

19th Sunday Ordinary time, Year B: 1 Kgs 19:4-8; Psalm 33:2-9; Ephesians 4:30-5:2;
John 6:41-51

Introduction: In our Gospel reading today, Jesus shows the connection between the bread of life that he gives to those who believe in him and the manna that God gave to the wandering people in the desert. St Paul warns us in the second reading that we need to live good lives so as to partake properly and fully in this sacred meal, Christ himself. To do otherwise is to sadden the Holy Spirit. Gathered as the people of God, dear friends, let us pray to God to accept our worship, praise and petitions and to give us healing and consolation.

Homily: Sometimes and on certain occasions, we just find ourselves weary, tired, sore, irritable and feeling sorry for ourselves. In other words, we just feel out of our depths. Most of the time, we don't even know why we feel the way we do. At other times, we know why –may be some anger has caught up with us all day, or there is certain irritation or disenchantment about our condition of work; perhaps we are victims of bully, spitefulness, calumny and constant nagging all around us. Sometimes the weather get annoying due to its unbearable heat or miserable rain and wind or even the cold freezing temperature. This unwelcome mood can keep us utterly disgusted about everything. We may feel that our life and world is enshrouded in darkness or utter misery. On such moments we get scared and even imagine the presence of depression, even when in reality, it does not exist.

In our first reading, we encounter Prophet Elijah in such fits of misery and sadness. The Scripture tells us, "Elijah went into the wilderness, a day's journey and sitting under a furze bush wished he were dead. Lord, he said, I have had enough, take my life..." (1 Kings 19:4). After battling to purify the religion of Israel and after meeting with such stiff resistance and opposition from the people, he felt he had exhausted all his resources. All he wanted at this stage was death. It was at this moment that God reached out to console him. God spoke to him in a still small voice.

When we are weighed down by our own worries what do we do? Do we pretend that all is well? Do we give vent to constant anger, bitterness, and rancour? Do we blame our woes on people and absorb ourselves of every blame? Do heap all our blames on God and on religion and vow to withdraw our worship of God? What exactly is our tendencies on occasions like that? Can we think of the most recent time or occasion when we felt really down and low and irritable. In a situation such as described above negative thoughts may be our inclination, but that is a very bad and destructive approach. Anger like an acid corrodes and eats into us without harming those to whom they are directed. Negative thoughts tend to damage our peace of mind, making us intolerable, and impossible to live with. When we refuse to be consoled, we infect people with our problems. In the same way that happiness and joy are infectious, sadism and bitterness are also.

In every situation in which we find ourselves, we must not forget that we are God's own people and members of the family of God. In 1 Pet 2:9, we are reminded that we are a chosen race, holy nation, people set apart. St Paul tells us that nothing can separate us from the love of God (Rom 8). St Ireneus tells us that the glory of God is man fully alive. St Augustine calls us the Eucharistic people, the alleluia people. Despair and lack of forgiveness are the greatest enemy of our faith and the worst threat to our joy. Fulton Sheen said that the heart that despairs does not cry to God. Today the Lord challenges us to hurry and escape from the suffocating, moody and self made Cella of despair and self pity and to get into God's fresh air of peace and joy. The small still voice of God is right there in

us and around us speaking gently into our ears. Let us wake up in the morning and smile with the rising sun as Bob Marley sings in one of his epic album titled “redemption song”.

The food of God, the food from heaven, the Holy Eucharist strengthens us for the journey of life. We need to renew this sustenance always. Christ himself is the true bread that we need for the precarious journey of life. This journey has its ups and downs, foils and foibles, crest and crisis and only Christ can help us weather its storm. Elijah became strong again after being fed by the Angel, we too become strong when Christ is in us as a living and ever present guest. He helps us to overcome the pains and hurts of life. He helps us forgive readily. He makes us not to horde hurts and grudges and assists us to get rid of our junk room of spitefulness. Christ makes our lives to be uncluttered and this cheers us up and cheers up the Holy Spirit of God.

Do we think about what we are doing when we go to communion? Do we see it as a healing power? Do we see it as partaking in Jesus’ death to give life to us? Do we discover the peace that comes with communion? Does it influence our lives during the week? Do we miss it dreadfully when we cannot partake of it? I hope that you will spend some time this week to ask yourselves these questions and attempt answering them. We pray that the Eucharist becomes truly a healing sacrament for us all and that it leads us to what St Paul bids us – ‘to be kind to one another, tender hearted, forgiving one another as God in Christ has forgiven us. Amen.