



## BENEDICTINE SISTERS OF CHICAGO

Reflections for the 19<sup>th</sup> Sunday in Ordinary Time    1Kings 19: 4-8  
August 11, 2024    Psalms 34: 2-3, 4-5, 6-7, 8-9  
Sister Judith Murphy    Ephesians 4: 30 to 5: 2  
John 6: 41-51

When I first looked at the readings for this Sunday, I was reminded that the celebration of Jesus's Transfiguration this past week occurs on the same date that the atom bomb fell on Hiroshima. The irony of this fits well for me with the today's scripture readings, all three of which tell of our loving God in search of humanity—as Abraham Heschel put it. I believe they speak to and encourage faith about our lived experiences these days.

The first reading from 1Kings tells of the discouragement of Elijah who was striving to restore the Israelites' faith in the God of the covenant at a time when the chosen people were experiencing confusion and consternation because the Babylonians had prevailed against them; how could their Covenant God have let the 400-year-old Davidic dynasty be trampled by their enemy Babylon? How could their own exile have occurred? The Israelites believed their God had promised that David's people, the chosen people, would last in perpetuity. Their faith was wavering, and Elijah's challenge was to shore up their faith... which had been brought to a terrible impasse. Elijah was tired out, in despair. He prayed for death: *This is enough, O Lord! Take my life!* he begs. He lay down and fell asleep, and the angel tells him to get up and eat, and prepare for his long walk. He—and we—are reminded that the Lord is there for us—not in the wind, not in the earthquake, not in the fire—but rather in the gentle whisper of the breeze. A lesson for this fiery prophet: God in his own way works God's will for Israel, even though it may not be according to Elijah's plans.

I found the letter to the Ephesians described as a treatise on "Principles for Spiritual Renewal": idealized, and often much needed reminders. The letter to the Ephesians reminds them and us that even (or especially) in the face of real life difficulties, we are called be kind and forgiving to one another.

Today's gospel tells about the Eucharist as the Bread of life. Just as Elijah received life-giving comfort and strength for his journey, so too we are fed and nourished for our life journey. We are also encouraged to grow into what we consume, to even be ready to be like bread, broken and consumed for the sake of our world, as part of our loving God's reaching out in search for humanity... to be part of what Pope Francis describes as a field hospital for our suffering world. To invite and say to our world, and to one another: *Taste and see the goodness of the Lord.*