

## The homily on Nineteenth Sunday in Ordinary Time

Our bodies need to be fed with common food such as bread, rice, meat, fish ... There are other things that are not food, but they are needed for the development of our wisdom and our knowledge. They are also called “food” – “spiritual food” - such as books, newspapers and many kinds of cultural media and cultural art.

From thousands of years ago until today, people have ever dreamed of living longer and even never having to die. In some Eastern cultures, they told many stories about the fountain of youth.

There is a story about the first king of China. His name is Qin Shi Huang, who built the Great Wall, it is more than 2,000 miles long. This is the only architecture that astronauts can recognize from space. He was very powerful and rich. He had everything, but he was very afraid of death. He was always searching for a way to live forever. One day, the astrologers told him about an amazing island in the South China Sea. Residents there have discovered a way to live forever. So he sent a number of big ships loaded with treasures, half of his property, heading for the island hoping to use the treasures to exchange for the secret of living forever. However, the people there certainly did not exchange. Finally, the king also died.

Today, the medical industry has developed quickly, so people find remedies to prolong life, to aid our health better like functional food, supplements, or vitamins. However, in the end, man must die. Therefore, no wonder when Jesus began talking about eternal life, the people came to hear. The Jews believed that there was a nether world of dead people, but they had no concept of that world. So, they are ready to receive any light that shines on this mystery.

In today’s Gospel, Jesus revealed to them a kind of food for eternal life. The food will help us to live forever in heaven. Jesus said, “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.” (Jn 6:51) The people began to murmur, “Is this not Jesus, the son of Joseph? Then how can he say, ‘I have come down from heaven?’” The Jews lived around the holy family, so they knew Jesus very well. That was the reason why it was difficult to accept Jesus’ proclamation.

And how about us today? Because of accepting this mystery – the mystery of the Eucharist - that we have gathered together to hear the word of God, the word of eternal life, to receive the Body and Blood of Christ, the bread of our souls. This is the secret of eternal life. Jesus is the source of life.

In the Book of Kings, the first reading today, the prophet Elijah, surrendered, and was waiting to die, then he was saved by the bread of heaven from the angel. He continued his way to proclaim the word of God for the Israelites, to lead the people of God in their journey of faith waiting for the true food of heaven that is Jesus incarnate.

Through the “bread of Jesus” from heaven, the Church is born, and the people of God are saved. We recognize our neighbors as brothers and sisters who have only one Father in heaven.

Through the “bread of Jesus” and his law of love, we gradually abolish fighting among us, forget about ourselves to serve others, and love others as ourselves. As St. Paul teaches us in the second reading: “Be kind to one another, compassionate, forgiving one another as God has forgiven you in Christ. Follow God’s example, as beloved children, and walk in love, as Christ loved us and handed himself over for us.” (Eph 4:32, 5:1-2)

Therefore, listen to the word of God, reflect on it, and look at ourselves. We realize that we are weak in faith. We worry too much for the food of this world and neglect the food of the eternal life. That is why the masses have less people attending.

This past week, I saw many of people in Bremond coming to pray the Holy Rosary so that they ask Our Lady to intercede to God for rain in our area. That is good. Their faith shows through their action. So, we can't say, "I love God, I believe in God" but do nothing or do something without love. Because "faith without works is dead" (James 2:26) God needs our hands and our sacrifices to accomplish miracles in our life.

Finally, Jesus is present in the Eucharist as he confirmed: "Whoever eats this bread will live forever". In the presence of this wonderful mystery, let us imitate the disciples of Jesus and invoke the Lord: "Lord, increase our small faith, so we can receive your word and the Holy Communion and approach the eternal life." Amen.