

Reflection for 18th Sunday Ordinary Time Year B

Exodus 16:2-4,12-15 Eph 4:17,20-24 John 6:24-35

Today's readings challenge us 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.

In the second reading, St. Paul advises us to satisfy our spiritual hunger by turning away from our former sinful ways and by leading renewed lives of love, kindness, compassion and forgiveness, and put on the new self in the goodness and holiness of the truth.

Today's Gospel passage is taken from the "Bread of Life Discourse" in John's Gospel. Here, Jesus makes the unique and bold claim: *"I am the Bread of Life; whoever comes to Me will never hunger, and whoever believes in Me will never thirst."*

Jesus was offering the people Bread from Heaven, Bread that nourishes for eternal life, Bread available to people who have faith in Jesus Christ. Some accepted the nourishment, but others turned away disappointed because Jesus' challenge required a commitment that they were unwilling to make.

As human beings, we hunger for many things besides food and material possessions. We hunger to be recognised and honoured, to love and be loved, to be listened to and to be appreciated; we hunger for truth, for meaning in life, for mercy, for forgiveness, for companionship, for peace, and we hunger for God.

Only God can satisfy our hunger and quench our thirst. St Augustine said " O God, you have made us for yourself and our hearts are restless until they rest in you."

In the Holy Mass, we are offered two types of bread: the Bread of Life, contained in God's Word. How often do you read and meditate on the Word of God and be nourished by the Word of God? The Word of God is a lamp to guide our feet and a light for our path.

In the Holy Mass, we are also offered the Bread of Life contained in the Holy Eucharist.

Receiving Jesus Christ in the Holy Eucharist, gives us:

- + courage to carry out God's work in the world.
- + it help us to live the life God wants for us.
- + it help us to know the will of God in our lives.
- + it gives us encouragement to love others and to strengthen the Faith community.
- + it gives us grace to overcome temptation and avoid sin.

+ it gives us Joy and Peace of heart, in knowing that Christ lives in us and will bring us to God's Heavenly Kingdom. Hence, we must receive the Holy Eucharist with our whole minds and hearts

The Holy Eucharist is Jesus Christ, who was broken, who gave way His life, makes us whole so that we can have life.

Every time we receive the Eucharist, in a way we should become the bread of life for others and nourish them with the bread of kindness, understanding, forgiveness, hope, grace, peace and love.

"I am the Bread of Life; whoever comes to Me will never hunger, and whoever believes in Me will never thirst."

Fr Patrick