

ctkAlive! Scripture Study
19th Sunday in Ordinary Time
2021—B Cycle



"Jesus is Rejected in His Hometown"
drawing by Marten de Vos
(b. 1532 – d. 1603)

Opening Prayer

(edited for use here)

Liturgical Prayer on the Nineteenth Sunday in Ordinary Time (B Cycle)

Lord Jesus,
you are the bread of life,
the manna that sustains me
in the desert of my daily life.

Without you,
I may hunger for righteousness
but will forever be found wanting.
Sustain me, O Lord,
and keep me in your grace
through the vessel of your
most holy Body and Blood.
Amen.

Scripture Readings

First Book of Kings 19: 4-8 "Elijah (when starving) prayed for death, saying, 'This is enough, O Lord!'"

Psalm 34: 2-9 "I will bless the Lord at all times. His prayer shall be ever in my mouth."

Ephesians 4: 30 to 5: 3 "All bitterness, fury, anger, shouting and reviling must be removed from you, along with all malice."

John 6: 41-51 “Is this not Jesus, son of Joseph? . . . Then how can he say, I have come down from heaven?”

A Reading from the First Book First Kings (19: 4-18)



A desert Broom Tree

“Then Elijah sat down under a broom tree and prayed to die, ‘(That’s) enough, Yahweh, take away my life for I am dying.’ He lay down and went to sleep under the broom tree.

“Then an angel touched him and said, ‘Get up and eat.’

“Elijah looked and saw at his head, a cake baked on hot stones and a jar of water. He ate and drank and went back to sleep.

“The angel of Yahweh came a second time to him, saying, ‘Get up and eat, for the journey is

too long for you.’

“He got up, ate and drank, and on the strength of that food, he traveled for forty days and forty nights to Horeb (Sinai), the mount of God.”

Personal Reflection

Fearing for his life, Prophet Elijah and fled from danger. He crossed the two kingdoms of Israel and Judah from north to south (around 150 miles). The 40-day journey proved too long for prophet, so God provided a shade tree and loaves of mysterious bread (twice!). Fed and rested again, Elijah traveled forty days and forty nights.

This event reminds us of the manna given to the Hebrews in the desert. It also reminds us of Jesus’ retreat-like time in the wilderness. Elijah’s and Jesus’ solitary desert experiences illustrate our own need for periodic desert/alone time. Today, we may call it a “retreat” or “time away.” These periods (of any length) strengthen us to travel forward on the daily road of our busy lives.

“Then Elijah sat down under a broom tree and prayed to die, ‘(That’s) enough, Yahweh! Take away my life for I am dying.’”

— *When in my life have I said God, “I’ve had it! I just can’t take this anymore!”— or words to that effect? What happened next?*

This reading reminds us of the manna given to the Hebrews in the desert and also of Jesus’ retreat-like time in the wilderness.

— *When did I last make a spiritual retreat, be it for a day, a weekend, or longer? What did I gain from my “desert time” with the Lord? Would I consider doing it again (perhaps when Covid restrictions no longer apply)? If, not, why? What can I do to substitute for the sake of my spiritual and emotional health?*

— *In what sense has my year-and-a-half Covid experience been like a long retreat? How has this period changed me for the better? Or the worse?*

Responsorial Psalm 34 (2-9)

Praise and fear of God
(slightly edited version)

Taste and see the goodness of the Lord.

My soul makes its boast in Yahweh;
let the lowly hear and rejoice.

Oh, let us magnify Yahweh!

Together, let us glorify his name.

Taste and see the goodness of the Lord.

I sought Yahweh, who answered
and delivered me from all my fears.

They who look to Yahweh are radiant with joy,
their faces never cloud with shame.

Taste and see the goodness of the Lord.

When the poor cry out,
Yahweh hears and saves them from distress.

Yahweh's angel encamps and patrols,
to keep safe those who fear the Lord.

Oh, see and taste the goodness of Yahweh!

Blessed is the one who finds shelter in the Lord!

Taste and see the goodness of the Lord.

Personal Reflection

Psalm 34 is called “a song for martyrs.” The words, “They who look to him are radiant with joy,” inspired and comforted Cardinal [St. John Fisher](#), at the hour of his martyrdom in London on June 22, 1535, by order of King Henry VIII. He was so weak he needed support. Holding his copy of the New Testament, Fisher mounted the scaffold and saw the sun shining behind the scaffold from which he would hang. He looked toward Jesus, who would bestow on him the radiance of the beatific vision.

This psalm invites “everyday martyrs,” like us, to endure our daily trials and suffering.

“I sought Yahweh, who answered and delivered me from all my fears.”

— *When was the last time God answered my prayer in a recognizable way?*
What feelings did that awareness arouse in me? What impact has that awareness had on me since then?

This psalm invites all unknown, everyday martyrs to endure their daily suffering.

— *I may not be a “martyr” in the classic definition of the word, but how am I aware of the daily “martyrdom” of my own vocation in life as clergyman, vowed religious, single lay person, husband or wife, father or mother? Also in my job or profession?*

A Reading from St. Paul's Second Letter to the Ephesians (4: 30 to 5:3)

“Do not sadden the Holy Spirit of God, with whom you were marked. He will be your distinctive mark on the day of salvation. Do away with all quarreling, rage, anger, insults, and every kind of malice. Instead, be good and understanding, forgiving one another, as God forgave you, in Christ. As most beloved children of God, strive to imitate him. Follow the way of love, the example of Christ, who loved you. He gave himself up for us, and became the offering and sacrificial victim, whose fragrance rises to God.”

