

Life -Giving Bread

I. A LOOK AT THE THREE READINGS

FIRST READING (1 Kgs 19:4-8)

Elijah runs for his life and wants to die

⁴And [Elijah] went a day's journey into the wilderness, until he came to a solitary broom tree and sat beneath it. He prayed for death: "Enough, LORD! Take my life, for I am no better than my ancestors." ⁵He lay down and fell asleep under the solitary broom tree,

An angel comes and makes him eat (so that he won't die)

but suddenly a messenger* touched him and said, "Get up and eat!" ⁶He looked and there at his head was a hearth cake and a jug of water.

Elijah repeats lying down (hoping to die)

After he **ate** and **drank**, he lay down again,

The angel insists that he eat more for the long journey.

⁷but the angel of the LORD came back a second time, touched him, and said, "Get up and eat or the journey will be too much for you!"

Elijah obeys. Things happen as planned.

⁸He got up, **ate**, and **drank**; then strengthened by that **food**, he walked forty days and forty nights to the mountain of God, Horeb.

THE FOCUS: Eating in order to Reach Destination

COMMENTARY

- Elijah is running for his life because Jezebel, the pagan queen of Israel, seeks to kill him, because he killed her prophets (prophets of Baal).
- In his desperation, Elijah desires to die. But an angel comes to feed him (God's intervention) with two imperatives: get up and eat. He also drinks as there is water.



The Bread that makes us live!

- Then Elijah goes back to the dying position.
- Again the angel commands: get up and eat.
- The angel gives a reason: his journey is long (not so much to preserve his life).
- When he eats and drink, he is able to reach his destination.
- Broom tree = shrub
- Horeb = Sinai

REFLECTIONS

When we experience success, we may also feel depressed. Not everyone would be happy for us. In fact, some would challenge us or seek our life. And we are afraid. So we run away.

In our depression (*wanting to die*), God intervenes through a friend or someone else or an event. In the case of Elijah, through an angel.

God provides for our needs to survive. God sees we still have a long way to go.

RESPONSORIAL PSALM (Ps 34:2-7)

TASTE AND SEE THE GOODNESS
OF THE LORD.

SECOND READING (Eph 4:30—5:2)

Relation with the Holy Spirit

³⁰And **do not grieve** the holy Spirit of God, with which you were sealed for the day of redemption.* ^{31v}All bitterness, fury, anger, shouting, and reviling **must be removed** from you, along with all malice.

Relation with one another (pattern: command + reason)

³²[And] **be kind to one another, compassionate, forgiving** one another (command) as God has forgiven you in Christ (reason).

Relation with God (pattern: command + reason)

^{5-1a}So **be imitators of God**,* as beloved children, ^{2b}and **live in love**, (command) as Christ loved us and handed himself over for us as a sacrificial offering to God for a fragrant aroma (reason).

THE FOCUS: Christian Living

COMMENTARY

- To live in the spirit, get rid of bitterness, fury, anger, shouting, reviling and malice.
- To live with others, one must be kind, compassionate and forgiving to one another (reciprocal practice of kindness and charity).
- To live with God (Father), imitate him, live in love.
- Love here means to give oneself to others (sacrifice).
- God is the model of Christian living.
- Christ is the manifestation of God's will for us. In Christ (v.32).
- As Christ loved... and handed over...(5:1).
- The principle of Christian living is Christ.

REFLECTIONS

The mystery of Christ is the sole motive for Christian charity and authenticity.

As Christians, we go up higher in our motivations in living virtuous lives.

We should be motivated by Christ himself.

GOSPEL READING (Jn 6:41-51)

The Jews to Jesus

⁴¹The Jews murmured about him because he said, "I am the **bread** that came down from heaven," ^{42v}and they said, "Is this not Jesus, the son of Joseph? Do we not know his father and mother? Then how can he say, 'I have come down from heaven'?"

Jesus to the Jews

^{43v}Jesus answered and said to them, "Stop murmuring* among yourselves. ⁴⁴No one can come to me unless the Father who sent me draw him, (*To accept Jesus and his claims is a gift from the Father*), and I will raise him on the last day (*salvation*).

^{45x}It is written in the prophets: 'They shall all be taught by God.'/Everyone who listens to my Father and learns from him comes to me. ^{46y}Not that anyone has seen the Father except the one who is from God; he has seen the Father.

⁴⁷Amen, amen, I say to you, whoever believes has eternal life (*salvation*).

⁴⁸I am the **bread of life**. ^{49z}Your ancestors ate the **manna** in the desert, but they died; ⁵⁰this is the **bread** that comes down from heaven so that one may eat it and not die. ^{51a}I am the living **bread** that came down from heaven; whoever eats this **bread** will live forever; and the **bread** that I will give is my flesh for the life of the world."*(salvation)*

THE FOCUS: Jesus is the Bread of Life

COMMENTARY

- In v.41, Jesus’ claim is totally unacceptable to the Jews. Outrageous claim. Jesus speaks metaphorically, “I am the bread....”, “from heaven...”
- In v.43, Jesus clarifies: The Jews do not accept him because they are not drawn by the Father.
- Those who are drawn and therefore believe are assured of salvation (life after death).
- Those who listen to his Father must necessarily go to Jesus (v.45).
- Maybe the Jews are not listening at all to the Father, that’s why, they can’t accept him.
- Belief (faith) is the response to the claim of Jesus. It has a reward =eternal life (v.47).
- Faith is concretized in the eating of the bread.
- The bread is his own flesh.
- Jews in John = those who oppose Jesus.

REFLECTIONS

The center of the eucharistic meal is Jesus himself, whose origins can be traced to heaven (*the new manna, the real one who gives life, no more death unlike in Exodus time*).

Eternal life (salvation) is promised to those who partake in the eucharistic meal.

II. TYING THE THREE READINGS TOGETHER TO DEVELOP YOUR HOMILY/SHARING

God provides food for the desperate, lonely prophet Elijah after his successful bout with the prophets of Baal (First Reading).

Christ is the reason for Christian living (*ethical and moral life*), life that communicates love, forgiveness, etc., to one another. These are behaviors practiced during meals (Second Reading).

Jesus Christ is the food himself (bread) coming down from heaven (Gosepl Reading).

How to develop your homily

Relate experiences of being broken, defeated, demoralized (in spite of victories, accomplishments). Like Elijah, we tend to give up right away. Energies seem to go down the drain. Efforts and sacrifices become useless. You do not want to do it again. You want to die.

But here we are, still alive and kicking. We do not commit suicide; we do not stop because some heaven-sent people (friends, institutions) give us words of encouragement and moral support, commanding us to pick up our broken pieces. They provide us materials (food, money) so that we may continue what we are doing.

Like Elijah, we have to submit ourselves to God. He has great plans for us. He has stored for us the real consolation which is yet to come. We continue with our journey.

As Christians, we are nourished by the gospel, by the words and claims of Jesus, and most especially by his body and blood. Our journey revealed by Christ is specifically, journey to eternal life, not to a mountain and to a short experience of bliss.

Jesus is still here to offer himself in the form of bread and wine and through the presence of fellow travellers who experience the same troubles.

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III. OUR CONTEXT

1. Increasing appreciation for the Liturgy of the Word by becoming more punctual.
2. The young people in our parishes are learning to do more outreach program: e.g. GK, immersions and medical mission.
3. Why is waging peace and promotion of justice sometimes downplayed by us who claim to be Eucharistic People? (HM).