

Nineteenth Sunday in Ordinary Time

August 12, 2018

First Reading – 1 Kings 19:4-8

Responsorial Psalm – Taste and see the goodness of the Lord

Second Reading – Ephesians 4:30 – 5:2

Alleluia – I am the living bread that came down from heaven, says the Lord; whoever eats the bread will live forever

Gospel – John 6:41-51

Both Readings, the Responsorial Psalm, the Alleluia, and the Gospel are all related to our sustenance. As humans, we need food and water to physically live. As Christians, we need spiritual food and water to live. That spiritual nourishment comes to us through the Body and Blood of Christ in the Eucharist.

In the First Reading, God provides food and water for Elijah to make the 40-day journey to the mountain of God, Horeb. God also sent an angel to help Elijah have the strength to do what God wanted him to. This was a reviving meal that prefigures the Eucharist. God provides us with what we need to do His work.

In the Second Reading, we are asked to be imitators of God and to live as Christ loved us, because He handed himself over as a sacrificial offering to God. Christ offered his Body and his Blood so that we could be freed from sin. The Eucharist sets before us what we are called to be: people who live together in peace.

In the Gospel, Jesus said “I am the bread that came down from heaven”. As recently written in the Reflections section of the Catholic Times, ‘If we as Christians would only open our hearts to Jesus in the Eucharist, we would be able to experience with the Psalmist a new growth in our spiritual ability to “taste and see the goodness of the Lord!”’ The article also stated, ‘Frequent holy reception of the Eucharist is therefore greatly recommended by the saints. Each time we receive him, He receives us, transforming us more and more into his image and likeness.’

I do not know how people who say they are Christians, but do not need to belong to a Church or attend regular services, get spiritually fed. I do know that just as my physical body needs food to stay alive, my spiritual body needs to be fed on a regular basis also. We have temptations every day that lead us away from the life God wants for us and we need the spiritual nourishment we receive at Mass to get through every week. I pray that all of us truly appreciate what a Blessing we have in the opportunity to partake in the Eucharist.

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