Personal Reflection

St. Paul teaches us that a life lived in faith does not allow us to live in any old haphazard way we want. He lays out a clear set of moral mandates as signs of *true* conversion to Christ. He sees these life choices as basic to committed Christian living. Throughout his letters to the various communities, Paul marks as signposts of a true Christian life with terms such as: live “according to the Spirit” (Romans 8: 5); live “as children of light” (Ephesians 5:8); live as “persons free in Christ” (Galatians 5: 1).

— *How am I doing today with Paul’s “do away withs” (quarreling, rage, anger, insults, and every kind of malice) in my life and relationships?*

“Instead, be good and understanding, forgiving one another, as God forgave you, in Christ. As most beloved children of God, strive to imitate him.”

— *How am I doing today with Paul’s “insteads” (goodness, understanding, forgiveness, striving to imitate Christ)? Which of these do I find hardest to embrace?*

Proclamation from the Gospel according to John (6: 41-51)



“Bread of Life” courtesy of Deacon [Silvain Brison](#) on [Unsplash](#)

“The Jews murmured because Jesus had said, ‘I am the bread which comes from heaven.’

“They said, ‘This man is the son of Joseph, isn’t he? We know his father and mother. How can he say that he has come from heaven?’

“Jesus answered them, ‘Do not murmur among yourselves. No one can come to me unless he is drawn by the Father who sent me; and I will raise him up on the last day. It has been written in the Prophets: They shall all be taught by God. So whoever listens and learns from the Father comes to me. For no one has seen the Father except the One who comes from God; he has seen the Father. Truly, I say to you, whoever believes has eternal life.

“I am the bread of life. Though your ancestors ate the manna in the desert, they died. But here you have the bread from heaven, so that you may eat of it, and not die. I am the living bread from heaven; whoever eats of this bread will live forever. The bread I shall give is my flesh, and I will give it for the life of the world.”

Personal Reflection

“But we’ve known this fellow all his life. He’s the son of Joseph, the carpenter.” Jesus’ fellow townspeople believed in God and in the Hebrew Scriptures. They had no problem honoring their long-dead patriarchs and prophets. But this contemporary and controversial messenger? To believe that one of their own—a kid they grew up and played with—could be their Messiah? That was whole other matter. We struggle today—even in our own Church—to discern who, among those claiming to be God’s messengers, truly point the way to the one true Christ present and at work in our world.

- *In our own local, national, and worldwide Catholic Church, whose voices speak to my heart in a way that I can trust as authentic?*
- *How good (or bad) am I at relating with others in my Church who seem to follow different voices and convictions?*

For Inspirational Viewing/Listening

Video:

[19th Sunday of Ordinary Time](#) – Gospel John 6:41–51 - [John Michael Talbot's](#) reflection on the Bread of Life (2.5 min.)

Music:

[“Taste and See”](#) composed by [James E. Moore](#), sung by ValLamar Jackson, Derek Cambell (*not misspelled*), and the Roberts Revival

[“I Am the Bread of Life”](#) music and lyrics by [Sr. Suzanne Toolin, RSM](#), sung by [Jaime Thietten](#)

The Week Ahead

Journaling Prompts

— *Based on this weekend’s Scripture readings, what does the Risen Christ ask me to do TODAY regarding . . .*

*(1) the quality of the love I bring to my personal relationships . . . and
(2) my life as an emissary of Christ, committed to bringing God’s love to the people with whom I interact in person and on social media?*

Who this week needs to hear from me some expression of love?

Who needs to receive from me a moment of laughter and personal concern?

Why do I hesitate?

In the light of this weekend’s Scriptures, take some time to write about events occurring in your life this week and what you see happening in the world.

Preview of Next Week's Scriptures

Assumption of the Blessed Virgin Mary (Daytime Readings)

Revelation 11:9, 12:1-6 and v10 “A great sign will appear in the sky: a woman clothed with the sun, with the moon under her feet. . . .”

Psalm 45: 10-12, 16 “The queen takes her place at your right hand.”

First Corinthians 15: 20-27 “The last enemy to be destroyed will be death, for ‘he subjected everything under his feet.’”

Luke 1: 39-56 “My soul proclaims the greatness of the Lord.”

Closing Prayer

(edited and abridged for use here)

A Prayer for Strength in Hard Times

Heavenly Father,

I'm tired and worn out.

I feel pressure from all the circumstances surrounding me, but I thank you for not letting them crush me.

I'm unsure of how this can or will work out for my good, but in Jesus' name I say *no* to discouragement and despair.

When I feel everything and everyone is against me,

I thank you that I never stand alone.

Thank you for being with me through it all, both as my friend and my advocate.

Thank you for picking me up every time life and its hard times knock me down.

Amen.

Source: [A Love Worth Living For](#) by Andriana

Questions?

Send any questions or comments you might have to algarrotto@comcast.net

Gender usage in writing: We are conscious of gender references to God in the Scripture texts. Often, attempts to rewrite these passages result in awkward sentence structures. We have left the biblical translations as they are but do our best to be inclusive in all other parts of the reflection.

The Sunday readings are from [Christian Community Bible: Catholic Pastoral Edition](#)

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Follow this link to my spiritual novel, [Bishop Myriel: In His Own Words](#).

Coming soon!! Inspector Javert: At the Gates of Hell

(a novel exploring “what happens next?” after we die)