

## 19<sup>th</sup> Sunday in Ordinary Time

The passage from 1 Kings 19:4-8 (first reading) recounts the story of the prophet Elijah after his encounter with the prophets of Baal on Mount Carmel. Elijah is fleeing for his life from Queen Jezebel, who threatens to kill him. He becomes despondent and asks God to take his life. However, instead of granting his request, God sends an angel to provide him with food and water, sustaining him for a long journey to Mount Horeb, the mounting of God. The focus of this story is on the themes of perseverance, God's provision, and the importance of trusting in God even in moments of despair.

The gospel passage (John 6:41-51), focuses on Jesus' discussion with the Jews who were grumbling about him claiming to be the bread that came down from heaven. Jesus emphasizes the importance of belief in him as the key to eternal life, comparing himself to the manna that sustained their ancestors in the desert. The passage highlights the significance of faith in Jesus as the source of spiritual nourishment and the pathway to eternal life.

Reflecting on Elijah's journey and God's intervention, can help us draw parallels to our own lives and find encouragement to trust in God's plan and provision, even in difficult times. We can also imagine ourselves as being on a journey of life toward the mountain of God which is eternal life. Like Elijah, we too may experience moments of weakness on the journey, and may need help; first of all, from one and another, and above all from God. What is essentially sustaining is a sense of God's presence with us and love for us. In other words, we need bread for our journey, and ordinary bread alone will not suffice. We need the bread that has come down from heaven, which only Jesus can give- the bread of the Eucharist.

On the strength of the bread which Jesus gives in the Eucharist, we will walk all the way to God's eternal kingdom. Along the way we may have the privilege of being a helper to another person who may be experiencing a low moment. It is only the kind of love and support that you expect from people who eat at the same table.