

AUGUST 12, 2018



# NINETEENTH SUNDAY IN ORDINARY TIME



1 KINGS 19:4-8

PSALM 34:2-3, 4-5, 6-7, 8-9

EPHESIANS 4:30-5:2

JOHN 6:41-51

## REFLECTION

What does Jesus mean when he says that if we eat the living bread we will live forever? The Jews were skeptical and complaining about Jesus in today's Gospel reading. They questioned what salvation was all about. Many teenagers find themselves with the same question. Challenging or rebelling against previously accepted beliefs is a natural developmental stage that many teenagers pass through. In an effort to assert independence, you might find yourself pushing away from your family, questioning the traditions or beliefs you grew up with. Perhaps you have already decided on some ways in which you hope to be or act differently from your parents. You might find yourself questioning your faith at this time, too. That might make you feel guilty or defiant, but it shouldn't. Asking questions is part of growing in faith. Having some questions, even really big questions, in your heart doesn't mean that you are rejecting God or expressing nonbelief. It means that you are engaged in your spiritual journey. Abandoning faith means abandoning even the questions. Welcome and stay engaged in any questions that you might have. They are opportunities for you to find fulfillment and grow in faith as you live into their answers.

## ACTION

Take time this week to list out all of the questions that you have about your faith. Know that God already sees everything that is in your heart, and be honest as you write down your questions. Admitting confusion or even doubt is OK. Acknowledging the things that you don't know or feel uncertain of will help you to grow in faith. You might also write down questions that you have been asked about your faith that made you feel challenged or unsure. Perhaps your non-Catholic friends have asked you why you have to go to Mass every Sunday, or why Catholics pray to Mary, for example, and you didn't really know how to answer. Take your list of questions to a trusted spiritual advisor, such as your pastor, youth minister, or religion teacher. Explain the things that you wonder about, and talk through the answers. Some questions might have easy explanations, while other questions might take more time as you sort through their answers in prayer. You might want to make an appointment to meet again in a few months in order to talk about any lingering questions, or new questions that arise.

## JOURNALING QUESTIONS

● What questions do you have about Catholic practices or teachings?

● What causes you to hesitate when it comes to participating in the Church or spending time in prayer?