

19th Sunday in Ordinary Time  
August 8 & 9, 2015

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All Saints Parish, Syr., NY

My dear Brothers and Sisters. Relax, and open your mind and heart, and just listen to what God is telling you today. Listen to the story of Elijah.

Elijah went on a day's journey into the desert, until he came to a broom tree and sat down beneath it. He prayed for death, saying: "This is enough O LORD! Take my life, for I am no better than my fathers." He lay down and fell asleep under the broom tree, but then an angel touched him, and ordered him to get up and eat. Elijah looked and there at his head was a hearth cake and a jug of water. After he eat and drank, he lay down again, but the angel of the LORD came back a second time, touched him and, ordered, "Get up and eat, else the journey will be too long for you!" He got up, ate, and drank; then strengthened by that food, he walked forty days and forty nights to the mountain of God, Horeb.

My dear Sisters and Brothers, When a child is born it still carries that warm and wonderful touch of a loving God, our Creator, nonetheless that moment is when we begin a similar journey to that of Elijah, a journey of a wonderful transformation from death to life, from the desert of oneself to the mountain of God, where death is a word that lost its meaning. The strengthening food for this journey is the bread and wine we bring to the altar, and then find them transformed into the Life of Jesus in the most holy Eucharist. Jesus said: *"I am the living bread that came down from heaven; whoever eats this bread will live forever."*

My dear Brothers and Sisters, St. Paul gives a taste of this journey of transformation from bad to good, from evil to holy, saying: *'All bitterness, fury, anger, shouting, and reviling must be removed from you, along with all malice. And be kind to one another, compassionate, forgiving one another as God has forgiven you in Christ'*.

I would like to share with you something I have discovered not so long ago. I found that if I were to respond to hurtful things in the same way as I have received them as hurtful, they will so remain, who knows for how long. But if I respond to any hurtful thing with something good: a loving and forgiving smile, a kind word, a prayer, then the bad thing has no place to go, and it fades away into nothing right there and then. I tried this, and it brought much joy into my life. First of all, the one who does a hurtful thing hurts himself or herself and not really me. Secondly, I do not know what is going on inside that person, but I know, to do something hurtful means that there is some kind of unhappiness inside, and even if I do not know this in detail, it deserves my concern and my prayer and healing in word and deed. This way everything is changed, and we become filled with peace and joy, a richness of our being, from which it is then easy to give.

It all started when I realized that if I give a blessing of protection, or say a small prayer for a really bad driver I encounter on the road, instead of using a bad word, and saying things like stupid and idiot, then I do not let myself to get angry, and the event will not upset me to a point of losing my cool and making me also a bad driver. This seemed to work very well. Then I said to myself, may be I should try this in other circumstances of life as well. The result was like the sun breaking through dark clouds, lighting up everything with the warmth of a joyful smile. Of course to change things like that needs patience and perseverance and sincerity. This is very real and not a game. But this way, one can even find love for everyone. The food that gives us strength is the Bread from heaven for our journey of forty days and forty nights to a loving and merciful God.



Broom Tree. Semi-evergreen tree in the desert providing shade for the travelers. The photo was taken from the Internet.