***Weekend Homily***

***19th Sunday Cycle A***

***August 13, 2017***

**You know it is good for us from time to time to ask ourselves the question “Why do we come to church on the weekend?” I mean, it’s a beautiful day---there are lots of people on the golf course---so why aren’t we with them. Why have we chosen to come here instead?**

**The answer is fairly simple. We gather here every Sunday to give God the worship we owe him as our Creator. We come together to acknowledge God as the Father and Lord of our lives; we gather to give him praise for his goodness and love, for the salvation he brought about for us through his Son, and for the eternity of unspeakable and glorious joy that awaits us with him in heaven.**

**But there is another important reason why we gather for Mass on the weekend. We come here to listen to God speak to us in the readings; to be encouraged and inspired and guided by his word---and to recommit ourselves as his people to living our lives according to his holy will---and to receive the strength to do that by sharing in the sacred body and blood of his Son in the Eucharist.**

**This weekend we as we listen to God speak to us in the scriptures we hear the story of a storm. Storms are a normal part of life. As we live our lives here on earth there are essentially two kinds of storms we encounter. There are the storms that come out of the blue, over which we have no control, like the storm the disciples experience on the Sea of Galilee.**

**Then there are the storms, the troubles. we bring on ourselves by the way we live and act or fail to act--- like the terrifying storm of a possible nuclear confrontation between us and North Korea.**

**This situation with North Korea didn’t come out of the blue. It has been years and decades in the making. Here is what I mean. In the 1990’s President Clinton, a Democrat, attempted to buy off the North Koreans, offering them money to give up their nuclear ambitions. They agreed but they lied---they took the money and used it to fund their weapons program.**

**President Clinton was followed by President Bush, a Republican. President Bush attempted to appease the North Koreans by taking the country off the list of State sponsored terrorism. Sanctions were lifted which lead to a fresh flow of money into their economy. How the North Koreans use it? They used it to fund the development of nuclear weapons.**

**Then came President Obama, a Democrat. Under the eight years of his administration we followed a policy of strategic patience---which meant nothing was done about North Korea---and not only that but at the same time North Korea was left to do whatever it wanted, we down-sized our military which has made us even more vulnerable.**

**Now this dangerous situation has been dumped in the lap of President Trump. All I can say is thank God he is not like the presidents who came before him otherwise, we would end up with more of the same. At least he has the courage to take a stand and address the problem---and not kick the can further down the road. Because, you see, the truth is we’ve run out of road.**

**Don’t get me wrong. I am not attempting to canonize President Trump. He has his flaws like the rest of us. He is a bit unpolished and rough around the edges. In fact, he is often criticized for not being presidential enough.**

**All I can say to that is--- while a number of the presidents before him acted quite presidential, they’re also the ones responsible for getting us into this mess. Maybe, at this point, we need someone like President Trump who is plain spoken and doesn’t leave any doubt as to where he stands, and doesn’t back down from his positions**

**What it all comes down to is that this confrontation with North Korea is a storm of our own making and it is being made all the worse by how deeply our country is divided. Jesus tells us “a house divided against itself cannot stand.” The truth of Christs words is this---if we remain as divided as we are right now our nation will not stand.**

**Think for a moment of the attempt that was made a week and a half ago to repeal and replace Obama Care. Senators and Congress people of both parties know that Obama Care is imploding and is going to need a massive infusion of money just to stay afloat and eventually it will bankrupt us unless we come up with a different plan.**

**When we had the chance to do just that a little over a week ago the Democrats who are largely responsible for the fix we are in wouldn’t lift a finger to help. And the Republicans who are in the majority and had the votes couldn’t even agree among themselves and so the effort went down to defeat. No wonder the citizens of this country are so disgusted with congress.**

**But you know what--- I think I have a good idea how we can get congress to act and come up with a great health care program that covers everyone. You see when congress made Obama Care the law of the land they exempted themselves. They provided themselves with a different and better healthcare program with generous government subsidies.**

**They should be forced to live under Obama Care like everyone else--- with the high premiums and high deductibles. If that were to happen I assure you congress would come up with a new and wonderful health program for all of us within a week.**

**Further, what’s up with congress making laws for us but exempting themselves? That’s something that needs to change. That’s not what democracy is all about. In a real democracy those elected to public office aren’t part of a privileged class. They work for us, and they need to live under the same laws as we do.**

**Anyway, getting back to the scriptures--- in today’s gospel, we hear the story of the disciples caught up in a violent storm, and Jesus coming to them across the water. There is much we can learn from Peter in this story. As he got out of the boat and began walking on the water toward the Lord he did just fine. It was only when he took his eyes off Jesus that he began to sink.**

**Today we are caught up in some pretty violent storms with what is happening in our country and in the world around us--- especially with regard to North Korea. In this weekend’s gospel, we are being reminded that the same Lord who came across the water to save his disciples from that violent storm on the Sea of Galilee--- this same lord is with us in this crisis.**

**If we are to weather this storm as well as all the storms of life, we need to turn to the Lord in faith, and keep our eyes fixed on him, trusting that he will help us and safely see us through it. And he will.**