ENCOUNTERING GOD
by Cl. Buen Andrew Cruz, SSP

Though complaining silently in my head, I still got a piece of paper and attempted to make one. It took me a while recalling how to make a paper boat. The kid was adamant and wanted it right away. “Hindi ka yata marunong gumawa eh,” (I think you don’t know how to make one,) she said. Embarrassed, I handed the paper saying, “Ikaw nga! (Can you?) To my surprise, she knew how. I exclaimed, “Eh marunong ka naman pala, nagapagawagawa ka pa!” (It seems you can make one, why ask me). Then, I uttered, “Paano yan?” (How do you make one?) So I got a piece of paper and followed her.

After making some paper boats, I guided her back to the main gate, where we saw her father waiting. He apologized endlessly for the disturbance the kid caused me. I said it was nothing. Before leaving, she called me gesturing to whisper a message. I stooped down to listen. I was surprised that she kissed me by my cheek and said, “Thank you Kuya, I love you, bye.”

As a volunteer catechist for kids and coming from a family of fishermen, I was overwhelmed by the images of this encounter—the child and the paper boat. That day, I received a gift I will forever treasure. Through that little child, God called me Kuya. He said I love you. He even gave me the sweetest kiss on my cheek.

With faith and a listening heart, we’re invited to recognize God’s presence in our lives. We don’t have to look very far. It is God who often comes to us like a gentle breeze as narrated in the first reading or through other means. Though some people still refuse to see Him amidst all the signs, as Saint Paul says in the second reading, God never tires. In today’s Gospel, Jesus walks on water towards His disciples in the middle of the night. This is a powerful image reminding us that God comes to us amidst darkness or even during life’s struggles and difficulties. God will always find a way to meet us, even in the most unlikely situation. God can even come like a child asking for a paper boat. The question is, “Are our hearts ready to encounter God?”

PASTORAL CATECHESIS FOR THE YEAR OF ECUMENISM, INTERRELIGIOUS DIALOGUE, AND INDIGENOUS PEOPLE

Greetings for Asia’s Christians
Fr. James H. Kroeger, MM

While focusing much of his message to Asia’s peoples on interreligious collaboration, Pope John Paul II also offered encouraging words to the Christians throughout the continent. “I cannot finish without sending a heartfelt greeting to my brothers and sisters in the Christian faith…. You are the successors of the early Christians who spread the Gospel message of love and service throughout Asia…. In the members of his Church—in you—Christ is Asian!”

“Christ and his Church cannot be alien to any people, nation or culture…. The Church has no worldly designs, no political or economic ambitions. She wants to be, in Asia as in every other part of the world, the sign of the merciful love of God, our common Father.”

“Wherever she is, the Church must sink her roots deeply into the spiritual and cultural soil of the country, assimilate all genuine values, enriching them also with the insights that she received from Jesus Christ…. My final word is a prayer for Asia…. I commend to the Almighty and Merciful God the dignity and destiny of every man, woman and child on this continent—the dignity and destiny of all Asia!”
Entrance Antiphon
(Cf. Ps 74[73]:20, 19, 22, 23)
(Retited when there is no opening song.)

Look to your covenant, O Lord, and forget not the life of your poor ones for ever. Arise, O God, and defend your cause, and forget not the cries of those who seek you.

Greeting
(The sign of the cross is made here.)

P — The grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, and the love of God, and the communion of the Holy Spirit be with you all.
All — And with your spirit.

Introduction
(These or similar words may be used to address the assembly.)

P — The Lord is not an angry God whose justice must be appeased. He is God who is close to his people. He is present amid life’s storms, as Jesus shows in rescuing Peter. He reveals himself also in unobtrusive and gentle moments, as the prophet Elijah experiences on Mount Horeb.

May we become a people ever convinced of God’s presence in both the ordinary and the extraordinary moments of our life.

Penitential Act

P — Brethren (brothers and sisters), let us acknowledge our sins, and so prepare ourselves to celebrate the sacred mysteries. (Pause)
P — You were sent to heal the contrite of heart: Lord, have mercy.
All — Lord, have mercy.
P — You came to call sinners: Christ, have mercy.
All — Christ, have mercy.
P — You are seated at the right hand of the Father to intercede for us: Lord, have mercy.
All — Lord, have mercy.
P — May almighty God have mercy on us, forgive us our sins, and bring us to everlasting life.
All — Amen.

Gloria

All — Glory to God in the highest, and on earth peace to people of good will. We praise you, we bless you, we adore you, we glorify you, we give you thanks for your great glory, Lord God, heavenly King, O God, almighty Father. Lord Jesus Christ, Only Begotten Son, Lord God, Lamb of God, Son of the Father, you take away the sins of the world, have mercy on us; you take away the sins of the world, receive our prayer; you are seated at the right hand of the Father, have mercy on us.
For you alone are the Holy One, you alone are the Lord, you alone are the Most High, Jesus Christ, with the Holy Spirit, in the glory of God the Father. Amen.

Collect

P — Let us pray. (Pause)
Almighty ever-living God, whom, taught by the Holy Spirit, we dare to call our Father, bringing us, we pray, to perfection in our hearts the spirit of adoption as your sons and daughters, that we may merit to enter into the inheritance which you have promised.
Through our Lord Jesus Christ, your Son, who lives and reigns with you in the unity of the Holy Spirit, one God, for ever and ever.
All — Amen.

(For Rubrics, see the Book of Common Prayer.)

First Reading
(1 Kgs 19:9a, 11–13a) (Sil)
The prophet Elijah experiences God through a tiny whispering sound. God is present in the ordinary and extraordinary events of life.

A reading from the first Book of Kings

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.
All — Thanks be to God.

