



## ***19<sup>th</sup> SUNDAY in ORDINARY TIME*** ***YEAR B – August 12, 2018***

In the first reading today (1 Kings 19:4-8), we hear about Elijah's long flight from the murderous persecution of King Ahab and Jezebel. It left him exhausted and discouraged. Feeling alone and abandoned, Elijah even flirts with the idea of death, asking God to take his life – dare we say suicide.

But Elijah was never really alone or abandoned. He was always cared for by God. God's messenger reminded him and refreshed and sustained Elijah with food and drink for the journey, a foretaste of the "living bread" to which Jesus refers in the gospel today.

In the second reading (Ephesians 4:30-5:2), St. Paul reminds us how we ought to behave while we are on our journey here on earth. He says, do not grieve the Holy Spirit, and then he explains what he means. He says, Remove from yourself, all fury, anger, shouting, and malice. That cannot heal a wounded spirit. Be kind to one another, be compassionate and then he asks us to do what is not always easy to do. He says, "Forgive one another as God has forgiven you. That passage alone provides enough food for thought for a whole week's retreat.

The gospel today (John 6:41-51) turns our attention in a different direction. It focuses on what happens at the end of our journey here on earth.

From the beginning of time, people have dreamed about never dying. They dreamed about living forever. They dreamed about eternal life. So, when Jesus showed up in Palestine and began talking about eternal life, people flocked to hear what he had to say.

One of the most remarkable things that Jesus said about eternal life is what he says in the gospel today. Listen again to his words: "I am the bread of life...If anyone eats this bread, he will live forever."

Jesus reveals - that death is not the end of life. There's another life to come and that life will never end. It is an everlasting life. Do you believe that? Some people don't.

St. Paul says that if Christ is not risen, our faith is in vain. But we believe that Christ did rise from the dead. We believe because we trust the witnesses who saw him. He died and was buried, rose from the dead and ascended into heaven. Those witnesses were willing to die for what they witnessed and for what they preached. We trust them. Because of their selfless witness, we are able to believe.

Every time we receive Communion at Mass, we receive the "living bread that comes down from heaven". That "living bread" sustains us here on earth as we journey toward our ultimate destination in heaven. To reach that destination, we must cross the bridge of death. It is the only way to get there.

Reflect today on what you believe about that and why you believe it.

