

**The New Manna from Heaven (John 6, Part 2)
(18th Sunday in Ordinary Time, Year B)**

Exodus 16:2-4, 12-15—The Manna from Heaven

1. Israel Complains: “Would that we had died...” in Egypt! (16:2-4)
2. Bread: in the “morning,” they ate “bread” (16:12)
3. Flesh: in the “evening,” they ate “flesh” (16:12)
4. Manna: comes in the morning with the “dew” (16:13)
5. “What is it?” (Hebrew *man hu*): they did not know what it was (16:15)
6. Bread from God: “it is the bread which the LORD has given you” (16:15)

Psalm 78—He Gave Them Bread from Heaven

1. Exodus: the “glorious deeds” of God during the time of the “fathers” (v. 4)
2. Manna: “He rained down upon them manna” and “grain of heaven” (v. 24)
3. Bread of Angels: “men ate the bread of the angels” (v. 24)

Ephesians 4:17, 20-24—Be Renewed in the Spirit of Your Minds

1. Holiness: Put off the “old nature” and put on the “new nature” in Christ (4:22-23)

John 6:24-35—The Demand for the New Manna

1. Context: takes place *after* the feeding of the 5,000 (6:26)
2. “Work” of God: that you “believe” (Greek *pisteuō*) in Jesus (6:28)
3. Sign: “What sign do you do, that we may see and believe in you?” (6:30)
4. Old Manna: “our fathers ate the manna in the wilderness...” (6:31)
5. New Manna: “Lord, give us this bread *always*...” (6:34)

Ancient Jewish Tradition

It will happen that when all that which should come to pass in these parts is accomplished, *the Messiah* will begin to be revealed... And those who are hungry will enjoy themselves and they will, moreover, see *marvels every day*.... *And it will happen at that time that the treasury of manna will come down again from on high*... (2 Baruch 29:3, 6-7; trans. in Charlesworth, *OTP*)

The Catechism on the Manna and the Eucharist

This catechesis unveils what lay hidden under the letter of the Old Testament: the mystery of Christ. It is called “typological” because it reveals the newness of Christ on the basis of the “figures” (types) which announce him in the deeds, words, and symbols of the first covenant... Thus the flood and Noah's ark prefigured salvation by Baptism, as did the cloud and the crossing of the Red Sea. Water from the rock was the figure of the spiritual gifts of Christ, and *manna in the desert prefigured the Eucharist, “the true bread from heaven.”* (CCC 1094)

Questions for Discussion and Reflection (18th Sunday in Ordinary Time, Year B)

1. What was the nature of the manna miracle? Why was it twofold: “bread” from heaven and “flesh” from heaven?

2. Why do the people demand that Jesus perform a “sign” like the “fathers” had when they received “manna” in the desert? How is Jesus like a new Moses?

3. What was the ancient Jewish tradition about how you would know who the Messiah was when he came?

For Further Study

1. Brant Pitre, *Jesus and the Jewish Roots of the Eucharist* (New York: Image, 2011), 75-115. A close analysis of John 6 in the light of the Old Testament and ancient Jewish traditions about the Messiah, the new Moses, and the new Manna from heaven.
2. Brant Pitre, *Jesus and the Last Supper* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2015). An in-depth analysis of all the major Eucharistic passages in the Gospels. For a scholarly audience.