

Homily for 19th Sunday in Ordinary Time

I've had it. I've really had it. I can't take it anymore. I am literally at the end of my rope. I want to run away.

Welcome to the world of the prophet Elijah. Better yet, welcome to our world. For how many of us have experienced or are experiencing all the feelings that come with "I've had it" ?

- the money runs out and the bills are still there
- the marriage is breaking apart
- we lose our job at 10:00 and are told to be gone by 11:00
- the doctor says, "I'm sorry. I just can't do any more."
- we're grieving someone we loved very much
- we're lonely and very tired of being lonely
- we're just exhausted from carrying burdens that no one else knows about and which drain us of our strength

And when we face these feelings we understand how Elijah felt. We can resonate with his words: "This is enough....take my life."

And locked in this "Elijah" kind of feeling, what can we do? And how do we keep going?

I don't think the answer to these questions is easy. I'm not going to stand before you and tell you to "say a prayer" and all will be well. It is much more complex than that.

To begin with...get help. Whether that be talking to a friend, don't carry it alone. God didn't create us to carry anything alone. God created us to help each other carry our burdens. And sometimes that means turning not only to a friend but to another who has the wisdom of professional training.

Secondly, we must be good to ourselves. None of us has the strength of Samson or the endurance of an Ever-Ready battery. Sometimes we ask more of ourselves than we are capable of giving. We need to take time for ourselves.

And finally, but certainly not last, bring those agonies and pains to God. Jesus in the Gospel says "I am the bread of life." And He who is the Bread of Life is also the Good Shepherd. And it is the Good Shepherd who said: "Come to me, all you who are burdened and I will refresh you."

We come together each Sunday not because we have our act together...just the opposite. We come together each week precisely because we are broken or suffering, worried, oppressed, in need or in pain. We come together because we are human and because all of us carry within ourselves a little bit (or maybe a lot) of Elijah. We come together

because life is fragile and some days we just don't know how we are going to get from one moment to the next.

And in our gathering we come forward to receive the "Bread of Life." We come forward to receive the One who gave His flesh for the life of the world...for our lives. We come forward to be fed by God whose love for us never fails. And we pray: "Give me strength, Lord. I'm frightened by what I face. Let eagle's wings raise me up. For without you I am lost."