In Their Midst

Session 7. Bread in the Wilderness

The God who frees his people also teaches them to depend on him, support one another, and receive each day as gift.

What We Found

Israel's wilderness needs were real, but the people's accusations exposed how quickly fear could turn into distrust. God did not ignore either the needs or the distrust. He patiently provided water, bread, protection, instruction, and wise counsel.

God's provision came through several forms. Some gifts were miraculous, while others involved obedience, courageous action, persevering prayer, supportive friends, good judgment, and shared responsibility.

Manna truly fed Israel in the wilderness and trained the people in daily dependence and Sabbath rest. Within the unity of Scripture, the Church also recognizes manna as a figure of Christ's greater gift, the bread of life.

Jethro's counsel showed that healthy leadership does not require one person to carry every burden. Authority can remain ordered while responsibility is entrusted to capable, God-fearing, trustworthy servants.

Voices of the Church

> **St. John Chrysostom, c. 347-407**
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> *St. John Chrysostom reads Israel's passage through the sea, manna, and water as sacramental figures. He also stresses that receiving great gifts did not make Israel's later unfaithfulness harmless.*
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> Homilies on First Corinthians 23.1-3.
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> **How this is cited.** This is a summary of Chrysostom's exposition of 1 Corinthians 10:1-5. Section numbering varies slightly among editions, but the teaching is explicit in Homily 23.
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> **For the group.** Invite the group to receive God's gifts with gratitude and continuing fidelity, not presumption.

> **St. Cyprian of Carthage, d. 258**
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> *St. Cyprian teaches that the petition for daily bread includes ordinary provision and, for Christians, Christ the bread of life received in the Eucharist.*
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> On the Lord's Prayer 18.
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> **How this is cited.** This is an honest summary of Cyprian's explanation of the petition, with his Eucharistic application preserved rather than turned into a direct quotation.
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> **For the group.** Daily dependence on God embraces both bodily need and the deeper hunger only Christ can satisfy.

> **St. Benedict of Nursia, c. 480-547**
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> *St. Benedict teaches that a superior should combine firmness with mercy, hate faults while loving the brothers, and arrange everything with prudent moderation so that the strong have something to strive for and the weak are not driven away.*
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> Rule of St. Benedict 64.7-19.
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> **How this is cited.** This is a close summary of the Rule's instructions concerning the abbot, especially its language about prudent moderation and care for both strong and weak.
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> **For the group.** Leadership serves people best when authority, compassion, realistic limits, and shared responsibility remain together.

Live It This Week

> **Practices**
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> 1. Pray the Our Father slowly on three mornings. Pause at the petition for daily bread and name one bodily need, one spiritual need, and one person whose needs you will place before the Father.
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> 2. Choose one recurring complaint. Each time it arises this week, state the need honestly to God, thank him for one provision already received, and take one obedient next step.
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> 3. Practice shared responsibility. Ask for concrete help with one burden, or offer specific help to someone whose hands are growing tired.
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> 4. If you are properly disposed, attend Mass this week with special attention to Christ the bread of life. Arrive five minutes early and ask for the grace to receive his gifts with faithful obedience.

Scripture Memory

> **Exodus 16:4**
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> "Then the LORD said to Moses, 'Behold, I will rain bread from heaven for you; and the people shall go out and gather a day's portion every day, that I may test them, whether they will walk in my law or not.'"
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> **Exodus 16:4**

Go Further in the Catechism

- CCC 1094. The Church reads Old Testament figures in light of Christ.
- CCC 1334-1335. Manna prefigures the Eucharist, and the multiplication of the loaves prefigures its superabundance.
- CCC 2119. Faith does not demand that God prove himself on our terms.
- CCC 2837. Daily bread includes earthly needs, God's Word, and the Eucharist.
- CCC 874-876. Christ is the source of ministry in the Church, and the offices he instituted are ordered to the service and growth of his people.

Before next session. Read Exodus 19:1-20:21 before we meet again. Bring your sealed guess, but do not open it yet.