

Bread for the Life of the World

19th Sunday in Ordinary Time

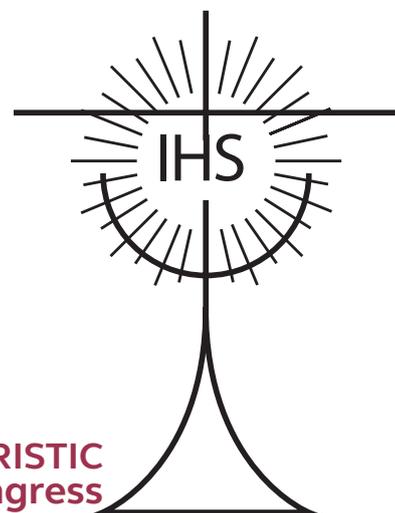
12 August 2018

Readings Summary

Reading 1	1 Kgs 19:4-8	<i>Strengthened by the food he walked until he reached the mountain of the Lord.</i>
Psalm	Ps 33: 2-9 r.9	<i>Taste and see that the Lord is good.</i>
Reading 2	Eph 4:30—5:2	<i>Follow Christ by loving as he loved you.</i>
Gospel Acclamation	John 14:23	<i>If anyone loves me he will keep my word, and my Father will love him, and we shall come to him.</i>
	John 6:51	<i>I am the living bread which has come down from heaven, says the Lord.</i>
		<i>Anyone who eats this bread will live for ever.</i>
Gospel	John 6:41-51	<i>I am the living bread which has come down from heaven.</i>

Readings & Homily Notes

- [Again there is a gap between the end of last week's Gospel (verse 35) and the beginning of this week's (verse 41). The passage expands on Jesus' relationship with his Father who draws people to him.]
 - In John 6: 37 Jesus says 'I shall not turn him away' or 'cast out'. There is an allusion here with story of the Fall as Adam and Eve are cast out of Eden. The Father has sent Jesus for our redemption. Rather than the Tree of Life he offers the Bread of Life and the promise of eternal life. (cf. John 6: 48, 51)
- The Gospel reading begins with the Jews complaining. This is an echo of a number of Old Testament passages including Exodus 16:2 which was heard at the beginning of last week's first reading: 'The whole community of the sons of Israel began to complain...' The people are both shocked by Jesus's claiming the Divine name but also literal in their appreciation of what Jesus is saying not grasping the truth that Jesus offers.
- Jesus highlights the role of the Father in drawing people to him. In the first period of RCIA one of the tasks of the catechists is to help enquirers identify and articulate how God has been at work in their lives and has brought them to this point.
- The First reading, in some ways, illustrates this. What is missing is the encounter with God which follows this passage on Horeb where Elijah experiences the sound of a gentle breeze. (1 Kings 19: 12). Before this passage Jezebel has sent Elijah a messenger and threatened his life. This sends Elijah in fear into the wilderness where he seems depressed. He receives a messenger from God who gives him food and drink, twice, so that he is strong enough to make a journey of forty days and nights to the mountain of the Lord. (The forty days echoing the Exodus and prefiguring Jesus's temptation in the desert.)



- Elijah's encounter with God on Horeb (1 Kings 19:9, 11–13) is heard on 19th Sunday in Ordinary Time, Year A.
- Jesus develops the image of the 'bread of life'. It is the 'living bread', his 'flesh', which is offered for the 'life of the world'. The flesh is body of Jesus offered up on the cross which in his glorified body is offered to us in Holy Communion for the life of the world. In the context of this passage the life of the world is both the kingdom of this world and eternal life.
- Though the Second Reading is not directly chosen to fit with the other readings because the key guiding principle for choosing passages is Christ's Paschal Mystery so it is not uncommon if there are resonances between the epistle and the other texts. In this week's reading Paul tells us that Christ loved us and offered himself in our place as a sacrifice to God.
- By ancient tradition Psalm 33 is sung at Communion and in particular today's response, 'Taste and see that the Lord is good.' This psalm and response is repeated over three Sundays. The response draws attention to the physical nature of the Eucharist —it is to be apprehended by the senses, tasting and seeing. Both are themes in John 6. No one has *seen* the Father except the Son who is sent by him. The crowd cannot reconcile what they see and what they hear. Jesus' invitation is not just to see him as the living bread but he has to be eaten and tasted.
- The second part of the response 'the Lord is good' gives us thanksgiving in response to the gift of Jesus in the Eucharist. The psalm verses for this Sunday could be a reflection on prayer before the Blessed Sacrament: to glorify the Lord and to pray for one's needs.

Homiletic Directory

CCC 1341-1344: "Do this in memory of me"

CCC 1384-1390: Take and eat: Communion

Liturgical Material

Penitential Act

Lord Jesus, you the living bread come down from heaven.

Lord Jesus, you call us to love one another as you have loved us.

Lord Jesus, you strengthen us for the journey of life.

Intercessions

For catechists and evangelists,
and all who seek to draw people to Christ;
may they offer abundant life to all.

For all preparing for the World Meeting of Families in Dublin;
may they grow in love and compassion.

Bulletin material

Now, Israel, what does the Lord your God require of you, but to fear the Lord your God, to walk in all his ways, to love him, to serve the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul, and to keep the commandments and statutes of the Lord, which I am commanding you today for your good?

Deuteronomy 10:12–13

If we truly understand the Eucharist; if we make the Eucharist the central focus of our lives; if we feed our lives with the Eucharist, we will not find it difficult to discover Christ, to love him, and to serve him in the poor.

St Teresa of Calcutta

Invitation to Personal Prayer & Reflection

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

Ps 147: 12, 14

The bread that I will give, says the Lord,
is my flesh for the life of the world.

cf. John 6:51

Communion Antiphon, 19th Sunday in Ordinary Time

The Communion Antiphon is intended to be sung as people come in procession to Communion. Like all liturgical actions and texts it carries potential layers of meaning. In *Celebrating the Mass* it is described as expressing ‘the humble patience of the poor moving forward to be fed, the alert expectancy of God’s people sharing the Paschal meal in readiness for their journey, the joyful confidence of God’s people on the march toward the promised land.’ (CTM 210) In Ordinary Time for each Sunday there is a choice of two Communion Antiphons, the first, usually, from the psalms, the second from the gospels, and it is suggested that preference be given to the one which is in harmony with the Gospel of the Mass. At Mass, as is apparent with the reading of John 6, the proclamation of the Gospel is fulfilled in Holy Communion. With the antiphons there is a relationship between the text and the action, between the antiphon and Communion. The scripture interprets what is happening, what is happening interprets the scripture. Whatever the original context of Psalm 147 the approach to Communion helps us to see the ‘fill of finest wheat’ to be the Eucharist; just as the Communion we receive will be the bread ‘for the life of the world’. Though the second antiphon is directly taken from the Gospel of the day it can be seen that the first is also in harmony. When sung in procession it puts the words of scripture on the lips of the faithful and like other parts of the Mass can be an expression of the people as the Body of Christ and so strengthen the balance between the individual and the whole. To receive Communion is both a personal act of faith and a corporate action of the Church.

- How do you prepare to receive Communion?
- How does the whole time of Communion help you to receive the Eucharist worthily?

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