

NINETEENTH SUNDAY IN ORDINARY TIME

Year B

1 Kings 19:4-8
Psalm 34:2-3, 4-5, 6-7, 8-9
Ephesians 4:30—5:2
John 6:41-51

Gathering

(An unlit candle, and a crucifix resting on a fresh loaf of bread are arranged on a table in the gathering place.)

Prayer

(The candle is lit. The leader invites members to be attentive to God's presence. After a time of quiet, the prayer continues as follows.)

Leader: Our Father, who are in heaven, hallowed be Your Name.

All: You are our creator, we honor Your name as we give You praise and thanksgiving for all You have given to us.

Leader: Your kingdom come, Your will be done, on earth as it is in Heaven.

All: We look forward to Your presence being known among all people and that peace, harmony and joy will surround all Your creatures.

Leader: Give us this day our daily bread.

All: You sustain us with Your words of everlasting life, You guide us with your Spirit.

Leader: Forgive our trespasses as we forgive those who
✠ transgress against us.

All: We ask your mercy and forgiveness for all that we have done to harm others in the same way we give mercy and

forgiveness to those who have harmed us.

Leader: Lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from evil.

All: Do not test us so that we do not follow You, and keep us safe as Your spirit helps us to recognize and banish evil.

Leader: For Yours is the kingdom and the power and the glory forever.

All: Amen.

(Members sing, "Taste and See". The song may be found on the Internet.)

HEARING THE LORD'S GOSPEL

(The scriptures are proclaimed aloud with a pause after each reading. Following a pause after the proclamation of the gospel, the leader invites members to name a word or phrase from the gospel that stays with them, but without any additional comment. Some may repeat what another has already said.)

When this naming is complete, the leader passes out copies of the scriptures of the week as needed. The leader then poses these questions: "What draws you to this gospel?" "Where do you resist this gospel?" The community pauses for a time of silent reflection. After about a minute, the leader invites members to consider the Reflection and Questions for the week. After additional time for silent reflection, the leader invites members to re-arrange themselves in groups of three or four for sharing. The small groups move off so as not to intrude on one another.)

Reflection



We are in the middle of John's portrayal of Jesus' speaking to the people about the bread of life. We have been hearing of this for a couple of weeks; we will continue to hear of it for a couple more. Having already been fed by the loaves and fishes, the crowd has been following Jesus looking for more. Jesus has been trying to take them to a new level. The bread he offers, the bread of life comes from faith in him. His is a challenging word. Many do not understand.

The Jews are murmuring. Their grumbling expresses skepticism,

unbelief. There is an undercurrent of vocal dissent. “What are you talking about?” “Who are you to say that?” “How can you believe that?” “Show me!” Murmuring arises from the threat of long held ideas and beliefs being challenged. No matter how many his marvelous deeds, the Jews ask for more. The issue is unbelief, mistrust in his message of good news. Belief in him entails a call to a new way of life, a life nourished by a bread that leads to eternal life.

We murmur too. Life often leaves us plagued by doubts and difficult questions. Buffeted by life, we can fall into mistrust about God’s love and care of us. We, too, cry out, “Show me, God”.

Caught in the difficulty of the moment, we need to heed Jesus’ advice; we need to listen for the Father’s word in our hearts and lives. We need to reflect back on our lives and consider how God’s love has already been revealed in our lives. The “bread” he offers is his “flesh”, given “for the life of the world.” This bread of life sustains us in good times and in challenging times, even when we murmur.

Questions for Reflection and Conversation

- ◆ What do you complain to God about?
- ◆ Name a couple of events in your life when God’s love for you was so clear.
- ◆ What questions of faith have you struggled with? How have you dealt with them?
- ◆ How keenly do you sense Christ’s presence in the Eucharistic bread?

HEARING THE GOSPEL’S LORD

(After about fifteen minutes of sharing in threes/fours, the leader re-gathers the community. Once back together, members pause for a moment. The leader then poses these questions: “What do you hear Christ saying to us in hearing and sharing his word?” “What do you want to hold on to for yourself from this session?” “How are you/we being called to live in response to God’s word?” After a pause, the leader invites the community to conversation. When this sharing is complete, the community moves to a time of prayer.)

Response in Action Suggestions

- ♦ Take the Ecological Footprint Quiz at www.myfootprint.org. Then click on the Take Action button to learn ways you can live in a more ecologically friendly way.
- ♦ Reach out to someone you know who is going through a difficult patch in life. Listen and reflect back how you sense that God has touched his/her life.
- ♦ Set aside time to visit a church some day this week to spend twenty minutes in reflection and prayer before the tabernacle.

Prayer

(After a brief pause, the gospel of the week is re-proclaimed by a member of the community. Following the proclamation, the leader poses these questions to the members: "What does Christ in his Spirit say to you now?" "What do you say to him in response?" The community pauses for a full five, perhaps even seven, minutes of prayerful attention to God. A brief instrumental may be played during part of this time. After this time of silence, the leader invites members without additional conversation simply to mention a word or two or a brief thought that captures what they hear Christ saying to them personally.

Following this sharing, a member prays the following on behalf of all.)

All: Taste and see the goodness of the Lord

Leader: I will bless the LORD at all times.
his praise shall be ever in my mouth.
Let my soul glory in the LORD;
the lowly will hear me and be glad.

All: Taste and see the goodness of the Lord

Psalm 34:2-3

(After a time of silence, the prayer concludes as follows.)

All: Come Holy Spirit, fill the hearts of your faithful,
that we may be recreated in your likeness and image,
that with you, we may work to renew the face of the earth.
Amen.

