

August 11, 2024

Written by
THE
FAITHFUL
DISCIPLE

Nineteenth Sunday in Ordinary Time

1 Kgs 19:4-8 | Eph 4:30—5:2 | Jn 6:41-51

GROW AS A DISCIPLE | PRAY, STUDY, ENGAGE, SERVE

In the first reading, we encounter the prophet Elijah as he is fleeing for his life from King Ahab and Queen Jezebel. He accomplishes a day's journey, then sits under a tree and prays for death. This is a tough scene! He is at the lowest point a human being can be. Yet in this darkest moment of despair, the light of faith flickers: Elijah cries out to God. He cries out for what he thinks he wants, and God provides him with what he *needs*, sending an angel (a messenger) to him with food and water for nourishment and strength. Thus fortified, Elijah continues his journey to Horeb. God took care of his tired, hungry, and despairing child. And over time, and through generations, his people continued to cry out to him, and in abounding love, God took care. Yet they remained separated from him. So he sent them, and the whole world, another messenger to bring food and drink for nourishment and strength: his Son. Jesus says in today's Gospel, "I am the living bread that came down from heaven; whoever eats this bread will live forever." With even just a flicker of faith at our lowest point, or in the best of times, we call upon the Lord and can receive the perfect nourishment of the body, blood, soul, and divinity of Jesus Christ. Through God's merciful love, he is food for this life and the next.

GO EVANGELIZE

PRAYER, INVITATION, WITNESS, ACCOMPANIMENT

Our earthly life is never going to be easy. We will have exhausting days where we feel tired, hungry, and possibly despairing. What's important to remember at those times is that God loves us, travels with us, and he gave us the gift of Jesus to lead us to a heavenly banquet. To have a foretaste of that banquet here on earth requires us to let go of our fears, doubts, anger, and selfishness. Paul tells the Ephesians they need to leave their bad temperament behind and imitate God, living in love. When we open our hearts to the love and joy Jesus offers, we can turn to others and share the Good News that Jesus is "the bread of life" and the bread that he gives is his flesh for the life of the world. He gives us the strength to continue *our* journey, and to help others in theirs. We become his earthly messengers, bringing nourishment and sharing his love.

SERVE Think of someone you know who is struggling right now.

This week bring this person some food or drink. Say a prayer for and with them. You'll be a messenger of God's redeeming love, offering nourishment for the spirit and soul as well as the body.