

### O. T. 19 (B) Sunday homily:

Dear Brothers and Sisters,

In this our time, we are living a time where all peoples are hungry more for spiritual than for physical food. In response to the spiritual hunger of people, Jesus proclaims Himself to be “the Bread of Life that came down from Heaven” and feeds them with His Word, and finally, He gives them His own body to be their nourishment and His own blood to be quench their thirst.

The first reading describes the physical and spiritual hungers experienced by the prophet Elijah. The Bread of Life that Jesus speaks about is prefigured in this reading by the miraculous food with which the angel nourished the Prophet Elijah in the desert while he was fleeing from the soldiers of Queen Jezebel. After being nourished by the Lord, Elijah was strengthened for the long journey of “forty days and forty nights,” to Mount Horeb, where God instructed Elijah to continue his prophetic work.

The second reading presents Christ Jesus, the “Bread of Life,” as a “sacrificial offering to God for a fragrant aroma.” Paul reminds the Ephesian Christians that, instead of seeking satisfaction in the stale food of anger, slander, bitterness, **and malice**, they are to nourish one another with the spiritual food of compassion, kindness, and mutual forgiveness.

Today’s Gospel describes Jesus reveals himself as the true “Bread of Life that came down from Heaven,” to give life to the world. Jesus proclaims that it is He Himself, the Incarnate Son of God, who is the new and perfect manna, literally “come down from Heaven.” This means that in the Holy Eucharist, Jesus gives us a share of eternal life, while we are still on earth. But some of Jesus’ followers turn away when Jesus explains the Source of His mysterious power and Heavenly origin.

Dear brothers and sisters,

Let us accept the challenge to become bread and drink for others: “You are what you eat! You become what you eat” Let us recognize that Jesus whom we consume in the Holy Eucharist is actually God, who assimilates us into His being. Thus, from Sunday to Saturday, we will grow into Jesus as Jesus grows in us, our lives will be transformed by the power of the Holy Spirit, and we will become more like Jesus. In this way, we shall share in the joyful and challenging life of being the Body of Christ for the world – Bread for a hungry world, and Drink for those who thirst for justice, peace, fullness of life, and even eternal life. In other words, the Eucharist challenges us to sacrifice ourselves for others as Christ has done for each of us.

That may seem to be difficult, or even impossible for us. However, we believe that for God there is nothing impossible. Therefore, it is up to us to surrender all that we are, all that we have to the power of God, for we believe that with the grace of God, everything will be easy and possible.