

Good morning everyone,

In our readings this coming Sunday (Tenth Sunday after Trinity) we continue to reflect on the truth of God's grace and power towards us as nourishment or feeding. In the new life in Christ, we are strengthened spiritually with 'food for the journey.' The Exodus story of manna in the wilderness for the wandering Israelites (which we read last week) and the food given to Elijah in our first reading today as he embarks on a journey to meet God, provide us with metaphorical images to remind us that we are fed by the risen Christ in our journey through life.

1 Kings 19: 4 – 8

We have the brief account of Elijah's flight for his life after the great slaughter he inflicted on the prophets of the pagan god Baal. Consequently, the evil Jezebel, wife of Ahab, the king of the northern kingdom of Israel, wanted him dead too. Elijah's mood seems rather uncharacteristic for the great prophet that he was. Perhaps this is somewhat reassuring for when we experience depression and doubt in our life of faith. Elijah is exhausted and appears confused. His victorious contest with the prophets of Baal does not seem to have brought about the conversion of the people that he had undoubtedly expected. He flees to the south, beyond the territory of Judah and into the Sinai desert. Sustained by the food brought to him by 'an angel,' he walks for forty days and nights to Mount Horeb (Sinai), where God had appeared to Moses. There, Elijah would be restored by a new revelation of the presence of God and given a new commission.

Ephesians 4: 25 – 5: 2

Having described how the Church fits into God's overall plan of salvation and having stressed the Church's need for unity and for Christians to live a new life in Christ, today's reading provides a list of instructions for how this life will work out in practice. The principles of unity and love which are necessary for life in Christ should affect the way Christians behave. Theft, foul language, bitterness, bad temper, anger, malice, are definitely out! Knowing that we are loved by God will help us to love others, with Christ's self-giving love providing us with a pattern for our own lives, enabling us to be generous, sympathetic and forgiving, remembering that we too have been treated with generosity and kindness, and forgiven by God in Christ.

John 6: 35 & 41 – 51

In the Gospel of John there are seven 'I am' sayings of Jesus beginning with today's 'I am the bread of life.' 'I am' recalls and connects Jesus with the divine name of God as first revealed to Moses. These 'I am' words almost certainly did not come out of the mouth of Jesus himself who, according to the Synoptic Gospels, always referred to himself as the Human One or, in traditional language, 'the Son of Man.' John's gift as the Spirit-filled interpreter of Jesus, leads him to express deep truths about who Jesus really is, and is for us. As the bread of life, Jesus is the one who nourishes us with food for our faith-life journey. The food that God gave to Elijah enabled him to walk to a distant sacred mountain to encounter the presence of God and experience the renewal of his ministry. The food that God gives to us is Jesus himself, given in a most practical way in the bread of the Eucharist and enabling us to live the new life in him and to walk with him all the way to the 'mountain of God' that is everlasting life.

A prayer for this Sunday:

God, Father of life, your Son Jesus is our living bread come down from you to give life to us and to the world. May he restore our strength and courage as we journey with him through life, and give us the will and the love to share our bread with those who need it, for in them too we hear the voice of Jesus crying out in hunger (Matthew 25: 35). We ask this in his name, Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.

Wishing you every blessing for Sunday and the week ahead.

Love and prayers,

John