

First reading 1 Kings 19:9a, 11-13**‘Stand on the mount before the Lord.’**

In those days: Elijah reached Horeb, the mount of God. There he came to a cave and lodged in it. And behold, the word of the Lord came to him. And he said, ‘Go out and stand on the mount before the Lord.’ And behold, the Lord passed by, and a great and strong wind tore the mountains and broke in pieces the rocks before the Lord, but the Lord was not in the wind. And after the wind an earthquake, but the Lord was not in the earthquake. And after the earthquake a fire, but the Lord was not in the fire. And after the fire the sound of a low whisper. And when Elijah heard it, he wrapped his face in his cloak and went out and stood at the entrance of the cave.

Responsorial Psalm 85(84): 9-14 R8**Show us, O Lord, your mercy, and grant us your salvation.**

I will hear what the Lord God speaks;
he speaks of peace for his people and his faithful.
His salvation is near for those who fear him,
and his glory will dwell in our land.

Mercy and faithfulness have met;
justice and peace have kissed.
Faithfulness shall spring from the earth,
and justice look down from heaven.

The Lord will bestow his bounty,
and our earth shall yield its increase.
Righteousness will march before him,
and guide his steps on the way.

Second reading Romans 9: 1-5**‘I wish that I were accursed for the sake of my brothers and sisters.’**

Brothers and Sisters: I am speaking the truth in Christ. I am not lying. My conscience bears me witness in the Holy Spirit — that I have great sorrow and unceasing anguish in my heart. For I could wish that I myself were accursed and cut off from Christ for the sake of my brothers and sisters, my kinsmen according to the flesh. They are Israelites, and to them belong the adoption, the glory, the covenants, the giving of the law, the worship, and the promises. To them belong the patriarchs, and from their race, according to the flesh, is the Christ, who is God over all, blessed for ever. Amen.

Gospel Acclamation Psalm 130(129):5

Alleluia, alleluia. I long for you, O Lord, my soul longs for his word. **Alleluia.**

Gospel Matthew 14:22-23**‘Command me to come to you on the water.’**

After the crowd had eaten and were satisfied:
Immediately Jesus made the disciples get into the boat and go before him to the other side, while he dismissed the crowds. And after he had dismissed the crowds, he went up on the mountain by himself to pray. When

evening came, he was there alone, but the boat by this time was a long way from the land, beaten by the waves, for the wind was against them. And in the fourth watch of the night he came to them, walking on the sea. But when the disciples saw him walking on the sea, they were terrified, and said, ‘It is a ghost!’ and they cried out in fear. But immediately Jesus spoke to them, saying, ‘Take heart; it is I. Do not be afraid.’ And Peter answered him, ‘Lord, if it is you, command me to come to you on the water.’ He said, ‘Come.’ So Peter got out of the boat and walked on the water and came to Jesus. But when he saw the wind, he was afraid, and beginning to sink he cried out, ‘Lord, save me.’ Jesus immediately reached out his hand and took hold of him, saying to him, ‘O you of little faith, why did you doubt?’ And when they got into the boat, the wind ceased. And those in the boat worshipped him, saying, ‘Truly you are the Son of God.’

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Feast days this week

Monday 10th August: St Lawrence

Tuesday 11th August: St Clare

Wednesday 12th August: St Jane Frances de Chantal

Thursday 13th August: Sts Pontian and Hippolytus

Friday 14th August: St Maximilian Kolbe

Saturday 8th August: Memorial of the Blessed Virgin Mary

The Cycle of Prayer**Europe****Background**

Pope John Paul II dedicated 6 patron saints to Europe:

- St Cyril and St Methodius (14 February)
- St Catherine of Siena (29 April)
- St Benedict (11 July)
- St Bridget of Sweden
- St Teresa Benedicta of the Cross (9th August)

They reflect the rich spiritual history of the Continent from East to West and across the centuries. In the Cycle of Prayer Europe is remembered in the Summer when a number of the Feasts days occur.

Prayer

*O God, who gave one origin to all peoples
and willed to gather from them one family for yourself,
fill all hearts, we pray, with the fire of your love
and kindle in them a desire
for the just advancement of their neighbour,
that, through the good things
which you richly bestow upon all,
each human person
may be brought to perfection,
every division may be removed,
and equity and justice may be established in human society.*

Roman Missal

If the wind should die

1. *Voyage: Life can be viewed as journey (Pilgrim's progress; Exodus; Odyssey) , or still better as voyage (because driven by forces more powerful than ourselves, like wind and wave.) We sail upon a rippling surface of events, feeling the joy of movement, being alive and going somewhere. When things go well, we feel the contentment of those experienced sailors, the apostles on their way home across the quiet lake of Galilee.*
2. *Waves: A gale blew up, changing their mood. Danger and fear of drowning. Our own life-voyage has its share of storms too, anxieties, problems and pressures of various kinds. How often a sudden turn of events can rob us of inner peace. Are we on a charted course, or just drifting along without any determined direction? Many find it hard enough to stay afloat, pressurised by the bewilderingly changing times, ill-at-ease in their relationships with others, discontented and insecure in themselves. That's exactly what the frightened apostles in the storm mean for us today: we are those sailors, tossing about in the waves.*
3. *Remedies: Many prescriptions are suggested, to ease the upsets of our voyage. Like different brands of medication for sea-sickness! A long quiet rest, a change of occupation, psychiatric help or counselling, a course of Yoga or Transcendental Meditation, Contemplative or Charismatic Prayer. Doubtless, every remedy has its own advantages, but what better support can be found in times of stress than an understanding friend? Today's gospel suggests that our first and most constant recourse should be to none other than, Christ himself.*
4. *Presence: God is present where we least expect him, although it is a hidden, unseen presence, not always easy to discover. It takes faith nearer than the door." So the apostles were amazed to see Christ coming to them in the middle of the storm, for (at that stage) they were men of little faith. Elijah, that lonely refugee, faithful to his God despite cruel persecution by Jezebel, discovered the mysterious presence of God in the still, small voice of his own soul. Standing at the mouth of a cave, on the slopes of the holy mountain, he got strength and comfort from the Living God. Where God is, there is peace. But his presence is everywhere, for those who learn to discern it.*
5. *Safe Harbour: We do not expect to be immune from the hardships and problems faced by all the other voyagers through this life. Indeed, Christ himself shared fully in all of these anxieties, being tested as we are. If the Church be seen as a boat (in which there are no idle passengers, but all are needed to row!) , then we have as destination the safe harbour of eternal life. With the compass of faith, and Christ himself as unseen captain of the ship, that harbour will surely be reached. In the meantime, though tossed about by circumstances, he tells us: "Courage! Do not be afraid, men of little faith!"*