Responsorial Psalm (Ps 85)

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

Sr. M. C. A. Parce, FSP

1. 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)

2. 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)

3. 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)

Second Reading
(Rom 9:1–5)

The apostle Paul shares the pain he feels for his people who fail to accept Jesus as the Messiah. And yet in his own good time, God will bring the people of Israel to himself.
A reading from the Letter of Saint Paul to the Romans

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 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. All — Thanks be to God.

Alleluia (Cl. Ps 130:5) (Stans)

All — Alleluia, alleluia. I wait for the Lord; my soul waits for his word. Alleluia, alleluia.

Gospel (Mt 14:22–33)

P — A reading from the holy Gospel according to Matthew. All — Glory to you, O Lord.

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 — Praise to you, Lord Jesus Christ.

Homily (Sit)

Profession of Faith (Stans)

All — I believe in one God, the Father almighty, maker of heaven and earth, of all things visible and invisible.

I believe in one Lord Jesus Christ, the Only Begotten Son of God, born of the Father before all ages. God from God, Light from Light, true God from true God, begotten, not made, consubstantial with the Father; through him all things were made. For us men and for our salvation he came down from heaven,

(At the words that follow up to and including and became man, all bow.)

and by the Holy Spirit was incarnate of the Virgin Mary, and became man.

For our sake he was crucified under Pontius Pilate, he suffered death and was buried, and rose again on the third day in accordance with the Scriptures. He ascended into heaven and is seated at the right hand of the Father. He will come again in glory to judge the living and the dead and his kingdom will have no end.

I believe in the Holy Spirit, the Lord, the giver of life, who proceeds from the Father and the Son, who with the Father and the Son is adored and glorified, who has spoken through the prophets.

I believe in one, holy, catholic, and apostolic Church. I confess one Baptism for the forgiveness of sins and I look forward to the resurrection of the dead and the life of the world to come. Amen.

Prayer of the Faithful

P — The Lord is “Emmanuel,” God who is ever with us. His help is there for us who call upon him. Confronted with life’s burdens and uncertainties, we pray to the Father:

R — Father, come to the help of your people.

C — May the Pope, the bishops, priests, and deacons be zealous in proclaiming the Gospel of love to the world and may they not be drowned by fear or discouragement. We pray: (R)

C — May the Church, the People of God, be filled with hope and courage in the periods of danger, violence, unbelief, and egoism. We pray: (R)

C — May our government and civil leaders protect the rights and dignity of farmers, fishermen, factory workers, and overseas Filipino workers. We pray: (R)

C — May Jesus’ words today assure those who listen to him of God’s loving presence amid tragedies and trials. May his words give comfort to those who are suffering today. We pray: (R)

C — May the needy, the suffering, and the dying experience your great love and providence through the care of people around them. We pray: (R)

C — Let us pray for the urgent concerns of our community and our personal intentions (pause). We pray: (R)

P — Heavenly Father, in the face of life’s difficulties we raise our hands to you. Reach out to us, help our unbelief, and make us your true disciples. Through Christ our Lord. All — Amen.

All — Amen.
Presentation of the Gifts (Stand)

P — Pray, brethren...
All — May the Lord accept the sacrifice at your hands for the praise and glory of his name, for our good, and the good of all his holy Church.

Prayer over the Offerings

P — Be pleased, O Lord, to accept the offerings of your Church, for in your mercy you have given them to be offered and by your power you transform them into the mystery of our salvation.
Through Christ our Lord.
All — Amen.

Preface VII: Salvation through the obedience of Christ

P — The Lord be with you.
All — And with your spirit.
P — Lift up your hearts.
All — We lift them up to the Lord.
P — Let us give thanks to the Lord our God.
All — It is right and just.
P — It is truly right and just, our duty and our salvation, always and everywhere to give you thanks, Lord, holy Father, almighty and eternal God.

For you so loved the world that in your mercy you sent us the Redeemer, to live like us in all things but sin, so that you might love us what you loved in your Son, by whose obedience we have been restored to those gifts of yours that, by sinning, we had lost in disobedience.

And so, Lord, with all the Angels and Saints, we, too, give you thanks, as in exultation we acclaim:

All — Holy, Holy, Holy Lord God of hosts. Heaven and earth are full of your glory. Hosanna in the highest. Blessed is he who comes in the name of the Lord. Hosanna in the highest.
(Kneel)

Acclamation (Stand)

All — When we eat this Bread and drink this Cup, we proclaim your Death, O Lord, until you come again.

THE COMMUNION RITE

The Lord’s Prayer

All — Our Father...
P — Deliver us, Lord...
All — For the kingdom, the power and the glory are yours now and for ever.

Invitation to Peace

Invitation to Communion (Kneel)

P — Behold the Lamb of God, behold him who takes away the sins of the world. Blessed are those called to the supper of the Lamb.

All — Lord, I am not worthy that you should enter under my roof, but only say the word and my soul shall be healed.

Communion Antiphon

(Ps 147:12, 14)

O Jerusalem, glorify the Lord, who gives you your fill of finest wheat.

Prayer after Communion (Stand)

P — Let us pray. (Pause)

May the communion in your Sacrament that we have consumed, save us, O Lord, and confirm us in the light of your truth.
Through Christ our Lord.
All — Amen.

THE CONCLUDING RITES

P — The Lord be with you.
All — And with your spirit.

Prayer over the People

P — Bow down for the blessing. (Pause)

Turn your people to you with all their heart, O Lord, we pray, for you protect even those who go astray, but when they serve you with undivided heart, you sustain them with still greater care.

Through Christ our Lord.
All — Amen.
P — And may the blessing of almighty God, the Father, and the Son, (†) and the Holy Spirit, come down on you and remain with you for ever.
All — Amen.

Dismissal

P — Go forth, the Mass is ended.
All — Thanks be to God.