

FROM THE DESK OF **Fr. Julius**



Brothers and Sisters in Christ,

Thank you to all for your good wishes and prayers as I travel to my native land. The flights worked out well, and I am still in Abuja, our national capital. I expect to see Mom and Dad, my siblings, and the children at the orphanage this coming weekend.

Our First Reading depicts both the physical and spiritual resignation experienced by the prophet Elijah, even as he is about to give up his life. But inexplicably fortified by an angel of the Lord, Elijah resumes his forty-day journey to Mount Horeb, reclaiming his prophetic ministry. This reading luminously prefigures our Gospel reading this weekend. In the Second Reading, while St. Paul presents Jesus to the Ephesians as a “*sacrificial offering to God for a fragrant aroma,*” he encourages them about using only uplifting measures amongst themselves; that any unpleasantness or animosity be banished, giving life only to that greater good, that sweetness of the Lord.

In the Gospel, following His miraculous feeding of the five thousand two Sundays ago, Jesus continues to reveal Himself as the true “*Bread of Life that came down from Heaven*” to give life to the world. Instead of their ancestors who died in the desert despite eating the *heavenly manna*, Jesus proclaims himself as the new and perfect manna, the Incarnate Son of God literally “come down from Heaven.” This means that the Holy Eucharist authentically provides us with a share in eternal life while still on this Earth, with the remedy that if we eat of this bread, we will live forever. The very wonder of partaking and consuming our Lord’s body, blood, soul, and divinity, as we take our turn in the Communion line, is the pivotal and central essence upon which our faith depends. Back then as now, some of Jesus’ followers turn away once he divulges the source of his mysterious authority and heavenly origin.

How can we not abandon ourselves completely to Christ’s presence in the Holy Eucharist? With awe, this holiest of sacraments increases our intimate union with Christ and preserves and renews the Sanctifying Grace we received at Baptism. He also cleanses us of past sin and protects us from future sins manifest in the great love we experience in the Holy Eucharist.

‘O sublime humility!
O humble sublimity!’ [St. Francis]

— Sunday Blessings!