

19 OTB.18; 1 Kgs 19:4-8; Eph 4:30-5:2; John 6:41-51

There was a salty old-timer with a peg leg, a hook, and an eye patch, who was looking for a job as a sea captain. “*You surely look the part,*” said the interviewer. “*How did you lose your leg?*” “*A shark took me leg,*” he grunted, “*and now I wears a wooden peg.*” “*What about your hand?*” “*Aye, laddy! I was in a sword fight and now I have a hook.*” “*How did you lose your eye?*”

“*T’was a terrible storm off Tortuga. The riggin’ was all foul, and I looked up just*

... when a sea gull was passin’ over.” “*And that put your eye out?*”

“NO! – T’was the first day I had me hook!”

(Source: Sunday Mornings, Clark)

By and large, most of us are in a lot better shape than that sea captain, and most of us are not missing so many parts. However, all of us, even the youngest here, bear the wounds of body & spirit that come from just being alive, just trying to make a life. Many do agree....

“Life is difficult.” Observed the writer M. Scott Peck in his book, *The Road Less Traveled: A New Psychology of Love, Traditional Values & Spiritual Growth*

Elijah can surely relate to this...**he prayed for death. “This is enough...”**

Sometimes life deals us unexpected & hurtful blows that come out of nowhere like an assassin’s dagger that cut deep into our hearts. Friends betray us, loved ones die, circumstances change & we are left out or forgotten. **Sometimes** we’re just like that sea captain with his hook: doing ourselves grave harm without even noticing till the damage is done.

Sometimes we wound others, but always we wound ourselves. And worse still, we repeat the same wounding patterns

... over and over again. We can be very slow learners.

But listen to this. **Long before any of us were born,** the God who created us to be divine-like & to grow into the divine image, **knew** we’d be like this, **knew** that our growing up would take a long time & that this process would involve endless trial and error - endless missteps & stumbles and blunders, endless wounds to our spirits before, *little by little*, we’d find our way and build lives that make sense.

God knew all that before we were born, but let us be born anyway!

Then this God didn’t walk away, didn’t leave us orphans. Instead, God gave us his son Jesus. And Jesus in turn gave us himself in the Eucharist, his

own body, his own spirit, to be received, taken inside us, and made a part of us as often as we need.

“I am the living bread that comes down from heaven; whoever eats this bread will live forever; and the bread that I will give is my flesh ... for the life of the world.”

Think for just a moment. Doesn't this new reality give us a whole new perspective on life & how to live that life? The early disciples had two beautiful names for the

2 Eucharist. The first is “food for pilgrims,” food for wanderers who are trying to find their way, and grow tired & hungry on the road. Yes, we know what that feels like, don't we! Sometimes we get so tired and weak it seems we can't take another step. **It's that new reality at work**

- the body & blood of Christ is the food that keeps us going.

The second name the disciples gave the Eucharist is **“medicine for sick people,”** not, as Pope Francis has recently reminded us, a **“reward for the perfect”**. The Eucharist is medicine for people whose spirits have been wounded by life &, let's be honest, by their own mistakes. And yes, we know what that feels like too, don't we. At those times, we don't need any more troubles. We need medicine that can bring us back to health. And that's once more our new reality - the Eucharist.

This new reality leads us down a different path in life....

As Jesus restores our strength & cures our sicknesses **with his holy food**, something very wonderful begins to happen. **He** helps us look at each other's wounds, faults & weaknesses with kinder hearts. **He** helps us to be touched by someone else's pain & sadness, their hungers and mistakes, **as if they were our own (and maybe they are)**. **Jesus** helps us to do for one another what he has done for us. In Paul's words, **“And be kind to one another, compassionate, forgiving one another as God has forgiven you.”** With and like, Jesus, we can

heal and comfort, strengthen and encourage, give life and new hope.

At this Liturgy of the Living Bread from heaven, let us remember that not a single one of us deserves this gift – Christ's own body becoming one with ours, and his own spirit drawing so very close to ours. Yet, we all desperately need it. We are now embraced by divine hands. **This is reality.** These same hands embraced Elijah, **“get up and eat, else the journey will be too long for you!”** (that's blunt!). These hands embraced the first disciples, and now us for the greatest mission of all, to transform the world into the new reality of the Eucharist,

... the Kingdom of God.

Is this believable? Is this even possible? Do we need to be perfect?

Someone once said,

*“We are all a little broken. But the last time I checked,
... broken crayons still color the same.”* *Unk.*

How much more true now because,

**Restored & Renewed by *the Living Bread from Heaven*
... we can color the world into the Kingdom!**