



# Christ in Our Neighborhood

## Prayer

Loving Father, You have prepared a table before us. May we recognize the unmerited gifts You have provided and always give thanks to You, through Your Son, Jesus Christ, who lives and reigns with You and the Holy Spirit, One God, forever and ever. Amen.

## Commentary

### 1st Reading: Ex 16:2-4, 12-15

Long before Janet Jackson sang, “What have you done for me lately,” people have been asking this question of God.

From the beginning of time, we have been looking for signs and assurances from God that He will not abandon us. Perhaps the greatest evidence of this is found in the Books of Exodus and Numbers, where the Israelites always seem to grumble about God’s lack of presence in their time of need.

Our First Reading gives us an example of their grumbling. Of course, as always, God hears their cry and provides a miracle. He showers them with hoarfrost (a thin, white, substance called Manna) in the morning and quail in the evening to satisfy their needs.

Of course, this is a test for the Israelites who seem to have forgotten the previous miracles God had provided them; including the parting of the Red Sea. In essence, the Book of Exodus shows that it is not God who abandons his people. Rather the people have abandoned the Lord.

## Question

Have you ever caught yourself questioning what God has done for you lately?

## Commentary

### 2nd Reading: Ephesians 4:17, 20-24

When God called the people of Israel to Himself, He expected a singleness of devotion and love for Him as He would have for them. Saint Paul expects the same attitude from Christians who claim to be one in Christ.

For this reason, Saint Paul warns the Ephesians to avoid living “as the Gentiles do.” The former ways of the newly converted Ephesians should be “put away,” and they are expected to be renewed in the Spirit.

As was the case for many Greek speaking cultures of their time, Ephesians lived as if this life was their only life worth living. Paul reminded that their new life in Christ was eternal and that they needed to “put on the new self.” Thus, they were not to be caught up in this world’s passing joys, but in the promise of the eternal joys of heaven.

## Question

How are you achieving a singleness of love for God and avoiding the passing pleasures of this world?

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## Commentary

### Gospel: John 6:24-35

The Israelites in Exodus were no different than the Ephesians in the Second Reading. They lost their singleness of devotion toward God. Because of this, they would only follow God if the Lord would provide miracles. We find the same theme in this week's Gospel.

After being fed by the Lord, the crowd seeks Jesus' out to be fed again. Chasing miracles can be a bad habit and Jesus wants to relieve them from their addiction. He tells them not to seek after food for a day, but for bread that will last forever. He wants to give himself to them. He would be their Bread of Life so that whoever comes to Him "will never hunger" and "never thirst."

Every time we gather on Sunday, we are invited to the Banquet of the Lord. In his General Audience in Rome (2/5/14), Pope Francis said, "Go to Mass, not just to pray, but to receive Communion, the bread that is the Body of Jesus Christ who saves us, forgives us, unites us to the Father. It is a beautiful thing to do!"

The challenge lies before us: Are we satisfied with what is found at the Banquet of the Lord or do we want to eat from other tables that do not satisfy?

## Question

Are you a person who needs daily assurance that God is with you? Are you able to trust in Christ who satisfies your every hunger?

## This Week's Task

Make it your aim to get to church early this Sunday. Try to get there 15-20 minutes before Mass.

Life is noisy. We need time to quiet ourselves in order to enjoy the beauty of the Banquet of the Lord.

## Prayer

The leader guides the group with this prayer from a Hymn by Robert E. Kreutz: Gift of Finest Wheat.

**All: You satisfy the hungry heart with gift of finest wheat, Come give to us, O saving Lord, the bread of life to eat.**

### Leader:

As when the shepherd calls his sheep,  
They know and heed his voice;  
So when You call Your family, Lord,  
We follow and rejoice.

### All: Chorus

### Leader:

You give yourself to us, O Lord,  
Then selfless let us be,  
To serve each other in Your name  
In truth and charity.

**The prayer continues with Psalm 78**

## Psalm

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

What we have heard and know,  
and what our fathers have declared to us,  
We will declare to the generation to come  
the glorious deeds of the LORD and his strength  
and the wonders that he wrought.

**R. The Lord gave them bread from heaven.**

He commanded the skies above  
and opened the doors of heaven;  
he rained manna upon them for food  
and gave them heavenly bread.

**R. The Lord gave them bread from heaven.**

Man ate the bread of angels,  
food he sent them in abundance.  
And he brought them to his holy land,  
to the mountains his right hand had won.

**R. The Lord gave them bread from heaven.**

**Conclude with an Our Father**