

**Lectionary readings: 1 Kings 19: 9-18; Psalm 85: 8-13;
Romans 10: 5-15; Matthew 14: 22-33**

For reflection and prayer

- **1 Kings 19:** Here is Elijah, full of self-pity, hiding in a cave out of fear. Then God speaks to him, not in the hurricane, not in the wind, not in the earthquake, not in the fire, but in the sound of a gentle whisper. How many times do we miss God because we expect Him to act in obvious 'loud' ways? And all the time God is quietly at work in our lives, if only we would hush the inner noise - and the radio and TV! - and spend some time in stillness and silence. We live in a noisy world, and we add to the noise. Why not spend time this week being still and silent, listening for what God wants to say to you? Elijah was told to '*go and stand before*' the Lord. Let each one of us do that this week.
- **Psalm 85:** Here are some verses from 'Psalms for Praying': v8: '*Listen, O people, in the silent chapel of your heart; and the Beloved will speak of peace to you.*' v13: '*Mercy and compassion are Love's way, and will guide our footsteps upon the path of peace.*' God promises us new life if we open ourselves to receive Him. This new life, the Psalmist says, will result in harmony, love, faithfulness, righteousness, peace - for us as individuals and as a church. How can it be otherwise if we are listening to God and living as He wants us to?
- **Romans 10:** v12 (The Message): '*It's exactly the same no matter what a person's religious background may be: the same God for all of us, acting the same*

incredibly generous way to everyone who calls out for help. Everyone who calls, 'Help, God!' gets help.' God has come to us in Christ and is offering each one of us a loving, intimate relationship with Himself. We don't have to earn it; we don't have to strive for it; we just have to embrace God and experience the intimacy He offers and give thanks. Let's open ourselves this week to this '*incredibly generous*' God who loves us.

- **Matthew 14:** When we encounter Peter, he responds willingly to Jesus' invitation, 'Come'. But he quickly realises that he is vulnerable - no longer in the safety of the boat - at the mercy of the waves. Who of us would have responded to Jesus' invitation to step out of the boat and walk across the water to Jesus? But we have responded to Jesus' call to discipleship and, like Peter, we find ourselves in difficult, seemingly impossible, situations at times. How do we behave when life is hard and we find ourselves sinking? Do we, like Peter, cry out to God: 'Help!?' If we do, we will have discovered, like Peter, that God is there waiting for us with outstretched arms ready to catch hold of us. Following Jesus each day is like stepping out of our 'boat', our comfort zone, and finding ourselves in the open sea. That's when we realise what faith is.

A reflection

'I stand. I open myself to God. I kneel. I listen. I step into God's presence. I float in the encompassing ocean of God's love.... I am still, at rest with God who is deep within me, and all around me. Out of that deep centre I weave a prayer of God's presence, affirming that God is, that God is with me.... Creating, sustaining and all-loving God, give us the strength and courage to be still, that we might better serve Your broken world.' Amen. (Donald Hilton)