

## **18<sup>th</sup> Sunday O.T. Homily**

Today's readings challenge us to be more concerned with spiritual food than with physical food and to get our spiritual food regularly from the word of God and from the Holy Eucharist – the Heavenly Bread- because only God can satisfy the various forms of our spiritual hunger.

The first reading shows us how God satisfied the physical hunger of His chosen people in the desert by giving them manna and quail. The restrictions imposed by God for the collecting of manna remind us to acknowledge humbly our total dependence on God and to trust that He will always provide for what we need.

Today's Responsorial Psalm (Ps 78) refers to manna as "Heavenly bread" and the "bread of angels" which God provided for Israel and provides for us today.

In the second reading, St. Paul advises the Ephesians to satisfy their spiritual hunger by turning away from their former evil ways and by leading renewed lives of love, kindness, compassion, and forgiveness. Paul reminds us that our acceptance of Jesus as the real source of our life and the nourishment of our souls, produces a total transformation in us. Having been nourished by the Bread from Heaven and the word of God, we need to bear witness to Christ by living lives renewed by the Holy Spirit.

Today's Gospel passage is taken from the "Bread of Life Discourse" in John's Gospel. Here, Jesus makes the unique, bold claim, "I am the Bread of Life; whoever comes to Me will never hunger, and whoever believes in Me will never thirst." Jesus is offering the crowd Bread from Heaven, Bread that will nourish them for eternal life, the Bread available to people who have Faith in Jesus Christ-the presence and indwelling of God in their hearts. When Jesus instructed those who had sought after him for earthly food that they should be fed by the Bread that Jesus would give them, some accepted this teaching. But others turned away disappointed, because Jesus' challenge required a commitment that they were unwilling to make.

Dear Brothers and Sisters,

1. We need to receive our spiritual nourishment from the word of God. In the Holy Mass, the Church offers us two types of bread: a) the Bread of Life, contained in God's Word and b) the Bread of Life, contained in the Holy Eucharist. a) The powerful Word of God gives us strength and inspiration to fight and conquer our temptations and to practice Christian love by serving others sacrificially and helping others by sharing our blessings with them. b) This word of God convinces us of our missionary duty of witnessing to Jesus by our ideal Christian life and convicts us of our sins.
2. We need to appreciate and gain the benefits of our Holy Communion with Jesus. Just as our normal food nourishes and strengthens our body, enables us to work, promotes physical growth, and dispels fatigue, our spiritual food in the Word of God and in the Holy Eucharist do these things and much more in our soul. Holy Communion (1) Unites us most closely to Jesus Himself, ("He that eats My Flesh and drinks My Blood, abides in Me, and I in him" Jn 6:57)); (2) Unites each of us individually to each individual member

of the human race through Jesus; (3), Imparts actual graces, including strength, the power to withstand temptation, and the desire to practice virtue, while maintaining, deepening, and increasing Sanctifying Grace in the soul; (4) Lessens the force of concupiscence of the eyes, concupiscence of the flesh and the pride of life (5) Gives us more self-control, freeing us from repented venial sins of anger, envy, evil thoughts and desires, and other evil propensities; and (7) Cancels the temporal penalties of sin according to the measure of our devotion.