

Read

1 Kings 19:4-8

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

Ephesians 4:30-5:2

John 6:41-51

Nineteenth Sunday in Ordinary Time

August 11, 2024



REFLECTION

No one likes being the subject of “murmuring.” It insinuates negativity, judgment, or dissatisfaction. So often when we find ourselves in a situation like the one at the beginning of the Gospel reading—whether we are the ones doing the murmuring or we are the ones being talked about—it’s less about a genuine desire to understand and more about reacting to something we don’t want to hear.

What was it that the people didn’t want to hear? What did Jesus say? Throughout this passage, we hear Jesus saying, “I am the bread from heaven, the living bread, the bread of life.” With these statements, Jesus identifies himself as the source of eternal nourishment that God provides. Even more, Jesus’ use of “I am” statements recalls the Old Testament name of God given to Moses at the burning bush. By using this name of God, Jesus declares that he is, in fact, God. Our reading today comes shortly after the miracle of the multiplication of loaves and fishes, feeding at least five thousand people, so it’s not as if Jesus’ statements are baseless claims. Rather, they are difficult truths to accept.

QUESTIONS

- ❖ What do today’s readings teach you about the Christian life?
- ❖ How do you respond when someone tells you a difficult truth?
- ❖ What are some ways you can complain less?

ACTION

Reflect on your own tendency to grumble. Murmuring among ourselves does not lead to positive change and growth. Pope Francis has said that complaining poisons the heart, leading us to anger and resentment. This week, work to transform your grumbling into positive action. Whenever you catch yourself complaining, write down the complaint. At the end of each day, review what you complained about and decide how you overcome the issues by turning a negative into a positive. Ask the Holy Spirit for wisdom and the grace to see things through God’s eyes and not your own.



Check out some tips on changing your outlook, with the video “Inspiration to Stop Complaining.”

<https://youtu.be/IQpwlciCKD4>



August 11, 2024

NINETEENTH SUNDAY IN ORDINARY TIME

LECTIONARY #116B

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Ephesians 4:30-5:2

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Prepare for the Word

The following elements may be used by the catechist, teacher, or youth minister to prepare to facilitate today's session with teens. You may integrate this information into the reflection and discussion on today's readings.

Leader's Context

For the past two weeks, we have been reading from John 6, known as the Bread of Life discourse. In it, Jesus explains that he is the Bread of Life and those who eat this bread shall not die. As Jesus elaborates on this teaching, the crowd grows more and more uncomfortable. Today, we hear them questioning Jesus because of his claim that he comes from heaven. They don't understand. They know his earthly parents and can't see beyond that, even when they have experienced his miracles. The young people are invited to reflect on the Eucharist today and the way Jesus is truly present and will never fail us.

Q FOCUS: *Jesus is truly the Bread of Life.*

Liturgical Calendar Connection

On August 12, the Church celebrates St. Jane Frances de Chantal. She lived in France in the seventeenth century. She had several children and was happily married, but her husband died only a few years into their marriage. Several years after her husband's death, she met St. Francis de Sales, who took on the role of her spiritual director. Following the model of Mary in her visitation to Elizabeth and with the help of St. Francis, she formed a community of women that became the Order of the Visitation of Mary. Regardless of her state in life—married, widowed, or as a nun—she served others and led them to Christ.

Church Teaching Connection

"The Eucharist, while commemorating the passion and resurrection, is also in continuity with the incarnation. At the Annunciation Mary conceived the Son of God in the physical reality of his body and blood, thus anticipating within herself what to some degree happens sacramentally in every believer who receives, under the signs of bread and wine, the Lord's body and blood. . . . [I]n the Eucharistic mystery we are asked to believe that the same Jesus Christ, Son of God and Son of Mary, becomes present in his full humanity and divinity under the signs of bread and wine" (Pope John Paul II, *Ecclesia de Eucharistia*, 55).

Hear the Word

Use this resource, a Lectionary, or a Bible to proclaim the reading. The book should be held reverently or placed on a lectern. If possible, light a candle that is placed near where the Gospel will be proclaimed. Gesture for teens to stand.

Gospel Acclamation

Use the same musical setting that is used in your parish or at school Masses. Teens may help with music and proclaim the Gospel.

Alleluia, alleluia.

Gospel

John 6:41-51

Reader: A reading from the holy Gospel according to John.

All: Glory to you, O Lord.

All make the sign of the cross on their forehead, lips, and heart.

The Jews murmured about Jesus because he said, "I am the bread that came down from heaven," and they said, "Is this not Jesus, the son of Joseph? Do we not know his father and mother? Then how can he say, 'I have come down from heaven'?" Jesus answered and said to them, "Stop murmuring among yourselves. No one can come to me unless

the Father who sent me draw him, and I will raise him on the last day. It is written in the prophets: *They shall all be taught by God.* Everyone who listens to my Father and learns from him comes to me. Not that anyone has seen the Father except the one who is from God; he has seen the Father. Amen, amen, I say to you, whoever believes has eternal life. I am the bread of life. Your ancestors ate the manna in the desert, but they died; this is the bread that comes down from heaven so that one may eat it and not die. I am the living bread that came down from heaven; whoever eats this bread will live forever; and the bread that I will give is my flesh for the life of the world."

