

WORD FROM THE PASTOR

“TRULY, YOU ARE THE SON OF GOD.”



This Sunday's biblical texts invite us to correct our understanding of God. This is what the prophet Elijah had to do on Mount Horeb (Sinai). He had pictured **God as a God of power**. He expected to find Him in the hurricane and then in the earthquake. But the Lord was in neither. After that came the sound of a gentle breeze. It was there that Elijah discovered the true God. He, who believed he was upholding his honor by slaughtering the "infidels," discovered he had been on the wrong track.

The true God is love and mercy. It is only through love that we truly speak of Him.

The Apostle Paul, too, had been mistaken about God. Initially, he violently persecuted Christians. But one day, he encountered Jesus on the road to Damascus. For him, this marked the beginning of a genuine conversion. He longed to share this extraordinary discovery with his brothers in the Jewish community, yet they refused to acknowledge Jesus as the Messiah. Paul shares his anguish over their disbelief. They could not accept that the privilege of the Chosen People was being extended to the Gentiles who had placed their faith in God. They failed to grasp that Christ had given up His body and shed His blood for them and for the multitude.

In the Gospel, it is Jesus Himself Who sets things straight. Let us recall: He has just multiplied the loaves to feed a hungry crowd. We can imagine the excitement of all those people. They believed they had found the king who would liberate them from the foreign occupier. Jesus recognizes this trap and does everything to ensure His disciples do not play along. That is why He urgently sends them off to the other shore. Through this event, he wants us to understand that the Kingdom of God is not of this world. It does not match the ideas we form of it. To enter it, we must leave behind our small comforts, our certainties, and our habits. **Christ invites us to meet Him on "the other shore" the shore of the unknown.**

After dismissing the crowds, Jesus withdraws alone to the mountain to pray. He teaches us that it is there, in prayer, that we can align ourselves with God and his true plan of love. **Like Elijah, Paul, and the apostles, we risk forming false ideas about the true God. But if we take the time to encounter Him in prayer, we better understand what He expects of us. It is in this heart-to-heart communion with Him that our faith is purified.**

If we welcome Christ into the boat of our lives, we know we can count on Him. We will be united in faith in Him. He longs to meet us at the very heart of our lives and our doubts. He never ceases to reach out His hand to us. The Church is that boat which must face the storms. What saves it is not the qualities or courage of its members, but the faith that allows it to move forward in the darkness. **Faith gives us the assurance of Jesus's presence by our side.**

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