

## 19<sup>TH</sup> SUNDAY IN ORDINARY TIME, CYCLE B

1 Kings 19: 4-8 + Psalm 34 + Ephesians 4: 30 – 5:2 + John 6: 41-51

Holy Spirit Catholic Church: August 9, 2015

There are times in our life when we feel like Elijah.

We become weary of the responsibilities we have accepted, whether it be at home or our place of employment, or we are overwhelmed by physical suffering or mental anguish that are a common part of life.

We are afraid that we are going to collapse under the weight of all that rests on our shoulders.

We feel like fleeing to a place where there are no tasks, no responsibilities, no suffering—anyplace that is away from our present reality.

Fear fills us, and we feel like we are at the end of our rope.

So we call out to God: *“take my life...I am worn out...I can't do this anymore.”*

Though this may be a prayer of desperation, it is still a prayer, and thus an acknowledgement that God is with us.

These times can be an opportunity for us to realize it's not all on us, that God's got this, if only we will surrender to God, if only we will place our trust more fully in God.

When we do, we discover with Elijah that God provides what only God can provide:

### **Divine nourishment!**

With Elijah we discover that the food and drink God provides is more than ordinary food and drink, for it strengthens us to continue on our journey.

What looks like so little, when it comes from the hand of God, is more than enough!

Jesus knows we need to be strengthened by bread from heaven, that we need divine nourishment on a regular basis.

For if we are to *“keep on keeping on”* in our journey of faith, if we are going to live in love, if we are going to imitate Jesus' self-giving love, then we need help.

The Risen Jesus says to each of us, *“Take and eat, this is my body, given up for you.”*

*“Take and drink, this is the chalice of my blood poured out for you.”*

*“Do this in memory of me.”*

In God's loving plan, Jesus establishes the celebration of the Eucharist, the Lord's Supper, as an ongoing reminder of God's saving love in the great gift of Jesus' life.

Remember, remember, remember how Christ Jesus gave his life to save you.

Be nourished by his life-giving love and be assured he is with you.  
For He is the Living Bread come down from heaven.  
The bread He gives is his flesh for the life of the world.

This sacred remembering of the saving death of Jesus is the reason for the Mass.  
The saving sacrifice of Son of God is what we recall every time we gather  
at this holy table, at this altar of sacrifice.  
He died once and for all for the forgiveness of sins, to save us from everlasting death.

We come into direct contact with the redeeming power of this act of life-giving love  
every time we do this in memory of him.  
Because it is the death of the Son of God,  
the power of such a loving act transcends all time.

So, as we are nourished by heavenly food and drink,  
we enter more deeply into union  
with the One who gives his life for us and to us.  
Knowing this, we find new hope and strength to continue our journey of faith.

In the celebration of the Mass, the Eucharistic Prayer is the great prayer of thanksgiving  
for all God has done, especially through the gift of His Son.  
This 2<sup>nd</sup> section of the Liturgy of the Eucharist,  
begins with the Preface Dialogue between priest and people  
and ends with Great Amen.

**The Preface Dialogue opens the Eucharistic Prayer.**

It is a dialogue between the priest and the people.  
This sort of call and response is a mark of communal prayer.

*Pr: The Lord be with you.                      R: And with your spirit.*  
*Pr: Lift up your hearts.                        R: We lift them up to the Lord.*  
*Pr: Let us give thanks to the Lord.        R: It is right and just.*

**The Preface Prayer follows** as the priest speaks this prayer on behalf of the people,  
but it is the prayer of the people.

Preface prayer concludes with these or similar words:

*“Let us join the angels and saints in their song of praise as they acclaim.”*

This prayer reminds us that we are part of a heavenly liturgy.

That our worship on earth is connected to the eternal praise of the heavenly hosts.

**Then comes the Sanctus---** *“Holy, Holy, Holy Lord, God of hosts.”*

This great hymn of praise is lifted right out of the Book of Revelation. We join the angels and saints and all the hosts of heaven is singing the praises of the all-holy God.

At the conclusion of the song those who are able to do so, *kneel*, which bodily tells us something important is about to happen.

The *Preface dialogue* between the priest and the people, the *Preface Prayer*, and the *singing of the Sanctus* prepare us to enter into the Eucharistic Prayer. Although it is also the prayer of the people, the Eucharistic prayer is spoken by the priest alone because it is such a long prayer. But it is meant to be “our” prayer.

This fact was brought home to me by a woman of deep faith who attended daily Mass when I served in Altus.

