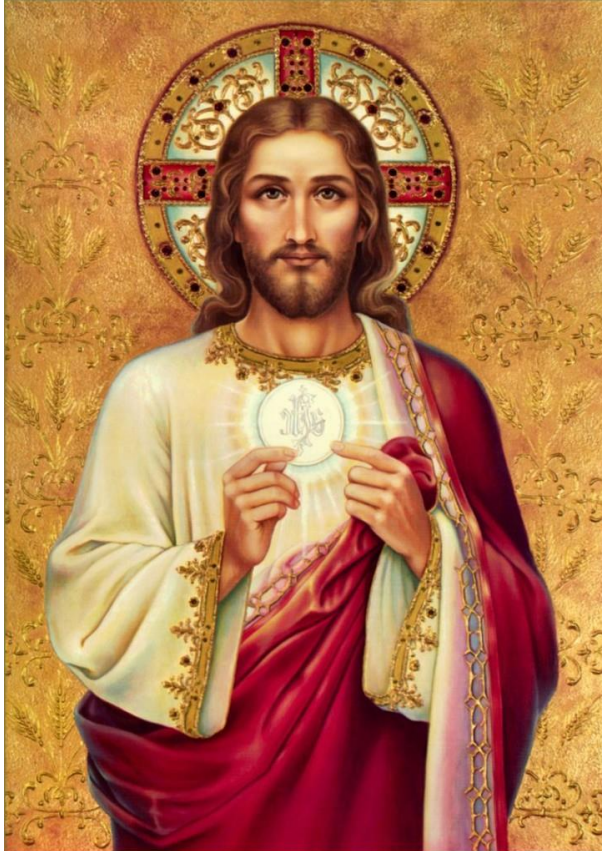


19th Sunday of Ordinary Time

Christ is the Living Bread and Mystery of our Faith

Readings: 1st: 1 Kg 19, 4-8; Ps 33; 2nd: Eph 4, 30. 5, 2; Gos Jn 6, 41-51



Today is the nineteenth Sunday of ordinary time. God continues to draw us to himself to save, feed, and strengthen us on our journey. This Sunday's readings provide us another opportunity to continue our reflection on the gift of the Holy Eucharist, the mystery of our faith, and the life of the world.

In today's first reading, the same Elijah, who defeated Ahab, Jezebel, and Baal's entire prophets, is afraid and running for his life. Elijah, who shut the heavens for three and half years, and later brought down fire and rain, is terrified and discouraged. He lost the hope of survival and thought that God had abandoned him.

This reading is fascinating and encouraging in many ways. This is because many of us are in the same boat right now with Elijah. I have often heard people say to me: "I am afraid and tired of this life." "I am alone in my struggle." "I do not think God still hears my prayers," even, "I feel like

dying because it is too much for me to bear."

Such moments in life that provoke and force us to make such confessions and tough ones. We are almost at our breaking or zero points. Like Elijah, some of us are on the run from different uncertainties of this life. We are saying or acting: "Lord, I have heard enough. Take my life!" So, we can appreciate Elijah's predicament. However, like Elijah, when we think that all hope is lost, God will surely intervene to nourish and strengthen us.

In the second reading, Paul reminds us that as children of God, we bear the mark of the Holy Spirit. This is simply to say that God never leaves us alone in the valley or desert of this life. Through the Holy Spirit, he accompanies us daily. So, rather than making the Holy Spirit sad through our sinful actions, we must obey, trust, and walk with Him.

The Holy Spirit leads us to Christ, the living bread who nourishes and equally strengthens us for our journey. So, Paul teaches us how to maintain this relationship with the Holy Spirit. "Never have grudges against others, or lose your temper, or raise your voice to anybody, or call each other names, forgive each other as readily as God forgave you in Christ."

In today's gospel, like Elijah, Jesus confronted his obstacles. The Pharisees would not believe in Him, nor would they let him have his peace. Instead, they looked for means to discredit Christ and his work. However, Christ did not give up. Instead, he remained focused. He insisted: "I am the living bread, which has come down from heaven. Anyone who eats this bread will live forever, and the bread I give is my flesh for the life of the world."

The good news today is that Christ draws us to himself every day through the Eucharistic to nourish and strengthen us for our journey. He is the living bread that satisfies our spiritual hunger. He equally fills us with His Spirit, who directs us on the right path on our journey. So today, God is saying to us as he spoke to Elijah in the desert, "arise, eat, drink," and continue your journey with new hope, zeal, and a new spirit.

Finally, let us take advantage of this generous gift that God had given us through the Holy Eucharist to enrich our lives. We must do what the psalmist tells us today: "Taste and see that the Lord is good." He is the living bread of life. He is the Mystery of our faith and the life of the world.

Peace be with you all!

Inspirational Quotes

Thomas Aquinas: "The Eucharist is the sacrament of love: it signifies love, it produces love. The Eucharist is the consummation of the whole spiritual life."

St. Gregory – "It is most true that he who attends holy Mass shall be freed from many evils and from many dangers, both seen and unseen."

St. John Paul II: "The Eucharist is the full realization of the worship which humanity owes God, and it cannot be compared to any other religious experience."