

18th Sunday Ordinary Time

the Body of Christ

⊕ Amen

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Today's readings speak of value systems. They show conflicts between believers' and non-believers' assessments of the key events. We are called on to select one or the other.

In the first reading the manna and quail are clear indications of God's care for his people. While both occur naturally, the quantity and timing are God's miracle for the Jews. Manna is a secretion of insects that live in the tamarisk tree. Currently, it can't be harvested in quantity. The quail are migrating birds that when confronting an adverse wind fall to the ground exhausted and are easy prey. The quantity of manna and the adverse wind is God's miracle for the Israelites.

The grumbling of the people question the validity of the entire Exodus. Do we choose the abundance of the fleshpots of Egypt or the manna and quail of the wilderness? The believer chooses God's value system.

In the second reading, Paul speaks of two value systems: those of the pagans and of the Christians. The first is characterized as ignorance and resistance to Christ. As in the first reading, the people are urged to reject their old way of living. Paul encourages us to put on the new clothes of a Christian way of life.

In the Gospel, John speaks of the non-believer who refuses to see the real meaning of the multiplication. To him it is merely a question of perishable food, and the provider as an earthly ruler. Believers see Jesus as the true bread from heaven. "Whoever comes to me will never be hungry, and whoever believes in me will never be thirsty."