

# EIGHTEENTH SUNDAY IN ORDINARY TIME

## LECTIONARY #113

### READING I Exodus 16:2–4, 12–15

#### A reading from the Book of Exodus

The **whole** Israelite community **grumbled** against Moses and Aaron.

The Israelites said to them,

“Would that we had **died** at the LORD’s hand in the land of Egypt,

as we sat by our **fleshpots** and ate our **fill** of bread!

But **you** had to lead us into this **desert**

to make the **whole** community die of **famine!**”

Then the **Lord** said to Moses,

“I will now **rain** down **bread** from **heaven** for you.

Each day the people are to go out and gather their daily **portion**;

thus will I **test** them,

to see whether they follow my instructions or **not**.

“I have **heard** the grumbling of the Israelites.

**Tell** them: In the evening twilight you shall eat **flesh**, and in the morning you shall have your fill of **bread**, so that you may **know** that I, the LORD, am your **God.**”

In the evening **quail** came up and **covered** the camp.

In the morning a **dew** lay all about the camp,

and when the dew **evaporated**, there on the surface of the desert

were fine **flakes** like **hoarfrost** on the ground.

A narrative reading. Contrast the whining and grumbling of the Israelites with God’s gentle compassion. Let the assembly hear the difference in your voice.

Exodus = EK-suh-duhs

The word “grumbled” should sound like what it means.

With real anguish.

Angrily.

God responds calmly.

With compassion.

Pause at the end of this line.

This is not a display of power as much as it is an act of love. Let that love show in your voice, eyes, and face.

#### READING I

In the desert the Israelites’ habitual complaining that often precedes a miracle places in relief their lack of faith; in contrast, the author underlines God’s attention to their needs. Sometimes he attends to their complaints; at other times he offers the opportunity to change their attitude. The manna is a proof of God’s providence. The theologian is not interested in the natural explanation of the miracle; he recounts the episode with a view to what this narrative means for

Israel, whose desert sojourn was the extraordinary period when God formed an alliance with his people and demonstrated fidelity and grace as he saved them from slavery. The traditions about the manna, the quail, and water in the wilderness are proof of God’s loving care.

#### READING II

Paul contrasts the Ephesians’ former existence with the new life they have in Christ, a life that requires every believer to strip

off the old garments of vanity and sin and clothe themselves with the new person faithful to Christ. They must reject their former Gentile way of life that does not include God. He reminds them of their earlier instruction, urging them to return to the way “you learned Christ.” Notice how he combines two images for conversion: changing clothing and renewal of mind. They must take off vice and put on Christ—thereby transforming the former person into the new. The hope to “be

Amazed.

"See how much the Lord loves you!"

For meditation and context:

**TO KEEP IN MIND**

Use inflection (the high or low pitch of your voice) to convey attitude and feeling. High pitch expresses intensity and excitement; low pitch expresses sadness, contrition, or solemnity.

An exhortatory reading. Paul sounds a little frustrated here. How do you feel when you have to tell someone the same thing over and over?

Ephesians = ee-FEE-shuhnz

With passion.

Of course not!

Drop your voice on the entire parenthetical thought ("assuming . . . Jesus").

Be dismissive of this "old self."

Smile as you share this better "new self."

Slow on this last line.

On seeing it, the Israelites asked one another, "What is this?" for they did not know what it was.

But Moses told them,

"This is the **bread** that the **LORD** has given you to eat."

RESPONSORIAL PSALM Psalm 78:3–4, 23–24, 25, 54 (24b)

**R. The Lord gave them bread from heaven.**

What we have heard and know,  
and what our fathers have declared to us,  
we will declare to the generation to come  
the glorious deeds of the LORD and  
his strength  
and the wonders that he wrought.

He commanded the skies above  
and opened the doors of heaven;  
he rained manna upon them for food  
and gave them heavenly bread.

Man ate the bread of angels,  
food he sent them in abundance.  
And he brought them to his holy land,  
to the mountains his right hand had won.

READING II Ephesians 4:17, 20–24

**A reading from the Letter of Saint Paul to the Ephesians**

Brothers and sisters:

**I declare and testify in the LORD**

that you must no longer live as the **Gentiles** do,  
in the **futility** of their minds;

that is **not** how you learned Christ,  
assuming that you have **heard** of him and were **taught** in him,  
as **truth** is in **Jesus**,

that you should put **away** the **old** self of your former way  
of life,

**corrupted** through deceitful desires,

and be **renewed** in the spirit of your minds,

and put on the **new** self,

created in God's way in **righteousness** and **holiness** of truth.

renewed in the spirit of your minds" points to the deficiencies of popular reasoning ("futility of their minds"). Ephesians describes the believer as "created in God," a phrase complemented by the attributes of God's newly created person, "in righteousness and holiness of truth."

**GOSPEL**

Jesus dialogues with the crowd at Capernaum, and as usual, they misunderstand his meaning. In their previous encounter he had multi-

plied five barley loaves to feed over five thousand hungry mouths. Today, when the crowd approaches, they ask, "Rabbi, when did you get here?" The address "Rabbi" shows that they rallied around him as an outstanding teacher. But they were looking for another miracle that they might exploit for their own ends. Jesus recognized their intentions; his response could be paraphrased as "You look for me because you ate and are full. You have eaten the material bread, but you missed the meaning.

Now listen to the inner meaning of these happenings." Jesus continues (paraphrase), "Do not labor for perishable food and temporal achievement. Strive for food that has value for eternal life. If all your effort, skill, and prayer end in just sustaining your physical existence, life will perish when the body dies. Strive, rather, for bread that nourishes the whole person, food that brings eternal life—food I will give you."

When they ask how to receive this special food, Jesus' answer, "believe in the