

19TH SUNDAY YEAR B 2021.

FOOD FOR STRENGTH ON THE JOURNEY.

We are in this world just for a time, we are in transit, our destination is heaven our eternal home. In this journey we will face many challenges, hardships, sickness, and confrontations of different types and magnitudes. We need always to be prepared as we journey in faith. We need food for our bodies, and we also need spiritual food.

In our first reading we see the great prophet Elijah facing such hardship and challenges as he championed the worship of one true God as opposed to false worship to Baals and false prophets. We see his humanity on trial as he escapes from the wrath of the wicked queen Jezebel who was longing to get rid of him in revenge. Elijah escapes for his life in the desert, **broken hearted and dispirited**. He couldn't take it anymore. He wished to die. It is in this situation of desperation he was fed with heavenly bread to give him strength both for the body and spirit to continue the journey. We all face such situations in this world. We need food for our journey and words of encouragement like Elijah, **"Get up and eat for the journey, for it will be long."**

This food is so clearly seen in the gospel. The miracle of the loaves and fishes, the living bread, **Jesus Christ himself is the Eucharist, the bread of life**. This is a truth of our catholic faith which sustains us spiritually. **Jesus gathered the people, he taught them, and he fed them. Don't we get this in every mass? Are we not privileged to have this spiritual nourishment?** Eucharist nourishes and satisfies us from this hunger just as we hunger for **companionship, affirmation, recognition, respect, and loyalty**. Our spirit hungers for **cleansing, forgiveness, spiritual rebirth, inner healing, and above all, union with God. All these can only be satisfied by our relationship with Christ through the EUCHARIST.**

In a materially prosperous world, there is a danger of masking spiritual starvation behind the materials. We can have material satisfaction, but we find that we are dead spiritually. Whenever people are spiritually starved, they grasp for anything they find in modern technology **pornographic material or superstitious literatures, filled with false illusions which might confuse and distort the human heart and even destroy life.** We need to feed our spirit with the real food, the Eucharist and the word of truth in scripture which we all get at **MASS. His word teaches us life is not a set of coincidences but rather a journey with destination and purpose, which is heaven.**

Jesus is the new Moses leading us in this journey, He is giving us manna, he is feeding us as he fed the Israelites and Elijah on their journey . He is available to us, giving us strength as he did to great men in our present-day society, the champions of **non-violence, Mahatma Gandhi of India, Nelson Mandela of South Africa, the great Martin Luther King, the champion of human rights.** They all had bitter moments like Elijah and needed strength in those moments.

Dr. Martin Luther King had this to say during one of those low moments, ***“Lord I have taken a stand for what I believe is right, but now I am afraid. The people are looking to me for leadership. If I stand before them without strength and courage they too will falter, but I am at the end of my powers, I have nothing left .I can’t face it any longer.” After this he had the strength to even face assassination.*** What a prayer of submission to God. Like Elijah, like you and me, we can face all these situations. We need **FOOD FOR OUR JOURNEY AND THE SUPPORT OF ONE ANOTHER.**