When I prayed the Eucharistic Prayer, she was moving her lips and mouthing the words I was saying.

She had been attending Mass so frequently and for such a long time that the prayer had become hers to speak silently.

**The Eucharistic Prayer begins with the 1<sup>st</sup> Epiclesis** as the Holy Spirit is called down upon the gifts of bread and wine.

The Spirit will transform these gifts into the body and blood of our Lord Jesus Christ.

**Then comes the Institutional Narrative and Consecration**

as the priest then speaks the words of Jesus from the Last Supper.

*Take and eat, this is my body given up for you.*

*Take and drink, this is my blood poured out for you.*

In doing so, he and the assembly gathered in prayer fulfill the command of Jesus to do this to remember him.

But not only by taking the bread and wine and speaking the words of Jesus do we remember the saving offering of his life, **but also in the offering of our lives** in love to others as he did that we remember his saving death on the cross.

As the priest says the words of Christ over the bread and wine, they become the body and blood of the Risen Lord.

The philosophical term for how they are changed is “*transubstantiation*,” meaning the substance of bread and wine, the very essence of bread and wine, has been changed. The “accidents”---what the bread and wine look like and taste like---remain the same.

So it is when we receive the Body of Christ, we look the same, but we have been changed in our very essence into the Living Body of Christ.

A tradition which arose in the Middle Ages was the ringing of bells when the priest held up the newly consecrated bread and wine, now become the Body and Blood of the Lord.

The reason the bells were rung is because people did not go to Communion in the Middle Ages, so they would receive Communion through their eyes, by gazing upon the Lord truly present in the consecrated bread and wine. Because the Mass was in Latin, and because many of the faithful would be doing their own private prayers, the bells would ring to alert them to look at the altar to feast their eyes on the miracle of Christ's real presence among them.

Then follows the **sung acclamation**, which is a remembering of this great mystery of our faith.

This is another dialogue between the priest and the people, where the priest sings, *"The mystery of faith."*

The people respond with one of several acclamations recalling the saving sacrifice which is the reason for the Mass and which marks their lives.

*"We proclaim your death, O Lord, & profess your Resurrection, until you come again."*

**The 2<sup>nd</sup> Epiclesis comes next** as the Holy Spirit is called down a 2<sup>nd</sup> time, this time over the assembly, so that they may become one body, one spirit in Christ.

*"Humbly we pray that, partaking of the Body and Blood of Christ, we may be gathered into one by the Holy Spirit."*

The role of the Holy Spirit in the Eucharistic Prayer is to sanctify and transform both the gifts of bread and wine and the people.

**Intercessions** are then offered for the Pope, Bishops, Clergy, the People of God, the whole world, and for those who have died. These intercessions take us back to the *"Prayers of the Faithful"* and the call of every baptized Christian to intercede for others. Why? Because we have been united to Christ in baptism, united to Him who sits at the right hand of the Father to forever intercede for us. Joined to him, we take on his mission of praying for the whole world.

At this time we also ask our merciful Father to grant us entrance into the fullness of life with all the saints who have gone before us and who now sing God's praises in heaven.

The **Doxology** is the great acclamation of praise concluding the Eucharistic Prayer.

*"Through him, with him, and in him, O God, almighty Father, in the unity of the Holy Spirit, all glory and honor is yours, forever and ever."*

The people give their assent by their **AMEN**.

(The word, "Amen", means to make the prayer your own.)

The doxology is the climax of the Eucharistic Prayer,  
which is why the Amen given to it is called the “**Great Amen.**”  
The people in doing so give their assent to all that has been prayed.  
Through Christ, in Christ, and with Christ, in the unity of the Holy Spirit,  
we are able to give proper praise and honor to our Almighty Father.

As the Body and Blood of Christ are lifted from the altar and offered to the Father,  
we offer our lives to the Father in union with Christ, by the power of the Holy Spirit.  
This is what we have been made to do!  
This Symphony of Praise and Thanksgiving has reached a crescendo  
with the Great Amen!

As we join our lives to the Son of God in the celebration of the Eucharist,  
we are empowered to continue his saving mission.  
To cast out of our lives all bitterness, fury, anger, reviling, and malice.  
To live in love as Christ loved us.  
To be kind to one another, compassionate, and forgive one another  
as we have been forgiven.

As we live in this Eucharistic way, others are able to taste and see  
the Goodness of God.

*Fr. Joseph A. Jacobi*