

Nineteenth Sunday in Ordinary Time

Sunday Mass Readings & Spiritual Leadership Guide

August 9, 2026 · Lectionary 115

Sunday Mass Readings

FIRST READING

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.

RESPONSORIAL PSALM

Psalm 85:9, 10, 11–12, 13–14

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

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

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

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SECOND READING

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.

GOSPEL

Matthew 14:22–33

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.

All readings sourced from USCCB, Lectionary 115. bible.usccb.org/bible/readings/080926.cfm

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Reflection

Elijah has fled into the wilderness, exhausted and afraid, expecting God to arrive in the spectacular—wind, earthquake, fire. Instead, God comes in a tiny whispering sound, and that is when Elijah finally moves. Peter steps out of the boat with bold faith, then loses his footing the moment he shifts his eyes from Jesus to the storm. Paul aches with sorrow for his people, willing to bear their burden himself—a love so vast it mirrors the cross. Together these readings draw a single portrait of the spiritual leader: someone who learns to find God in the quiet, to fix their gaze on Christ when the wind rises, and to carry a genuine love for the people they serve—even at personal cost.

Leadership Principles

PRINCIPLE 1

God Speaks in the Still Small Voice

Elijah expected the spectacular, but God came in a tiny whispering sound (1 Kgs 19:12). Leaders are conditioned to look for big, dramatic results. But discernment happens in silence. A leader who cannot be still will miss the most important guidance they will ever receive.

PRINCIPLE 2

Keep Your Eyes on Christ, Not the Storm

Peter walked on water until he looked at the wind—then he sank (Mt 14:30). We all face storms: conflict, uncertainty, failure. The deciding question is not how fierce the wind is, but where your gaze is fixed. Courage is not the absence of fear; it is refusing to let fear redirect your eyes.

PRINCIPLE 3

Step Out of the Boat

Peter is the only disciple who asked to come and then actually stepped out (Mt 14:29). The others stayed in the boat. Stepping up requires a willingness to leave the safety of what is known and move toward Christ even when the conditions are not ideal. A step of faith, however imperfect, is still a step.

PRINCIPLE 4

Cry Out When You Are Sinking

When Peter began to sink, he did not try to recover on his own—he cried, “Lord, save me!” (Mt 14:30). Spiritual leaders who refuse to ask for help drown quietly. Humility to cry out is not weakness; it is the posture that draws the hand of Christ.

PRINCIPLE 5

Let Love for Your People Cost You Something

Paul is willing to be “accursed and cut off from Christ” for the sake of his people (Rom 9:3). Most people are willing to lead as long as it is convenient. Paul models a sacrificial love that mirrors Christ’s. The depth of a leader’s care is measured not by words but by what they are willing to absorb on behalf of those they lead.

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Discussion Questions

QUESTION 1

Elijah looked for God in wind, earthquake, and fire—but God came in a whisper (1 Kgs 19:12). Where do you tend to look for God’s guidance most naturally—in dramatic circumstances or in quiet moments? What would it take to create more stillness in your daily life so you can hear the whispering sound?

QUESTION 2

Peter stepped out of the boat on Jesus’ word (Mt 14:29). Is there a step of faith you have been avoiding because the conditions feel too uncertain? What specific “boat” do you need to get out of this week, and what is holding you back?

QUESTION 3

Peter began to sink when he shifted his focus from Jesus to the storm (Mt 14:30). What “storm” is most threatening to take your eyes off Christ right now—in your leadership, your family, or your personal life? What practice helps you re-fix your gaze when that happens?

QUESTION 4

Peter cried out “Lord, save me!” when he was sinking (Mt 14:30). How quickly do you turn to prayer and ask for help when you are overwhelmed? What keeps you from crying out sooner, and what would it look like to lower that threshold?

QUESTION 5

Paul says he has “great sorrow and constant anguish” for his people (Rom 9:2). Who are the people you lead or love for whom you carry that kind of deep burden? How does that love shape the way you show up for them, and is there someone you have been holding at arm’s length who needs you to move closer?

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Closing Action

A concrete, personal response drawn from the readings this week:

This week, carve out ten minutes of silence each morning—no phone, no music, no agenda. Sit in it and listen. If you hear nothing, stay anyway. At the end of the week, write down one thing you sensed God saying in the quiet that you would have missed in the noise. Bring that word to your next group meeting and share it (1 Kgs 19:12–13).

“After the fire there was a tiny whispering sound.” — 1 Kings 19:12

Closing Prayer

Lord God, you spoke to Elijah not in the wind or the earthquake or the fire, but in a still, small voice. Quiet our hearts from the noise that drowns you out. Teach us to come to the cave—to set aside the spectacular and wait for the whisper. Give us the patience to be still long enough to hear you.

Jesus, you walked toward your disciples on the water in the darkest hour of the night. When we are tossed by the storms of leadership and life, keep our eyes fixed on you. And when we sink—because we will—may we cry out quickly, trusting that your hand is already reaching for us.

Holy Spirit, give us the love Paul carried for his people: a love that aches, that sacrifices, that refuses to give up. Make us leaders who are moved by the needs of those we serve, not just managing them from a distance. Fill us with a compassion rooted not in sentiment but in the cross. Amen.

“Lord, let us see your kindness, and grant us your salvation.” — Psalm 85:8