

The scene in today's first reading is fraught with danger. The prophet Elijah is fleeing for his life. The ruthless Jezebel, wife of the weak and corrupt King Ahab, wants to cut him down, as she has done with the other prophets of Yahweh. Elijah is now on his own, the last and remaining spokesman of God, and no one is listening. And so Elijah flees to the desert and there lies down under a shrub by the side of a dried-up wadi where he hopes to die. He has had enough and pleads to God to take his life.

It is easy to feel sympathy for Elijah. We too, at times, can feel an enormous weight crushing our spirits. It may be in our personal lives when faced with seemingly impossible odds. Or it may be when we survey the world around us and our hearts are punctured by the depth of cruelty, selfishness, and callous disregard for human life and the environment. In these moments it is tempting to feel like Elijah, and just want to give up.

But God won't so easily give up on us. He has a mission for each of us. And each of us in his or her own heart has to discern what that mission is.

And so in the story of Elijah, God sends his angel to place beside Elijah bread and water. This miraculous food will sustain him for forty days and nights until he reaches Mount Horeb, the mountain of God. Elijah is renewed and strengthened to once again be God's holy prophet.

In the Eucharist we too are sustained and made holy by the bread of life and the cup of salvation. This is a far greater miracle, for it is no mere angel who visits us (as in the case of Elijah) it is Christ himself who is present to us sacramentally in his life giving body and blood: "I am the living bread come down from heaven" (John 6.51).

As we participate in the sacramental life of the church, we too become a sacramental people. That is, a people made holy in Christ to be the very presence of Christ in our world.

***Peace & blessings,
Gerard***