

August 11, 2024

Nineteenth Sunday in Ordinary Time



AWAKEN

Becoming Disciples of the Word

Sunday's

READINGS

1 Kings 19:4–8
Ephesians 4:30–5:2
John 6:41–51

Scan the code to read today's readings. ➔



Opening PRAYER

Most Blessed Holy Spirit, the spring from which life flows, recreate our hearts to love what is good and reject what is evil. Amen.



Thoughts for REFLECTION

Today's readings present a repetitive theme: God will provide all that we need. What makes it possible for some people to trust God when they feel as if they are dying in a relationship or situation?

Awaken is written and edited by Jo Ann Paradise, D.Min.



What You NEED to KNOW

Scripture Background

1 Kings 19:4–8

It is a common temptation to confuse the prophet Elijah and Elisha. Each of these men was called to speak God's word to the Israelites and neighboring peoples. Elijah lived 900 years before Jesus. During his time, the King of Israel in the northern kingdom was King Ahab. Ahab allowed his wife, Jezebel, a Phoenician princess, to continue her practice of the worship of Baal, a pagan god. Elijah is sent by God to confront Ahab and challenge the prophets of Baal. After showing God's power, Elijah orders the Jews to kill Baal's prophets. In response, Jezebel orders Elijah's death. He flees to the desert. Today we hear Elijah's prayer in the desert. Just as he did for the starving Israelites who received manna in the desert, God provides Elijah with bread and water. Elijah has enough strength to wander in the desert for forty days and nights. Toward the end of Elijah's life, Elisha becomes his disciple and, upon Elijah's earthly departure, assumes the role of prophet.

Ephesians 4:30– 5:2

Paul's Letter to the Ephesians reminds us that we were sealed with the Holy Spirit at Baptism. Therefore, we should not grieve

(disappoint) the Holy Spirit by allowing bitterness, fury, anger, shouting, reviling, or malice to take up space in our hearts. Instead, kindness, compassion, and forgiveness should be the essence of our discipleship. Because we are God's beloved children, we are called to love others as Christ has loved us. Knowing that Christ's love was born of sacrifice, we need to offer ourselves in sacrifice for the sake of the Kingdom.

John 6:41–51

We continue to journey through the Bread of Life Discourse in John's Gospel. John offers us two points for reflection. First, he calls attention to the fact that some of the people who know the family of Jesus are blinded by what they think they know. The compassion of Jesus moves him to try to break through their blindness and lead them to see his true identity. He calls to mind their ancestors, wandering in the desert: "Your ancestors ate the manna in the desert, but they died" (v. 49). He then tells them, "I am the living bread that came down from heaven; whoever eats this bread will live forever" (v. 51). God revealed himself by giving the people manna in the desert. Now, he reveals himself through his Son, Jesus.





Points to Ponder

The Fragrance of Christ

The laws of physics tell us that when we enter a space, it changes. We are displacing the air in a room equal to our matter, or in water we displace an equal amount of water. Saint Paul is telling us that, as Jesus' followers, when we enter a space, the space changes. In our bodies, we carry Christ. His presence is like a fragrant aroma (see Ephesians 5:2). My mother had a favorite perfume that she wore often. After she entered eternal life, my sister-in-law would sometimes smell that same scent in her son's room. Upon investigating, she discovered that he had taken one of Mom's bottles and hidden it in his closet. When he was missing her, he sprayed her scent in the air. Just like that scent, when we enter a space—our workplaces, our family gatherings, or a sporting venue—is it changed because we have brought Christ there? When we leave a space, do we leave his scent lingering in the air? Those are questions worth considering.

- Who brings the fragrance of Christ into your life?
- When you are or have been with that person, how do you feel?



He who eats my flesh and drinks my blood has eternal life, and I will raise him up on the last day.

—John 6:54

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



Connecting GOSPEL

and CHURCH TEACHING

Grace then Sin

The *Catechism of the Catholic Church* helps us grasp why Jesus, God made man, came into the world. We cannot understand Jesus' Incarnation without understanding sin and grace, for sin is a rupture in our relationship with God. Without the knowledge of God and his love, sin has no meaning. Grace, we are told is "the free and undeserved help that God gives us to respond to his call to become children of God" (CCC, 1996). "Only in this relationship is the evil of sin

unmasked in its true identity as humanity's rejection of God and opposition to him" (CCC, 386). Jesus reconciles us with the Father through his self-giving love. That sacrifice of love continues to be offered to us in the Eucharist. Of our own accord, Saint Augustine says, we are only capable of sin. With God's grace we are capable of doing God's will, of living a life of discipleship.

➔ To learn more, refer to CCC, 385–389, and 1996 or go to Booklet 9, Session 1 in *Growing Faith*.



Closing PRAYER

Holy Spirit, give us the capacity to imagine the Kingdom of God. Through your grace, help us to be aware of the fragrance we leave behind when we interact with others and all your creation. Amen.

FAMILY CORNER

Scan here for parent resources. ➔



Question of the Week

Why did Jesus give us his Body in the appearance of bread?



Family Prayer

Jesus, it is hard to believe what we cannot see. Help us to have faith in you and your promise that the Eucharist is really you—Body, Blood, Soul, and Divinity. Amen.