

2021 August 01

## **Eighteenth Sunday in Ordinary Time**

### **Reading:**

**First:** Exodus 16.2-4, 12-15, 31a, "I have heard the complaining of the Israelites." (12a)

**The Psalm:** 78, "Mortals ate of the bread of angels." (25)

**Second:** Ephesians 4.17, 20.24, "You were taught to put away your former way of life, your old self." (22)

**The Gospel:** John 6.24-35, "It was not Moses who gave you bread from heaven, but it was my Father." (32b)

### **Free Meal?**

Getting a free meal daily is a great blessing. How many of the Americans will go for it? Probably not many. However, there are people in many parts of the world including many in North America who wish for such a bounty. This is because they are hungry, and they do not have food. The people in the Exodus time were hungry and needed food. God gave them food apparently from nowhere. Were they grateful to God for it? Not for a long time, not even till it ceased to come to them, when they started eating the produce of the promised land.

Gratitude was not a stable attitude in them. Is it any stable in the people of this time, in us? We do not have many positive evidences. The people of Judea sought after Jesus the day after the multiplication of the bread and fish. They were again looking for a free meal. Jesus told them that what he gave them the previous day was a bread that perishes. He promised them food that endures for eternal life, which he was willing to give, provided they believed in him. There were no many takers. The impressions of the multiplication of bread was a hangover with them and they wanted such things again. Hence, they asked him to show signs that they may believe. They were demanding signs that go on and on, nonstop.

They referred to the manna and the meat their ancestors received every day in the wilderness. They wanted similar happenings, which alone would impress them. Looking back to them we get the impression that they did not retain the impressions Jesus created in them. They rejected them and him too. The long dialogue of Jesus in chapter 6 of John's gospel, the longest one in this gospel with 71 verses, was to turn their attention from perishable food to the imperishable one, from the material bounties of God to God himself, the giver of all gifts. Jesus in many words tried to impress upon them the necessity to accept himself as their food for eternity. At the end of the day they rejected him and his offer. However, Jesus was uncompromising and insisted on accepting himself, his body and blood as their food and drink, which were capable of leading them to eternity. His offer continues even to this day.

We need to understand the seriousness of this offer and consciously and with great desire and devotion respond to this offer. The same demand of Jesus is repeated by St. Paul in his letter to the Ephesians today, "*Brothers and sisters, you were taught to put away your former ways of life, your old self, corrupt and deluded by its lusts, and to be renewed in the spirit of your minds, and to clothe yourselves with the New Man, created according to the likeness of God in true righteousness and holiness.*" (Ephesians 4.22-24) This renewal is to be an ongoing act in our everyday life. Every worship session is an event of this renewal and acceptance of Jesus as our personal Savior here and now. The test for sincerity to respond to Jesus consists in the

degree of our willingness to change, to move one step away from our present way of life, to move one pew forward in our worship sessions! Are we willing? Will we move?