

# Bread from Heaven

*Exodus 16:1-5, 13-26, 31-35; Deuteronomy 8:2-3; Psalm 78:23-25; Wisdom 16:20-21*

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## What We Found

One month out of Egypt, Israel grumbled, and God answered grumbling with a gift: bread rained from heaven, every morning, for forty years. The test rode inside the gift: gather a day's portion, and trust God for tomorrow. He who gathered much had nothing over, and he who gathered little had no lack.

The bread behaved according to trust. Hoarded against orders, it bred worms by morning; kept at God's word for the Sabbath, it endured. And it was named after a question, man hu, what is it, a question Israel kept in a jar before the LORD, throughout their generations, the jar Hebrews 9:4 remembers as a golden urn.

Israel's own commentary said the quiet part out loud: the manna taught that man does not live by bread alone, but by everything that proceeds out of the mouth of the LORD. The poets called it the grain of heaven and the bread of the angels. And when the manna stopped at the edge of Canaan, the hunger it had schooled did not. That hunger is the homework.

## Voices of the Church

### St. Augustine of Hippo

*On the Sermon on the Mount, Book 2*

St. Augustine taught that when we pray for our daily bread, we are told to ask for this day only, so that the asking itself becomes a daily return to the Father. He heard in the petition both the bread that sustains the body and the deeper nourishment God gives his children, and he saw that the command to ask for this day only makes the prayer itself a daily act of dependence on the Father.

### St. Basil the Great

*Homily on the words "I will pull down my barns," 4th century*

St. Basil preached against the rich man who built bigger barns, and pressed the point without mercy: the bread you hold back belongs to the hungry. For Basil, hoarding is not thrift but injustice toward the poor. Set beside the manna, his challenge lands as a lesson in trust: generosity is what confidence in the daily Giver actually looks like.

### St. Thomas Aquinas

*Sacris Solemnis (the hymn of Panis Angelicus), 13th century*

St. Thomas took up the very words of Psalm 78 and sang that the bread of angels becomes the bread of men, and that the bread of heaven puts an end to the figures that foreshadowed it. What the psalmist called the food of angels, Aquinas dared to say, is given to the poor, the servant, the lowly.

Let the hymn whet your appetite for where this study is going.

## Live It This Week

1. Pray the Our Father slowly once a day this week, and stop for a full breath at "give us this day our daily bread." Ask for today only.
2. Take up St. Basil's challenge in one concrete act: give bread you do not need to someone who does. Groceries, a meal, a gift card. Let generosity be what trust looks like.
3. Read Exodus 16 start to finish, and mark every moment of trust and every moment of distrust. Notice which one God answers with food anyway.

## Scripture Memory Verse

*"Man shall not live by bread alone, but by every word that proceeds from the mouth of God."*

**Matthew 4:4, quoting Deuteronomy 8:3**

## Before Next Session

Read Leviticus 24:5-9. It is five verses about bread you have probably never noticed, sitting in a room you have never pictured. Read it twice and ask where the bread is, and who eats it.

*Catechism of the Catholic Church: 1334; 2837*