

**ECHOING GOD’S WORD
IN THE
CATHOLIC FAITH COMMUNITY
NINETEENTH SUNDAY IN ORDINARY TIME
August 11, 2024**

SCRIPTURES:

1 Kings 19:4-8	Elijah is strengthened by God’s food.
Ephesians 4:30-5:2	Walk in Love, just as Christ did.
John 6:41-51	Christ is the Living Bread that came from heaven.

READ THE SCRIPTURES:

Read the Scriptures carefully in your group beginning with the Gospel. Take a few minutes in silence to hear the Lord speaking to the heart. Remember that the word of God in the Bible is primarily addressed to the Church community. What does God want the community to hear today?

SCRIPTURE BACKGROUND:

Ephesians:

Sealed with the Holy Spirit is the only way that Christians can live. The challenge of living up to the demands of the Gospel is too much for the human person ever to achieve. Only with the power of God acting within us can we ever hope to live up to the teachings of Christ. The power of God, which is exercised through the Holy Spirit, makes it possible for us to be Gospel people. Seals were used in ancient times to authenticate the power of the one who imprinted the seal. Christians were sealed with the power of the Holy Spirit so that they could do the works of Jesus Christ, Son of God and Messiah.

John:

People have been murmuring for a long time against God! We are so inclined not to believe that God is with us in all the circumstances and all the situations of our lives. The ancient people of Israel murmured against God and against Moses in the desert of Sinai. “What kind of food is this? Didn’t we have better food in Egypt?”

The food that God gave to his people was in fact The Law. Torah was the real food which came down from heaven as the people of Israel were led from slavery into freedom. The manna was only an image for that real food which would nourish the soul of the people. The rabbis came to realize that what God gives is always life! Those who allow God to come close to them will be given life in this world and in the next.

The New Law is Jesus Christ himself; or rather, he is the New Law, which nourishes for life everlasting. He is the Way, the Truth, and the Life. He is the Bread that has come down from

heaven, the Bread that the Father gives so that we may live forever.

I AM should be in flashing neon lights! It is the sacred name of God, revealed to Moses on Mount Sinai: Yahweh! We have no adequate way of translating that most sacred word. I AM is such a weak expression in English. The best translation is the very person of Jesus Christ the Lord. He is indeed the God with us!

Not only does Jesus Christ feed his people with bread for their stomachs, but he gives his very self, the Divine One on Earth. We become what we eat! We live off the very life of God which is in Jesus Christ. The Eucharist which we share every day, every week, raises us up to the realm of the divine being. And still, we murmur!

QUESTIONS FOR DISCUSSION

1. Can you share with your group how you have been fed by God in ways that could only have been bread from heaven? Have you had experiences in your life where you know God was present with love and with power to raise you above the level of death and dying, to a world where there was hope and love and affection and peace? Even here below?

2. What bread do you have to offer others around you in the world in which you live? Can you bring a touch of hope and of salvation to those who are struggling with pain and with despair? Can you give to others some of the divine energy that you have been given by Christ? Is it possible that you are being invited to pass on that which you have received?

3. Look at your parish community. Look at the Church as it exists throughout the world today. How generous is the Church in giving the Bread of Life to all who request it?

PRAYER

Lord Jesus, you feed our faith.

Lord, have mercy.

Christ Jesus, you nourish our hope.

Christ, have mercy.

Lord Jesus, you strengthen our love.

Lord, have mercy.

CATHOLIC DOCTRINE

Over the centuries, the Catholic Church has developed a practice concerning the Eucharist that is not common among other Christian Churches: Adoration of the Blessed Sacrament in the tabernacle.

For centuries, and until very recent years, Catholics made visits to the Blessed Sacrament reserved in the tabernacle in our churches. As everyone knows, after the celebration of the Mass, if there are any hosts left over from the Communion Rite, these are placed in the tabernacle. A

sanctuary lamp is kept lit, in a red or white lamp holder, somewhere in the area of the tabernacle. The tabernacle is the holy place in our churches where “Jesus is present.”

Since we believe in the Real Presence of Christ in the Eucharist, we are most respectful of what remains after every celebration of the Eucharist, whether on a Sunday or on weekdays. We reserve the Blessed Sacrament.

In the very first centuries of the Church, there is no evidence that the hosts were kept after celebrations of the Eucharist. Several reasons might have contributed to this. Under persecution, it was not safe to keep the Eucharistic Bread beyond the time of the celebration. There were no stable buildings that we call “churches” today. The primary focus was on the actual celebration where people ate the body and drank the blood of the Lord. There are some historical documents from which we know that the body of Christ in Eucharist was sent to those who could not come to the celebration.

After the Church became established and protected in the Roman Empire (after 325 AD), there came into existence public church buildings used exclusively for worship. Gradually, we see the emergence of the practice of reserving the Eucharistic Bread after the celebrations so that the sick might be given Communion before they died. It became common in the Western Church to keep some of the Eucharistic Bread enclosed in a dove-like container suspended from the church ceiling near the altar. These were the first tabernacles.

During those centuries when Catholics abstained from receiving Communion out of a sense of unworthiness, adoration of the Blessed Sacrament in the tabernacle took on special importance. Today, we need to adore Jesus Christ all the more.

The Catechism: # 1178, 1183, 1378-81, 1418, 2691, 2696

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