

19<sup>th</sup> Sunday in Ordinary Time, 8 August 2021

Scriptures: 1 Kings 19:4-8; Ephesians 4:30-5:2; John 6:41-51

Homily: Fr. Ken

The initial message to us from this morning's Gospel is straight forward: All that we have comes ultimately from God. This is where we begin.

In the first reading, Elijah is in a state of despair, unable to continue with his appointed task as God's spokesperson. God's angel comes not once but twice to feed him, and then Elijah is able to continue on his journey to the mountain of God. Without being fed by God, he can do nothing.

In the Gospel, it is Jesus who claims to come from God and to feed us. This evokes a confrontation among his listeners. How can this man, whose human origins they know, come from God? But, Jesus is insistent. The prophet's promise that the people will be taught personally by God is being fulfilled in him. Jesus, who has seen and been with God, is the one to bring God's gift into the world.

The nature and meaning of the gift to those who open their hearts and minds to him is overwhelming. It is variously described as eternal life, the bread of life, the bread that comes down from heaven, the flesh of Jesus himself offered for the life of the world. The Lord has fed his people in the past: he fed his people in the desert with manna, and he fed Elijah in the wilderness.

This food is different because it is a sharing in God's own eternal life. We enter into the eternal life of God our Creator as we are fed by Jesus, who gives us his own life. His gift to us of himself is

total, for he hands himself over to suffering and death on our behalf.

Here we find ourselves at the heart of the mystery of our salvation, and at the heart of our Eucharistic belief. The Christ who feeds us is the Christ who dies for us, and it is in his act of dying that he feeds us. St. Paul, in the second reading, invites us to follow Jesus in this act of sacrifice, loving others as he has loved us, giving up our lives as an offering and sacrifice to God.

We try to bring both elements of Christ's gift to us into our worship and into our very lives.

The Eucharist we celebrate is by definition an act of thanksgiving. We open ourselves to all Christ wishes to give us. We listen to his word, we see his peace in each other, we receive him in the bread and in the wine. WE acknowledge how each moment of our life is touched by the extraordinary power of God, and our weekend celebration especially brings us together to open ourselves as a community and as a parish to all that his mysterious gift entails.

We give of ourselves, in imitation of Christ, in our commitment to each other, especially to those who are poor. The gift of Christ's life becomes the gift of our lives, and as he rises from the dead, so we too rise to new life in him.

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