

NINETEENTH SUNDAY IN ORDINARY TIME

A narrative reading. Think of someone specific you know who is overwhelmed and despondent. Proclaim as if speaking to that person to convey God's compassion.

Elijah = ee-Lĭ-juh

Proclaim with tiredness in your voice from the start.

Elijah's exhaustion might be best proclaimed softly, but intensely, with real anguish.

Keep your energy low, then immediately pick it up at the angel's appearance.

With some surprise.

Drop your energy again as Elijah gives up, then pick it up as the angel returns.

Firmly.

Stand up straight and proclaim with Elijah's renewed vigor and confidence in God.

Horeb = HOHR-eb

LECTIONARY #116

READING I 1 Kings 19:4-8

A reading from the first Book of Kings

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**.

READING I Elijah, disillusioned because of the constant opposition his prophetic work had aroused, was ready to give up. But roused and fed by God, he spent forty days and nights retracing the Israelites' forty-year desert trek, going up Mount Horeb to meet God. This story focuses on the breakfast the angel provided under the shrub, a reviving meal that prefigures the Eucharist, Viaticum—provisions for a journey. We pilgrims traveling toward the eternal inheritance are sustained by the Sacrament of the Eucharist. The mountain of God, Horeb, recalls Sinai of

the exodus; it is where Elijah met God, who restored his energy to continue his service. All along the wilderness path the prophet was strengthened by food, and so are we. Thus invigorated, we continue our journey to the mountain of God.

READING II In chapter 4 of the Letter to the Ephesians the author has been expounding on the lifestyle expected of a Christian who receives the grace of the Holy Spirit. In this passage, he outlines the effects of the people's incorporation into the Christian community. The

phrase "grieve the Holy Spirit" echoes Isaiah 63:10, speaking of the disobedient Israelites: "they rebelled and grieved his holy spirit." He presents a list of vices to avoid—"bitterness, fury, anger, shouting, and reviling"; all have their root in anger, about which the author has said (several verses before this passage begins): "do not let the sun set on your anger" (4:26). After the list of unacceptable behaviors, this principle is laid down: behave toward one another as God behaves toward you. The Christian's behavior should be kind, compassionate, and forgiving.

For meditation and context:

TO KEEP IN MIND

Exhortatory texts make an urgent appeal to listeners. They may encourage, warn, or challenge, and often include a call to action. You must convey the urgency and passion behind the words.

An exhortatory reading. Make sure Paul's love (and yours) comes through in this short and simple reading.

Ephesians = ee-FEE-shuhnz

Of course you don't want to act this way!

Eagerly.

Pause at the end of this line.

A summary of the whole Christian way of living. Sincerely encourage the assembly with this exhortation.

TO KEEP IN MIND

Be careful not to "swallow" words by mumbling. Articulate carefully so that every word is clearly heard, especially at the end of lines.

The section concludes with fraternal love and harmony, virtues opposite the divisions caused by anger. When Israel was redeemed from slavery in Egypt, the Passover lamb's blood on their doorposts was the sign of those who would be skipped over and saved from the plague of death. In an analogous way the seal of the Holy Spirit, received in the sacraments of Baptism and Confirmation, is the indelible sign engraved in the soul of those called to salvation by virtue of the redemption in Christ. Be "imitators of God" in forgiving and loving: what a marvelous call—impos-

RESPONSORIAL PSALM Psalm 34:2-3, 4-5, 6-7, 8-9 (9a)

R. Taste and see the goodness of the Lord.

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.

Glorify the LORD with me,
let us together extol his name.
I sought the LORD, and he answered me
and delivered me from all my fears.

Look to him that you may be radiant
with joy,
and your faces may not blush with shame.
When the afflicted man called out, the
LORD heard,
and from all his distress he saved him.

The angel of the LORD encamps
around those who fear him and
delivers them.
Taste and see how good the LORD is;
blessed the man who takes refuge in him.

READING II Ephesians 4:30—5:2

A reading from the Letter of Saint Paul to the Ephesians

Brothers and sisters:

Do not grieve the Holy Spirit of God,
with which you were sealed for the day of redemption.

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**.

sible, except for God's grace—to love "as Christ loved us."

What is remarkable is the degree of perfection that is asked of the Christian—to be all things, not in any mediocre way, but in a way that seems impossible for ordinary persons: "forgiving one another as God has forgiven you in Christ." The Eucharist sets before us what we are called to be: a people who live together in peace, a people who choose to act as peacemakers. In celebrating the Eucharist together we assume the task of exercising a peacemaking influence. On this day the Eucharistic Prayer we

pray silently as the celebrant speaks it aloud asks that the individuals gathered for worship be transformed into one people.

GOSPEL

In this passage the audience with whom Jesus dialogues is not the beneficiaries of the multiplication of the loaves but the "Jews" who murmur, as did the Israelites in the desert (Exodus 16:2, 6-12). The people John describes may be Galileans who are familiar with Jesus' background and thus conclude that he is just too ordinary to be the Messiah. Here he says that the Father