

Homily for August 12, 2018, 19th in Ordinary Time

1 Kings 19-4-8

Ephesians 4:30-5:2

John 6:41-51

How do we taste and see the goodness of the Lord

We have three basic needs: food, security and love. When miseries strike and we are down in the dumps, it is food that is changed by love and memories that become therapy. Many turn to food when feeling downhearted. Chocolate is high on the list. A slice of apple pie like your mother made, remember peeling the apples? Mac and cheese, chicken pot pie, ice cream – whatever brings comfort to our senses gives us peace. In these readings we hear that bread was the comfort food of the ages – manna for the Israelites, bread for Elijah, and Jesus as the living bread.

Elijah preaches but no one listens. He was persecuted, overwhelmed, exhausted and fearful. Elijah's relationship with God was one of honesty and trust and enabled him to speak out and say "this is too hard for me to continue on". Food strengthened him and allowed him to continue on his journey, knowing God had his back. He could taste God's love through the bread and water that was offered. He could see God working in his life.

Jesus made himself available to us as food, food for our souls, as living bread in the Eucharist. Taste and see how good the Lord is. Jesus invites us to follow Him by being co-creators with Him. We have been entrusted with the work of Jesus: to care for all of creation, to spread the Word of God and love for all mankind. Exhausting! As Elijah discovered. Without food we would die – without fellowship life is not worth living.

We have choices in life: complaining, bitterness, anger at God for our wrong choices or the life of the Spirit – love and compassion with our goal being imitators of God, living in love as children of God. We are called to be the living body of Christ. Our behavior either strengthens or diminishes that body.

In community we are joined together in common ways and yet have different gifts that we share on our journey. We too taste Jesus love for us in the bread and wine of the Eucharist enabling us to see the goodness of God in our own lives. God also offers us a life more abundant than we can imagine when we partake of the "bread from heaven, which is Jesus". The sustaining power of the Eucharist comes from the people with whom we gather for worship. In our common commitment, in our shared worship, is a source of strength for each of us to live the Gospel all week. Christ is present when we are gathered together. It is a meal we share with Christ.

Young people in particular need guidance to see the way to follow Jesus. They need to see truth in our words, justice in our actions and how to treat others with love and respect. We are witnesses to God's unending mercy and love. After several school shootings lately it has been

the students who have called out for change, challenging every one of us to do all that is necessary to protect our young people.

With an attitude of a grateful response with our faith, Jesus will strengthen us to enable us to work with one another to secure justice in the world, to meet the needs of the poor and oppressed, to comfort the sick. Jesus is inviting us to another way to live, to radiate what is, to a wider world and respond to it. It is another way of being present to what and why we say we are as Christians in the world.

Our journey of prayer, self-knowledge and asking for forgiveness is made possible through the bread of the Eucharist from which we are sustained. We are never to be ashamed of our need for help or forgiveness. These readings ask us to search our hearts and act from what are our hopes and desires. Elijah teaches us how to pray, honestly, no holding back and how God responds to our prayers.

Frederick Bulchner writes: "the life I touch for good or ill will touch another life, and that in turn another, until who knows where the trembling stops or in what place my touch will be felt."