

AUGUST 5, 2018



# EIGHTEENTH SUNDAY IN ORDINARY TIME



EXODUS 16:2-4, 12-15

PSALM 78:3-4, 23-24, 25, 54

EPHESIANS 4:17, 20-24

JOHN 6:24-35

## REFLECTION

I often find myself grumbling too much. I rant to my best friends, who will usually allow me to complain for as long as I want. However, I once learned in a psychology course that ranting to others doesn't relieve any of your stress or take your mind off of the issue—in fact, it only serves to add stress and strengthen negative emotions. In the First Reading from Exodus, the Israelites are grumbling. God hears this, and decides to send them some help; they are literally sent bread from heaven, or manna. How many times, I wonder, do we grumble in this manner? And how often do we fail to see that God responds, and provides what we need? I'm not saying that God always sends us heavenly bread, but we are very often sent something! In the Gospel this week, John shares Jesus' profession that he is the "bread of life" (v. 35). Those who come to Jesus, we read, shall not hunger, and those who believe in him shall not thirst. This is both a statement and an invitation for us. We are invited to come to Jesus, to return to God, and our hunger and thirst will be washed away. Jesus warns against working for "food that perishes" (v. 27) but urges us to work for the food of our faith, which provides eternal life.

## ACTION

You may notice that there is a lot of food or meal symbolism in the Bible. There is talk of hungering and thirsting, of holy bread, coming to table, and of breaking bread together. We, as Catholics, are summoned together every week to share the meal of the Eucharist, which brings us closer as a community of believers and unites our common faith. Christ was the ultimate sacrifice—he gave us his Body and offered himself to be broken. Yet he did not do this passively; Christ, in his human nature, knew that we would need help after he was gone. Christ repeatedly invites those hungering and thirsting to come to God. The Bible is full of these kinds of invitations, to come to God and be fulfilled. One of our challenges as Christians is to pay attention to what we are seeking. Do we ultimately seek the Kingdom of God? Are we working towards this every day, or do we get distracted, grumbling about lesser needs along the way? We are called to come as we are to build this Kingdom. Jesus is there to meet us wherever we are. It's up to us to reach out, hungering and thirsting as we may be, to accept the invitation!

## JOURNALING QUESTIONS

● When was the last time you found yourself grumbling about something? Was it important? For what do you hunger and thirst? How might God be trying to meet you, to relieve you of this hunger or quench this thirst?