

Reflection Questions

- Can you identify with Elijah's feeling of wanting to give up the fight?
 - What happened and how did you find the grace to overcome?
- What spiritual food is your soul craving?
 - How can you incorporate prayer, spiritual reading, corporal/spiritual works of mercy, or the Eucharist into your daily routine?
 - Are there particular practices you would like help with?

Corporal Works of Mercy

- feed the hungry
- give drink to the thirsty
- shelter the homeless
- clothe the naked
- visit the sick and imprisoned
- bury the dead
- give alms to the poor

Spiritual Works of Mercy

- instruct the ignorant
- counsel the doubtful
- admonish the sinner
- forgive injuries
- comfort the sorrowful
- bear wrongs patiently
- pray for the living and the dead

19th Sunday in Ordinary Time



Elijah went a day's journey into the desert, until he came to a broom tree and sat beneath it.

He prayed for death saying:

"This is enough, O LORD!

Take my life, for I am no better than my fathers."

He lay down and fell asleep under the broom tree,

but then an angel touched him and ordered him to get up and eat.

Elijah looked and there at his head was a hearth cake

and a jug of water.

After he ate and drank, he lay down again, but the angel of the LORD came back a second time,

touched him, and ordered,

"Get up and eat, else the journey will be too long for you!"

He got up, ate, and drank;

then strengthened by that food,

he walked forty days and forty nights to the mountain of God, Horeb.

Taken from the 1st Book of Kings, this passage is our first reading in this coming Sunday's mass. Many of us may be able to relate to Elijah's lost enthusiasm for life and desire to give up. "Take my life," is a request that God interprets a bit differently than we do. When we enter recovery desperate for change, God finds a way to nourish us and propel us for the journey ahead, often sending angels and messengers to do His work.

The second reading this week gives description of the spiritual quest that lies ahead as we find freedom from the pain of addiction within our families. Saint Paul writes to the Ephesians:

All bitterness, fury, anger, shouting, and reviling must be removed from you, along with all malice. And be kind to one another, compassionate, forgiving one another as God has forgiven you in Christ.

So be imitators of God, as beloved children, and live in love, as Christ loved us and handed himself over for us as a sacrificial offering to God for a fragrant aroma.

These are marching orders that cannot be completed on our own accord. Just as God has lifted us and given us new purpose, we are to continue to seek Him as the source of everlasting life. This is made possible by the strength of community, the grace that accompanies working the twelve steps, and humbly approaching Christ in the sacraments.

There is a spiritual dimension about us—the soul—that must be fed if we are to grow. Just like the muscles of our body break down if we do not get physical food, our souls have a tendency to become lethargic, hopeless, and unhealthy when impoverished. This is the condition of many around us, giving us reason to soften our expectations of others as we begin to make our own progress with the help of God. We can be of no help to others until we regularly get our own spiritual sustenance.

Prayer is a good foundation for our spiritual diet. Spending quality time with God brings rest and renewed hope for the journey. When we allow ourselves proper quiet space we get an opportunity to savor the mystery of God. Spiritual reading brings a desired depth to our mind and can help counter-act futile thoughts and the storm of cheap media we're exposed to.

Corporal and spiritual works of mercy (see back page) provide an excellent way to transition from bitterness, fury, and anger to an attitude of forgiveness and imitation of God. When we engage mercy and share it with others, a divine hunger is filled.

Finally, we can feed our soul with the spiritual food of Jesus—the Eucharist. "I am the bread of life," Christ proclaims again in this week's Gospel reading. The food that brings everlasting life is the same that provides us freedom from addiction and unhealthy attachments, one day at a time.