

Cycle B 18th Sunday in Ordinary Time
Sunday August 5th, 2018

The reading today from the beginning of chapter 16 of Exodus needs to be read in light of chapters 14, and 15 of Exodus. Chapter 14 is the great Exodus event when the Lord through Moses parts the Red Sea, the people cross on dry land; and then the Lord through Moses caused the water to flow back over the whole Egyptian army and not a single one of them escaped. The Israelites saw the power of God and believed in Him and His servant Moses. In chapter 15 the people give praise and worship to the Lord for His mighty deeds.

Now we come to chapter 16 of Exodus. The people of Israel have seen the power of the Lord with their own eyes, they have been led from slavery into freedom, they have given praise and worship to the Lord; and now what do they do? They complain. The people have forgotten all that the Lord had done for them. And so when things got hard, the people of Israel wanted to go back into slavery because it was easier. **“In the Land of Egypt.....we sat by our flesh pots and ate our fill of bread.”** Going back into slavery is the equivalent of going back into sin.

In some ways we are not much different than the people of Israel. We would rather stay in the way of slavery to sin, because **growing** in the spiritual life is just too hard of work. Think how much hard work it takes to train and prepare for a career? The countless hours of studying, writing papers, and taking exams; all for that good career. Or, the countless hours of hard work conditioning, training and

practicing for sports, so that one came make a select team and receive a scholarship. So, why would we not want to do the hard work of training for **eternal life**? This is what the Scriptures are reminding us of today, that training in the spiritual life is hard work.

Jesus pointed this out as He instructed the crowds. Remember last week that Jesus multiplied the loaves and the fish and everyone had their fill. Today He says to the crowds, “**Amen, amen I saw to you, you are looking for me not because you saw signs, but because you ate the loaves and were filled.**” Jesus is basically saying to the people, you want the easy way; you do not want to do the hard work of growing in the spiritual life. Jesus went on to say, “**Do not work for food that perishes, but for the food that endures for eternal life, which the Son of Man will give you.**” Jesus here is preparing to give us Himself. This passage is preparing us for the Holy Eucharist. **The Body of Christ.** Receiving the Body of Christ challenges all of us to a higher level of Christian living. What is our attitude when we come forward for Holy Eucharist? Is this just something we do, or have we done the **hard work of preparing** our hearts and minds to receive the Holy Eucharist. When we say Amen, are we saying: “amen” not really sure; I have some place I need to be, or are we saying: “**Amen**” this is truly the Body Blood Soul and divinity of Jesus Christ; and I want to do the hard work of whatever it takes,

to grow in the spiritual life and enter into heaven. Because preparing for heaven is hard work.

The Scriptures today challenge us to remember all that the Lord has done for us. We are being challenged to do the hard work of growing in the spiritual life. When we come to Holy Communion the Lord does not want us to give a weak “amen”. The Lord wants us to give an “**Amen**” this is truly the Body Blood Soul and divinity of Jesus Christ; and I want to do the hard work of whatever it takes, to grow in the spiritual life and enter into heaven.