

**FATHER MARK SCHULTE HOMILY**  
**Eighteenth Sunday in Ordinary Time (B)**  
**August 1, 2021**  
**“Make the Transition”**

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We know that events which occurred in the Old Testament among the Israelites can point to certain events which took place in the New Testament. In this Sunday’s readings, the Church offers us two such related events (Ex 16:2-15) (Jn 6:24-35).

In the first reading, we see that the Israelites have been freed from Egypt and are now making their way through the desert to the promised land. As is typical of people they begin complaining to Moses that they don’t have enough to eat and even begin to lament the fact that they left Egypt, that place of slavery, where they at least had plenty of food to eat. God hears their grumbling and sends them a mysterious miraculous food that appears on the ground after the dew dries up. In scripture, the presence of dew can be a sign of blessing. The miraculous food is a type of bread referred to as manna. The Israelites will eat this mysterious food until they reach the promised land and then it will cease. And so, the manna becomes a kind of transitional food that God provides to His people from slavery in Egypt until they reach the promised land. A kind of food meant specifically for the journey through the desert.

In the Gospel, we see how Jesus has just miraculously multiplied the loaves of bread and fed thousands of people. Some of these same people follow Jesus across the lake to Capernaum where they want Jesus to feed them again. Jesus realizes this and said, “you have come not because you have seen miracles [and heard good teaching], but because you have eaten your fill of bread”, and now want to be fed again.

Jesus takes this opportunity to encourage them to seek spiritual food rather than only food for the body. Spiritual food that will sustain them eternally. He has attracted them with food for the body – so that He can give them food for the soul. He wants to transition them away from merely thinking of their bodily needs to thinking of their spiritual needs as well. But in order to get this spiritual food they must show faith in Him (CCC 2830).

Before they put their faith in Jesus, they want Him to show them a miraculous sign something similar to the way Moses provided manna for the Israelites. Jesus informs them that it wasn’t Moses that provided the manna bread from heaven but His heavenly Father. And now His heavenly Father wants to provide them with true bread from heaven.

Jesus told them, “I am the bread of life” which my Father is providing for you now so that you will never go hungry again, unlike the manna that was eaten in the desert. Later in this Bread of Life discourse, Jesus will solemnly say that “unless you eat my flesh and drink my blood you have no life in you” (Jn 6:53). Jesus will provide his sacred flesh for believers to eat in the Holy Eucharist, beginning at the Last Supper Passover meal (Mt 26:26).

And so, several transitions have taken place.

- As the Israelites transition through the desert from Egypt to the promised land God will feed His people a transitional food, manna.
- Jesus helps the people transition from a merely physical way of thinking, that is desiring only what the body wants (food) to desiring what the spirit needs for eternal life, His body, which is as He put it real food.

- Our entire lifetime here on earth is a transitional period until we reach heaven. During this transitional time like the Israelites, we will eat a transitional food that will sustain us spiritually, that is the Eucharistic Bread, the body, blood, soul and divinity of God, Jesus Christ, “the bread of life”.

Again, Jesus said “unless you eat my flesh and drink my blood you have no life in you”. The sacraments of Baptism and Confirmation mark our souls for God (CCC 1272). They start us on that spiritual journey through life. But it will be the Eucharist, our transitional spiritual food, that will sustain us on this journey. Without it we will die spiritually.

The Israelites ate the manna until they reached the promised land. Once in the promised land they ate the food of the promised land and no longer needed the manna (Jos 5:12). We eat the Eucharist, the body of Christ, the bread of life until we enter heaven. Once in heaven the life of the Trinity, Father, Son and Holy Spirit will sustain us.

Every day when we pray the Our Father prayer as Jesus taught us, we petition God the Father for this Eucharistic food until we reach eternal life (Lk 11:3) (CCC 2835).

- Our Father who art in heaven...
- Give us this day our daily bread (our transitional food through this life).

Bread and water (food) are creatures, created by God, elements of the earth.

- They cannot sustain us indefinitely.
- Only God the creator can do this. Jesus is the creator. He can sustain us eternally. He does this through the Eucharistic bread, his body and blood.
- Pray for this bread daily, do not turn away from it, as so many have.

Every person has to make the transition from the merely physical man to the spiritual man. The Apostle Paul told His disciples to “put off the old man and put on the new man Jesus Christ” (Eph 4:22-24). This begins at baptism and is sustained by the sacrament of the Eucharist – without which there can be no permanent spiritual life.

This begs the question, “Have you made this spiritual transition yet?”

- Have you put off your old ways of thinking and put on Jesus Christ?
- Many, even many Catholics have not because they consciously turned away from the Eucharist, the spiritual food, and no longer come to Mass to receive it (Jn 6:66).
- If they persist in this state and finally die in this state, they will likely be damned because they refused the Body of Christ, the Son of God.
- Remember the words of Jesus: “unless you eat my flesh and drink my blood you have no life in you”. Without life there is only death.

Religion is not a hop-scotch match where we jump from one church to another and then whichever one we land on that becomes our religion.

Religion is not like a butterfly that goes from flower to flower until it finds the one it prefers.

Religion is about truth – and there is only one truth. Jesus is that truth and He has given that truth in His word and in the Holy Eucharist.

CCC = Catechism of the Catholic Church