Reader: The Gospel of the Lord.

All: Praise to you, Lord Jesus Christ.

Everyone may be seated.

Reflect on the Word

When beginning the reflection and discussion about today's readings, first refer to the handout for today. Ask teens what they learned about themselves and about Christian discipleship from performing the action for the week and journaling. Ask teens about the readings of the day: What struck them? What do they think the readings mean? How do the readings affect their own lives? Then begin the following reflection:

► **Have you ever felt misunderstood? How did that make you feel? Were you able to help people better understand you?**

Jesus is misunderstood by the crowd as he tries to explain exactly who he is. He wants them to know him and what he is all about. Jesus is the "living bread that came down from heaven," and those who partake of him will never die. But the crowd cannot grasp this; they do not understand.

They want to put Jesus in a box and tell him who he is. He is the son of Mary and Joseph. How can he be from heaven? The crowd only sees the human aspect of Jesus' nature. They have experienced the miracles he has worked but they still do not recognize his divinity. They have observed him, but they do not *know* him.

► **When have you been put into a box? In what ways might people your age be put into a box by others?**

Jesus does not want this confusion. "Please don't assume things about me," he seems to be saying, "I'll tell you precisely who I am." And what does he tell them? He says, "I am the bread of life."

A few weeks ago, we heard the Gospel reading in which Jesus miraculously fed five thousand people through the multiplication of a few loaves of bread. This miracle is fresh in the minds of the crowd. Jesus says that he is better than that miraculous bread. While the bread is limited in what it can do for a person and once it is eaten it is gone, Jesus has no limit. He is the living bread that brings life to the world.

► **What sorts of things do we put our trust in that fade or fail? Is it bad to do this or are there some things that might be beneficial to us?**

Even with things that are good for us, like exercise, medicines, loved ones, and so on, putting our trust in them is limited; they can only do so much and last for so long. Jesus invites us to trust in him, who will never fail or be limited.

Every time we receive the Eucharist, Jesus invites us to affirm that he is really present in it and is the Bread of Life. While the Eucharist may look like ordinary bread, composed of just wheat and water, it is far more than that. We must look beyond what we see outwardly and affirm our faith in what the Church proclaims: the resurrected Jesus is present in a real and substantial way in the Eucharist.

There may be a temptation to say, "That's just bread" or "The Eucharist is only a symbol." Saying that would be like the words of the crowd in today's Gospel. We know better. Jesus is trustworthy and he is who he says he is. What he gives us in the Eucharist is what he says it is: his own body and blood. This is what we put our trust in, this is who we offer ourselves to, so that we might share in the salvation Jesus offers.

When we meet Jesus in the Eucharist, we should bring our authentic selves. We need not pretend we are perfect to receive the Eucharist. In fact, we shouldn't pretend at all. Jesus was showing his true self to his followers, and as his followers today,

we don't have to be afraid to show our true selves to him.

Wrapping It Up

Consider these points to conclude the discussion and reflection. Integrate the thoughts and ideas that surfaced during the discussion as well as the "Church Teaching Connection" on page 6.

Jesus is the Bread of Life, fully present in the Eucharist.

People misunderstood Jesus at times and still misunderstand him today in regard to the Church's teaching on the Eucharist.

In the Eucharist, Jesus gives himself to us and we offer ourselves to God.

Act on the Word

Who Said That?

For this activity, you will need many slips of paper and a pen or pencil for each participant.

This is a group game that can be played as a large group or in several smaller groups. The minimum group number is four people but can easily accommodate up to about fifteen people. The goal of the game is to have fun while getting to know one another.

The rules of the game are as follows: One person is the reader. This person will read a question from the list provided here, or you can create your own list of questions that are particular to your group. Each player, including the reader, will write a response to the question on a slip of paper and hand the paper to the reader.

Once all papers are collected, the reader will repeat the question and then read aloud all of the responses. The person to the left of the reader is the guesser. The guesser chooses one response and matches it to one player. If the guesser is correct, the person who wrote the response is eliminated from the round and the guesser goes again. If the guesser is wrong, the person to the left of the guesser becomes the next guesser. The round continues until all of the participants have been correctly

matched to their responses. The reader cannot guess. A point is awarded to the guesser for each correct match he or she makes. If there is time for more rounds, the reader can be replaced with another person.

The goal of the game is to guess who said a certain response. The participants are free to answer the questions in their own way, with their own unique style. Guesses will be made based on assumptions about the people playing the game and how well everyone really knows each other! Allow for fun and community building as group members get to know one another even better.

The questions:

- * Something Jesus would say to this group.
- * Not the name of a disciple.
- * Something you wouldn't expect to find in the church parking lot.
- * Something that seems to take an eternity.
- * A church item you wished was also in your home.
- * Your favorite and least favorite foods.
- * Something you love about your church community.
- * Your dream vacation.

Closing Prayer

*Lord of life,
you nourish us with Bread from heaven
so that we may one day join you
in your kingdom
for the feast that will never end.
Through Christ our Lord.
Amen.*

For Next Sunday

To help teens prepare for next Sunday's Mass, print, email, or share on a blog or social media the handout found on the next page. The JPG and PDF files are available at www.ltp.org/lwgr. Encourage teens to attend Mass with family or friends.