



Bringing Home the Word

Nineteenth Sunday in Ordinary Time (A)
August 9, 2026

Get Out of the Boat

Fr. Joseph Juknialis

As priests, we're expected to plan our own funerals, including the Scripture readings. As it happens, I chose the gospel for this Sunday—the one about Jesus walking across the water and inviting Peter to trust and step out of the boat and come to him. You may think it strange for a funeral, but it's been pretty much the story of my life. Often, there have been times when I was asked to go where I didn't want to go, like Peter being asked to get out of the boat. Ultimately, I realized that those were also the very

times when I seemed most aware of God's presence. Oh, I think God was always there; it's simply that my own ego often got in the way. It was when I gave in that I most felt buoyed by God. In fact, the least satisfying assignment was the one I eagerly sought out, and some of those I resisted turned out to be graced.

Like Peter, it's good to do what doesn't always make sense. What does all this have to do with my choice of this Scripture reading for my funeral? Well, every time I have stepped out of the boat of security, God has been there to sustain me. I figure there is going to be no bigger "stepping out" than death, so I'm expecting that God will be there as well. †

Sunday Readings

1 Kings 19:9a, 11–13a

Elijah...stood at the entrance of the cave. A voice said to him, Why are you here, Elijah?

Romans 9:1–5

I speak the truth in Christ, I do not lie; my conscience joins with the Holy Spirit.

Matthew 14:22–33

Peter said to [Jesus] in reply, "Lord, if it is you, command me to come to you on the water."



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that I most felt buoyed
by God.*

A Word from Pope Leo XIV

We live immersed in a culture of speed, immediacy, and haste—a culture of "discard" and indifference that prevents us from pausing along the way and drawing near to acknowledge the needs and suffering that surround us. In the parable, when the Samaritan saw the wounded man, he did not "pass by." Instead, he looked upon him with an open and attentive gaze—the very gaze of Jesus.

MESSAGE ON WORLD DAY OF THE SICK, ROME, FEBRUARY 11, 2026



REFLECTION QUESTIONS

QUESTIONS FOR REFLECTION

- Have you experienced the impossible becoming possible with God's grace?
- Will you remember this the next time something seems impossible?



A Pilgrimage of the Soul

Fr. Peter D. Hill, CSsR

Last August, two friends and I found ourselves standing at a stone marker in the small town of Sarria, Spain, with backpacks on, hiking shoes laced, and hearts open for the 100-kilometer journey to Santiago de Compostela. We were officially *peregrinos*, or pilgrims, on the Camino de Santiago, about to walk toward the cathedral where, tradition holds, the remains of St. James the Apostle are buried. We had talked about this trip for months, but nothing quite prepared us for how this journey would become more than a walk—it became a pilgrimage of the soul.

We walked 20 to 30 kilometers daily through forests, farmland, small villages, and towns. We would wake early, walk in silence or conversation, stop for coffee or a beer, and press on. There were beautiful moments: early morning mists rising over the hills, birdsong in the quiet woods, the rhythm of footsteps that became its own kind of prayer.

But, along the way, something more profound began to happen. With every step, God gently invited me inward to

notice what I had been carrying in my heart. Old frustrations, unspoken fears, the need to be in control—all of it surfaced, not in dramatic moments, but in the quiet. The Camino has a way of peeling back the layers.

I did not hear any booming voices from heaven, but a shift happened between my aching feet and the breathtaking views: I began to trust more and strive less. I started to listen not just to the birds or the crunch of gravel underfoot, but to God's whisper, saying, "Let go. I'm walking with you."

When we finally arrived in Santiago, footsore and joyful, the moment was deeply moving. Not just because we had finished the journey, but because the journey had finished something in us too. Something had settled. Something had healed. †

I listened to God whisper, "Let go. I'm walking with you."

From "Plain Talk" by Fr. Peter D. Hill, CSsR, *Liguorian*, July/August 2025. For more information, call 800-325-9521 or visit Liguori.org.

Wisdom from Catholic Update

From "Spiritual Direction for Catholics" by Dr. Karen Shields Wright

The purpose of spiritual direction is to nurture a person's growth in holiness by gently helping one recognize and respond to God the Father's love, drawing one more deeply into communion with Jesus Christ and conformity to his life. Through prayerful discernment, one learns to become attentive to the quiet promptings of the Holy Spirit, gradually discovering the threads of grace woven throughout their prayer and daily life. Two people come together to be inspired by and to listen to the Holy Spirit, seeking out those droplets of grace from God so they can grow in holiness and virtue, and so they can discover and experience their identity as the beloved of our God, who is Love.

Catholic Update—a subscription newsletter published eleven times a year—explores Church tradition and teaching on contemporary topics. For more information, call 800-325-9521 or visit Liguori.org.

PRAYER

For those hoping for what seems impossible: healing, reconciliation, justice, peace among the nations and within communities and families. We pray in Jesus' name. Amen.

The Redemptorists

WEEKDAY READINGS

August 10–15

Monday, St. Lawrence: 2 Cor 9:6–10
/ Jn 12:24–26

Tuesday, St. Clare: Ez 2:8–3:4
/ Mt 18:1–5, 10, 12–14

Wednesday, Weekday: Ez 9:1–7; 10:18–22
/ Mt 18:15–20

Thursday, Weekday: Ez 12:1–12 / Mt 18:21–19:1

Friday, St. Maximilian Kolbe: Ez 16:1–15, 60, 63
or 16:59–63 / Mt 19:3–12

Saturday, Assumption of the Blessed Virgin Mary: Rv 11:19a; 12:1–6a, 10ab / 1 Cor 15:20–27 / Lk 1:39–56



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