

***“What material food produces in our bodily life, Holy Communion wonderfully achieves in our spiritual life....It preserves, increases and renews the life of grace received at baptism” (Catechism of the Catholic Church, no. 1392).***

### **Jesus The Bread of Life Invites Us to Eat And Be Strengthened**

The Church has been inviting us for a couple of Sundays to reflect on the Eucharist- the Center and Summit of the life of the Church, the root and foundation of the Christian life, and the food for eternal life. In each of the readings of these Sundays, we read the connection of the physical food which God gave to his people in the Old Testament with the spiritual food in the New Testament (NT). The gift in NT is the gift of God himself through the person of his Son, our Lord Jesus Christ, who invites us to celebrate the Eucharist always in his memory and to eat and drink his body and blood for our sanctification and salvation.

In the first reading today, God sent an angel to give Elijah food to strengthen him to walk for 40 days and 40 nights. Elijah was in a state of desperation following the events of Mt. Carmel (I kings 18). He saw his life as being hopeless and helpless and desired to die. The food given to him strengthened him to accomplish his mission. In the Gospel, Jesus tells us that he is the bread of life that comes from heaven for the life of the world. This bread is the spiritual food that gives spiritual strength that leads to everlasting life unlike the food given in the Old Testament which gave only a temporal life. The bread of life is an eternal food because it gives life to the soul which is immortal and indestructible.

This bread of life will become our spiritual food if we partake in it with the right dispositions and allow its enduring effects to influence us. St. Paul points out clearly in the second readings some of the human tendencies that can make this eternal food fruitless and ineffectual. These are bitterness, fury, anger, shouting, reviling, malice, etc. The bread of life should help us imitate the person we receive by being kind, compassionate, and forgiving. We pray that the body and blood of Christ we share will give us the spiritual strength to live in communion with him now and forever. Amen.

***“Lord, I am not worthy to receive you, but only say the word and I shall be healed” (Matthew 8:8, Luke 7:6-7).***