



# LIVING THE GOSPEL

**19<sup>th</sup> Sunday in Ordinary Time  
August 11<sup>th</sup> 2024**

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**Theme: "I am the living bread which came down from heaven;..and the bread which I shall give for the live of the world is my flesh."**

## **Gathering Prayer**

**All:** Almighty ever-living God, whom, taught by the Holy Spirit, we dare to call our Father, bring, 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 on, who lives and reigns with you in the unity of the Holy Spirit, one God, for ever and ever. Amen.

## **Exploring the Word**

### **Gospel Reading: John 6: 41-51**

<sup>41</sup>The Jews then murmured at him, because he said, "I am the bread which came down from heaven." <sup>42</sup>They said, "Is not this Jesus, the son of Joseph, whose father and mother we know? How does he now say, 'I have come down from heaven?'" <sup>43</sup>Jesus answered them, "Do not murmur among yourselves. <sup>44</sup>No one can come to me unless the Father who sent me draws him; and I will raise him up the last day. <sup>45</sup>It is written in the prophets, 'And they shall all be taught by God.' Everyone who has heard and learned from the Father comes to me. <sup>46</sup>Not that anyone has seen the Father except him who is from God; he has seen the Father. <sup>47</sup>Truly, truly, I say to you, he who believes has eternal life. <sup>48</sup>I am the bread of life. <sup>49</sup>Your fathers ate the manna in the wilderness, and they died. <sup>50</sup>This is the bread which comes down from heaven, that a man may eat of it and not die. <sup>51</sup>I am the living bread which came down from heaven; if any one eats of this bread, he will live for ever: and the bread which I shall give for the live of the world is my flesh."

## **Gospel Focus**

Jesus continues this week in likening himself to the manna given by God. He, too, is bread sent down from heaven. He gives life where death was before a certainty. He sustains us through this pilgrimage of earthly life until we can enter the fullness of God's promises. He fulfils the work of God in the Old Testament, while also surpassing it by far. While those who ate manna still died, eating this living bread will give life eternal. This was uttered mysteriously for Jesus hearers, for whom the concept of the Eucharist did not yet exist. It remains mysterious for us now. Partaking in the Eucharist is a radical act of trust in the God who made us and loves us and wants abundant life for us.

## **Gospel Reflection**

Sometimes things are so horrible, we say we just want to die. Most of the time we intend that metaphorically. Elijah, in today's first reading, seems to mean it literally. He is fleeing for his life., as Jezebel is determined to kill him because he vanquished the prophets of Baal and put them to death. Parking himself under a broom tree a day's journey into the desert, he prays, "This is enough, O Lord! Take my life, for I am no better than my fathers." It is not clear whether Elijah is fed up with the difficulty of his ministry or he is lamenting his own actions, having just killed the prophets of Baal. Perhaps it is both. In any case, the frailty of God's fiery prophet is most visible.

When Elijah is at his lowest, God's messenger comes with food and water, urging him to continue onward. Obediently, he gets up and takes nourishment, continuing his sojourn in the desert for forty years. Elijah quest will culminate at Mount Horeb (also called Sinai in the J and P strands of the Pentateuchal narrative). There, like Moses, he encounters God.

But the Holy One is not in the fierce wind or the earthquake of the fire but in the voice that emerges out of sheer silence. In the desert Elijah learns of God's nonviolent ways. He does not find the Holy One in the violent wind or the earthquake or the fire but in the silence that instructs him to anoint others: an act of consecration and also of healing.

In the gospel, there is murmuring in the desert by the people surrounding Jesus, just as the Israelites did with Moses. In the latter instance, the complaint was about not having food, to which God responded by sending manna and quail. In the gospel, the problem is with the source of the spiritual nourishment being offered. Jesus claims to be the "bread that came down from heaven," echoing God's promise in Isaiah 55:10-11 of the nourishing and effective word that comes "down from heaven." In this first part of the bread of life discourse, the emphasis is on the bread as a nourishing word. In the second half, which we will hear next Sunday, the emphasis is on the Eucharistic nourishment.

The source of this nourishing word is a point of contention. The people think they know Jesus' origins and family; is he just not like them? Another obstacle is his unusual manner of teaching. He does not preach in Elijah's fiery way, but he waits for God to draw open hearts to himself, letting themselves be taught through listening, learning while not seeing entirely, and finally, responding with belief. This is "living bread," a nourishing word that leads one to cherish all life, to choose life, and ultimately, to relinquish one's own life for the life of the world, believing that this is the way to life eternal.

