



OUR LADY OF THE LAKE CATHOLIC CHURCH

Love God. Love Others. Make Disciples of Jesus Christ.

NINETEENTH SUNDAY
IN ORDINARY TIME
AUGUST 11, 2024

The Bread of Life - Spiritual Survival

*I am the living bread that came down from heaven; whoever eats this bread will live forever;
and the bread that I will give is my flesh for the life of the world.*

John 6:51

In our Gospel passage this Sunday, Jesus declares his divinity as *the living bread that came down from heaven*. But the crowd of people who have been following him begin to murmur: *"Is this not Jesus, the son of Joseph? Do we not know his father and mother? How can he say he came down from heaven?"* They are having a hard time putting aside their lived experience of Jesus from Nazareth to accept Jesus, as their Divine Teacher. Jesus doubles down on his message as he quotes the prophet Isaiah: *They shall be taught by God.* (Is 54:13)

Perhaps most difficult to accept in Jesus' "Bread of Life" discourse that we have been contemplating these past three weeks in the Gospel of St. John is that his "flesh," his Body and Blood, is given "for the life of the world." Many who had been following Jesus at that time found this teaching hard to believe and left him. How is it for us? Are we willing to develop a personal relationship with the Lord in prayer that he might sow in our hearts a deeper understanding of his true and real presence?

The Real Presence: Taste and See

We usually think of this Bread of Life discourse as focused on the Eucharist, but the first part of it—just like the Liturgy of the Word in the first part of the Mass—is centered on the Bread of Life as the revelation of God—the WORD made Flesh. Our psalm response this week and following invites us to *taste and see the goodness of the Lord.* (Psalm 34)

We might similarly ask ourselves then, *"What do I need to learn from God in this moment of my life?"* Listening is one of the main purposes of prayer. As we wrestle with the deeper

questions of faith, or as we contemplate important life decisions, do we take time to listen to our Lord by reading and reflecting on the scriptures? To be truly fed by the "Bread of Life" we need to be open and listen—to TASTE—the

"Word of God" each day. Christ's Real Presence is also available to us in the Living Word.

Our Spiritual Survival

Just as for Elijah journeying in the desert in our first reading, God wants to provide us with food for the spiritual journey. Jesus wants to feed us, nourish us, for he knows the challenge of discipleship. Each of us may face life struggles, personal challenges, or relationship difficulties that seem impossible to overcome. When we add in the current state of the world and weather, all may seem overwhelming. Like Elijah we

may be discouraged and wonder if God has abandoned us.

In the Holy Eucharist, Jesus reveals his Divine presence *from* all time and *for* all time: God with us, for us, and nourishing us. More than food, the Eucharist is given for our spiritual life and survival. It is our gateway to eternal life. But we must respond. How are we daily cultivating our relationship with the Lord through prayer, by spending time with the scriptures, and by giving witness to Christ's presence in our lives so that others might believe?

St. Paul, in our second reading, provides an action plan as he reminds the Ephesians: *be kind to one another, compassionate, forgiving one another as God has forgiven you in Christ.* (Eph 4:31)

—Tom Tomaszek, Pastoral Associate

