

Sunday's

READINGS

Exodus 16:2–4, 12–15
Ephesians 4:17, 20–24
John 6:24–35

Scan the code to read
today's readings. ➔



Opening PRAYER

Jesus, in the words of the father of the possessed boy, "I believe. Help my unbelief" (Mark 9:24). Amen.



Thoughts for REFLECTION

How might the father's statement in the opening prayer above apply to our understanding of the Eucharist?

Reflect on your understanding of the effects of Baptism.

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What You NEED to KNOW

Scripture Background

Exodus 16:2–4, 12–15

In this reading from Exodus, we meet the Israelites shortly after their escape from Egypt. They have experienced God's power in liberating them through miraculous events. Another immediate need has surfaced. They are hungry. As they look around, they see nothing but barren desert. It is not unreasonable for them to wonder, "Did God lead us here to die of famine?" The Israelites had experienced Yahweh as the God who transported them to safety, but can they trust him to satisfy their hunger? Quail and manna were God's answer to their question. Although we are not certain about its make-up, manna was likened to bread. Gathered in the morning, it was only edible for one day.

Ephesians 4:17, 20–24

In this section of Saint Paul's Letter to the Ephesians, Paul offers little room for misunderstanding. If you have encountered Christ and have chosen discipleship, you must think and live differently than unbelievers. Jesus has taught us the truth. Your words and actions should reflect the truth he has given to us. You are a new person, someone whose very nature has been changed. You are conformed to Christ. In Baptism you

entered the divine life of the Trinity. You are recreated in "God's way in righteousness and holiness of truth" (v. 24).

John 6:24–35

Even though we are in the Lectionary cycle that focuses on Mark's Gospel, last week we were introduced to Chapter 6 of John's Gospel: the Bread of Life Discourse. Today and for the next three weeks we will continue to hear from John. John uses a tool that we often see in literature. Jesus is speaking at one level and the crowd is answering and asking questions at another level. Jesus asks the crowd not to focus on the material bread that they were given, but on the bread that will satisfy them forever. Confused, they ask how to do the works of God, to receive this eternal bread so they will not hunger again. Jesus responds, "This is the work of God, that you believe in the one he sent" (v. 22). They said in reply, "Sir, give us this bread always." Jesus said to them, "I am the bread of life; whoever comes to me will never hunger, and whoever believes in me will never thirst "I am the bread of life; whoever comes to me will never hunger" (vs. 34–35). These words echo Jesus' words spoken at the Last Supper: "Take, this is my body" (Mark 14:22).





Points to Ponder

Our Daily Bread

When we consider today's First Reading, our left brains may be thinking, "Is this historically accurate?" Or, "What might be the natural cause for what they thought was manna from Heaven?" If we let those questions go, we get to the heart of the spiritual matter. God is providing what they need. Day after day, they receive their daily bread. We call this *providence*, the protective care of God. Believing in God's providence is trusting that God will provide what we need. It presumes the understanding of God as the good. One small detail in the story begs our attention. The manna could not be kept for the next day. Do these words call to mind "Give us this day, our daily bread"? We are asking God to provide for our needs this day. For the disciple the spiritual question then becomes, "What is it we really need, keeping the purpose of our creation in mind?"

- How has the passage from Exodus deepened your faith this week?
- Share a time when you have been manna in the desert for someone.



The Eucharist is the Sacrament of Love; it signifies love, it produces love.

—Saint Thomas Aquinas

Strengthen belief in the True Presence of Jesus in the Eucharist. Visit the Pflaum Eucharist resources page.



and CHURCH TEACHING

Connecting GOSPEL

Why Go to Mass?

Today's readings are overwhelming in their Eucharistic images. Jesus declares, "I am the bread of life." Saint Paul reminds us that our love for neighbor is intimately connected to our relationship with Christ. Without Christ, we cannot bear each other in love. Why go to Mass? In the Eucharist we strengthen our connection to Christ and to one another. Through Christ, in him, and with him we can offer our neighbors the real experience of Christ's love. You

may be the only eucharist another person receives. The Eucharist "is the culmination both of God's action sanctifying the world in Christ and of the worship men offer to Christ and through him to the Father in the Holy Spirit" (*Eucharisticum mysterium*, 6; CCC, 1325). God sanctifies, makes holy, the world through our thoughts, words, and actions.

➔ To learn more, refer to CCC, 1822–1843 or go to Booklet 8, Session 1 in Growing Faith.



Closing PRAYER

Dear Jesus, our manna from Heaven, help us to trust in the Father's providence and to love as you love. Amen.

FAMILY CORNER

Scan here for parent resources. ➔



Question of the Week

Why does Jesus say that if we eat the bread he gives us, we will never be hungry? What does he mean?



Family Prayer

Lord, you gave yourself in sacrifice for us. You give yourself to us in the Eucharist. Teach us to give everything we have to you! Amen.