

**ENTRANCE ANTIPHON** (or a hymn) O God, come to my assistance; O Lord, make haste to help me! You are my rescuer, my help; O Lord, do not delay.

**RESPONSORIAL PSALM** (Ps 77)

ANTIPHON: The Lord gave them bread from heaven.

RESPONSE: **The Lord gave them bread from heaven.**

**LECTOR:** The things we have heard and understood, the things our fathers have told us, we will tell to the next generation: the glories of the Lord and his might. **R.**

**LECTOR:** He commanded the clouds above and opened the gates of heaven. He rained down manna for their food, and gave them bread from heaven. **R.**

**LECTOR:** Mere men ate the bread of angels. He sent them abundance of food. He brought them to this holy land, to the mountain which his right hand had won. **R.**

**GOSPEL ACCLAMATION** Alleluia, Alleluia! No one lives on bread alone, but on every word that comes from the mouth of God. Alleluia!

**COMMUNION ANTIPHON** (or a hymn) You have given us, O Lord, bread from heaven, endowed with all delights and sweetness in every taste.

**Or**

I am the bread of life, says the Lord; whoever comes to me will not hunger and whoever believes in me will not thirst.

**TODAY'S READINGS** Exodus 16: 2-4, 12-15; Ephesians 4:17, 20-24; John 6:24-35

**NEXT WEEK** (19th Sunday of Year B) 1 Kings 19:4-8; Ps 33; Ephesians 4:30-5:2; John 6:41-51

*Yuletide cheer  
with Majellan  
Christmas cards*

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*Being truly  
thankful*



**4 August 2024 18th Sunday Year B**

Complaining about life's woes is a fairly common human experience. We find it in today's Exodus account of the Israelites wandering in the desert. Although they had been freed from slavery, they now find themselves in search of food and bitterly complaining of their situation to Moses and Aaron. Yet, we also know how the story ends: the Lord sends them heavenly bread, but only after they have been tested to learn the lesson that God does not abandon the chosen people.

"What have you that you have not received?" asks Paul in a letter to the complaining Corinthians.

We know we live in a world where so many have legitimate grounds for complaint: people without jobs, housing, education, medical necessities, drinkable water or adequate food. There are some Australians who live in urban and outback places who go without basic human needs.

Yet, most of us enjoy more than adequate 'things' to live by. Probably, though, we simply accept these 'gifts of life' without too much thought about the blessings we have received. Often it is those of us who have most who are the least aware of our need to be thankful. Everything we have, including life itself, says Paul, is a precious gift of our Creator.

In today's letter to the Ephesians, Paul asks us up front: are we still corrupted by illusions? Are our lives taken up with false desires – power, success, money, prestige – to the point that we Christians live an aimless kind of existence

and have learnt nothing from Christ? No, says Paul, this is not good enough. Rather, we must undergo a "spiritual revolution" and "put on the mind of Christ" to learn that God's abundant blessings are everywhere about us.

After feeding of the 5,000, Jesus leads his disciples to spiritual awakening. He tells them they need to think beyond material things and "work for food that lasts forever". Most of the disciples remain dumbfounded and ask Jesus for (another) sign. After all, they say, did not Moses give a sign by providing "manna in the desert"?

Jesus rebukes this kind of thinking, reminding them it was not Moses but God who gives "bread from heaven". Jesus then confronts them with his astounding claim: he is the true "bread of life"; and those who come to him will never be hungry.

As disciples, we are called to reassess our lives in light of Jesus' invitation to enter into living relationship with him. He is the "bread of life" we share in the Eucharist and other sacraments, the one we seek in prayer, the one we find in those most neglected, forgotten and in need.

If we stay centred on ourselves and our own little worlds, we will find many things that cause pain and sorrow. If we focus on the ills of the wider world, we will have even more reason for despondency, even despair. Rather, let us become spiritually alive to God's abundant generosity that is freely given. Let us become Christ for others.