

19TH SUNDAY IN ORDINARY TIME, YRB

August 9th, 2009

QUEEN OF PEACE CATHOLIC COMMUNITY
GAINESVILLE, FLORIDA
Rev. Jeff McGowan

1ST READING: 1 KINGS 19:4-8

“Get up and eat else the journey will be too long for you.”

PSALM 34

Taste and see the goodness of the Lord.

2ND READING: EPHESIANS 4:30-5:2

And be kind to one another, compassionate, forgiving one another as God has forgiven you in Christ.

GOSPEL: JOHN 6:41-51

I am the living bread that came down from heaven; whoever eats this bread will live forever; and the bread that I will give is my flesh for the life of the world.

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I read that a well known priest went from the United States to India to spend some time working with Mother Teresa. She asked him what she could do for him. He asked her to pray for him. She asked: “What would you like me to pray for?” He said, “Pray that I have clarity.” Mother said: “No, I will not pray for that.” He asked her why. She said: “Because clarity is the last thing you are clinging to and must let go of.” He commented that she seemed to have the clarity he longed for. She laughed and said: “I have never had clarity; what I have always had is trust. So I will pray that you trust God’s love.”

Jesus had fed thousands, healed the blind and the lame, driven away demons, healed even lepers but his neighbors still murmured. He was the best thing to ever come their way, but they had questions. They were looking for clarity; Jesus was asking them to trust him.

A university student said that he had he felt distant from God. He said that the academic load is heavy and he had gotten so busy with studies, fraternity life, sports and wanting to fit in that he’d grown careless in his relationship with God. He said: “I used to have a good prayer life when I was in high school, I really

want to feel God's presence in my life, but I get so distracted by all my activities that sometimes I think God must be mad at me. Then I get scared. But I keep doing the same stuff out of habit or because my friends expect me or because I can't imagine any other alternative. I actually wish I were closer to God."

This is graduation weekend at the University and some of the grads might be here. I wonder whether it sounds like a familiar story. And now school is about to begin and many of our high school grads are about to go away to school or begin college here in town. A few years ago one of our graduating seniors said that he figured he had been to so many Masses at St. Patrick's and St. Francis, he had some Masses stored up and might miss a few when he went to college. He smiled and I smiled, but, you know, I've been there.

So, this is close, this is a serious question. Suppose for a moment that you are the God of Jesus Christ. The college guy is not sure he can count on your love anymore. He's stuck in a pattern that is not satisfying but he doesn't know how to get out of it. Still supposing that you are God, what are your feelings toward this young man? Are you thinking he's got his priorities messed up? Are you angry? Do you see him as having a relationship with you?

Now, let's consider our own journey. We can get waylaid from our walk with God by busyness, depression, family situations, addictions, or worse. It's easy to skip our prayers keeping on the run. We may share the same feelings the young man feels. How do you think God is feeling about you?

Those murmuring neighbors of Jesus only knew about the Old Testament God. They didn't dare speak his name. Their God was a harsh judge, an angry, vengeful God. Then there's Jesus and he is changing water into wine at wedding feasts and speaking tenderly of a loving "Father," and about the prodigal son being welcomed home. We know he's God; we know he's our answer; we know the bread he gives is his flesh for the life we most desire. But like them, we have questions, we crave clarity. What is called for, though, is trust. If we walk the way of trust we live confident that God will not abandon us and even if we stray, we will not abandon God. With a strong affirmation of our goodness and willingly suffering for our weakness, God is loving us at this moment, just as we are and

not as we think we should be. We believe he is all-powerful, all-mighty, why would we believe there's a limit to his love? Why would we allow anything to hold us back from receiving his body? No matter where we are in our journey, our trust in God's love gives God immense pleasure. And that's Good News!