## **Old/New Testament and CCC links**

### **First Reading —1 Kings 19:4-8**

<sup>4</sup> But he himself went a day's journey into the wilderness, and came and sat down under a broom tree; and he asked that he might die, saying, "It is enough; now, O LORD, take away my life; for I am no better than my fathers." <sup>5</sup> And he lay down and slept under a broom tree; and behold, an angel touched him, and said to him, "Arise and eat." <sup>6</sup> And he looked, and behold, there was at his head a cake baked on hot stones and a jar of water. And he ate and drank, and lay down again. <sup>7</sup> And the angel of the LORD came again a second time, and touched him, and said, "Arise and eat, else the journey will be too great for you." <sup>8</sup> And he arose, and ate and drank, and went in the strength of that food forty days and forty nights to Horeb the mount of God.

## **Responsorial Psalm—Ps 34:2-3, 4-5, 6-7, 8-9**

***R: Taste and see the goodness of the Lord.***

I will bless the Lord at all times; his praise shall be ever in my mouth. Let my soul glory in the Lord; the lowly will hear me and be glad. **(R)**

Glorify the Lord with me, let us together extol his name. I sought the Lord, and he answered me and delivered me from all my fears. **(R)**

Look to him that you may be radiant with joy, and your faces may not blush with shame. When the afflicted man called out, the Lord heard, and from all his distress he saved him. **(R)**

The angel of the Lord encamps around those who fear him and delivers them. Taste and see how good the Lord is; blessed the man who takes refuge in him. **(R)**

## **Second Reading — Ephesians 4:30-5:2**

<sup>30</sup> And do not grieve the Holy Spirit of God, in whom you were sealed for the day of redemption. <sup>31</sup> Let all bitterness and wrath and anger and clamor and slander be put away from you, with all malice, <sup>32</sup> and be kind to one another, tenderhearted, forgiving one another, as God in Christ forgave you.

<sup>5:1</sup> Therefore be imitators of God, as beloved children. <sup>2</sup> And walk in love, as Christ loved us and gave himself up for us, a fragrant offering and sacrifice to God.

## **Catechism of The Catholic Church**

**423.** We believe and confess that Jesus of Nazareth, born a Jew of a daughter of Israel at Bethlehem at the time of King Herod the Great and the emperor Caesar Augustus, a carpenter by trade, who died crucified in Jerusalem under the procurator Pontius Pilate during the reign of the emperor Tiberius, is the eternal Son of God made man. He 'came from God',<sup>4</sup> 'descended from heaven',<sup>5</sup> and 'came in the flesh'.<sup>6</sup> For 'the Word became flesh and dwelt among us, full of grace and truth; we have beheld his glory, glory as of the only Son from the Father. . . And from his fullness have we all received, grace upon grace.'<sup>7</sup>

**1296.** Christ himself declared that he was marked with his Father's seal.<sup>108</sup> Christians are also marked with a seal: "It is God who establishes us with you in Christ and has commissioned us; he has put his seal on us and given us his Spirit in our hearts as a guarantee."<sup>109</sup> This seal of the Holy Spirit marks our total belonging to Christ, our enrollment in his service for ever, as well as the promise of divine protection in the great eschatological trial.<sup>110</sup>

**2835.** This petition, with the responsibility it involves, also applies to another hunger from which men are perishing: "Man does not live by bread alone, but . . . by every word that proceeds from the mouth of God,"<sup>123</sup> that is, by the Word he speaks and the Spirit he breathes forth. Christians must make every effort "to proclaim the good news to the poor." There is a famine on earth, "not a famine of bread, nor a thirst for water, but of hearing the words of the LORD."<sup>124</sup> For this reason the specifically Christian sense of this fourth petition concerns the Bread of Life: The Word of God accepted in faith, the Body of Christ received in the Eucharist.<sup>125</sup>

### **Sharing and Discussion**

1. Have you encountered desert experiences in your life? How has God sustained you through them?
2. What do you hunger for in life, at this point in time? Is this greater than your hunger for eternal life?
3. Do you hunger for the "Holy Eucharist the bread of life"? Why or why not?

### **Closing Prayer**

**All:** God of peace, through the gift of your son Jesus Christ you promise to bring all things into the light. Hear our prayers that with boldness we might proclaim your good news. We ask this through Christ our Lord. Amen.

**Leader:** May the Lord bless us, protect us from all evil and bring us to everlasting life.

**All:** Amen