

## Commentary on the Readings for August 22, 2021

### The 21st Sunday in Ordinary Time

Today is the last of three consecutive Sundays where the readings have given us a slightly different perspective on the theme of Jesus Christ as the Bread of Life. Here, the Gospel asks us to make a choice; to believe in Jesus Christ and accept His teachings, His Life and His Church or go your own way, or as Joshua says in the First Reading "...decide today whom you will believe in and serve." This is a powerful command and one that we should be careful in deciding.

The **First Reading** is from the *Book of Joshua (24:1- 18)*. The time of this event is shortly after the Israelites (Jews) entered the Promised Land. Joshua was their leader after Moses died. Not all of the people accepted his leadership and grumbled against him. Nevertheless, he was the appointed leader of the People of God and made the people choose between following the One, True God and following some other god. The people made the right choice.

The **Responsorial Psalm** is (34:2-21). This is the same Psalm that we have been using these past three weeks. Here the Psalmist glorifies God because: God provides for His People (the theme two weeks ago), He is the divine Bread of Life (last week) and He is the ultimate choice for everlasting life (this week). As Peter says in the gospel, "Lord, to whom shall we go? You have the words of eternal life."

The **Second Reading** is from *St. Paul's Letter to the Ephesians (5:21-32)*. In modern times, this passage from Paul's beautiful Letter to the Ephesians has been controversial, but in earlier days it was looked upon as glorifying the Christian family which is a symbol of the Church. So it is today, the family is the essence of, or the birthplace of Christian life from which our Church, the Body of Christ, receives new human life. In rereading (or listening to) this passage, please try to get past the "politically incorrect" wording of submission and try to see it from God's viewpoint.

The **Gospel Reading** is *John (6:60-69)*. This is the ending of Jesus' discourse on the "Bread of Life." Many of the people hearing Him listened but heard only in material or earthly terms of eating someone's flesh and drinking his blood. They could not figure out in their minds that there must be something more to this. Looking back to the days of Moses and the Israelites wandering in the desert, God fed them with manna. This was neither "Wonder Bread" nor "Orowheat" as we know it today. Nor was it something that they recognized in their day, but it did come down from Heaven and fed and sustained them for many years.

For three weeks now, we have been hearing from all the readings that God has been providing for His People down through the ages, both earthly and spiritually, not only to sustain them, but to make them aware of His divine providence. Yet we also hear how some people still grumble and gripe because they don't always get what they want or it isn't to their liking. We must remember that worshiping our God is not getting what we want; rather, it is giving God what He wants. In this case, it is active participation, devotion and prayer. St. Francis of Assisi tells us "...It is in giving that we receive." When we attend Mass and give praise, thanksgiving and worship to God through Jesus Christ, and do so with sincerity, we receive far more than we can imagine. Something to think about during your prayer time this week!

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