storm, many of us are over-confident impetuous, lacking constancy . . . like Peter! And our life, from time to time, does resemble the stormy sea of Galilee, too!

Sometimes, after daring too much and having used up the last ounce of our energies, gripped by the terror of the impending disaster, we too have found ourselves crying out: “Lord, save me!” These are the moments when our pride vanishes and the child that is in us, the believer that is in us, surfaces from the killer waves and brings us to clasp desperately the friendly, steady hand of Jesus, the only One Who can lead us to safety.

So we have been saved time and time again not by our might, but by God’s merciful love. And thus, thanks to Him, we have continued our journey through the sea of life ever-confident of the nearness of the God Who always protects and saves those who trust in Him.

But the storms are not limited to the lives of individual believers. They also concern the Church as a whole or parts of it. The Church has, indeed, over the centuries, often found itself in the eye of frightening “storms” that have caused uncertain-