Nineteenth Sunday in Ordinary Time B 2018

In the Lectionary for Ordinary Time the last three Sundays and NEXT Sunday are a long meditation on the Eucharist. But it IS a vast subject and so central to our faith. This week we see food - and the Bread that comes down from Heaven - giving strength and Life. There is Elijah - utterly weary - being fed and finding new - unexpected resources - setting out again with renewed purpose.

Jesus tells us that it is the quality of the food that matters - ‘your ancestors ate Manna - they are dead - eat the food that gives life.’

We are what we eat. On a day to day basis we don’t turn in to what we eat - though our size can betray the quantities we eat. But certainly in a moral sense we turn into what we consume. What we take into ourselves - into our minds - forms us. We imagine that it doesn’t - that we maintain our independence and judgement. But that is an illusion - the newspapers we read, what we watch on television, read on Facebook, or wherever, finds its home in us - and becomes part of us. Indeed it does more - it creates a need - if not an actual addiction. We are not quite sure WHAT to think until we have checked up with others’ opinion. And it rarely brings hope or peace - rather the reverse.

Many of you know only too well the awfulness of drug or alcohol dependence - but we all have our little addictions one way or another. We are all now aware that for too many, especially of our young, social media has become a destructive addiction.

Jesus says ‘if you are going to be addicted be addicted to me’. Not quite in those words - I admit - but that is the gist of it. So much else is in competition with him - and his voice is quiet. Quiet but urgent. ‘If you really want life then come to me! I am the living bread which has come down from Heaven’ Is he part of our balanced diet…? Are his words and opinions forming us as much as all the others that we hear and read? Can anything else truly satisfy us as much as the food that he offers? Questions to consider over this long period of meditation on the Eucharist.