

The author Stephen Covey, who passed away about a month ago, wrote his first best-seller in 1989. It was titled "*The Seven Habits of Highly Effective People.*" Covey argues against what he calls the "*Personality Ethic*" where one hides their bad points and promotes their good points - and instead promotes what he calls the "*Character Ethic*" where a person works to become strengthening their good points and eliminating their bad points.

In a sense, Covey's theorem is that too often people work to fake who they are - being a phony - in order to curry favor with high-powered individuals and to put on a false front ... instead of just being a good person.

Covey's "*Seven Habits*" has sold more than 25 million copies worldwide. And has spawned an entire empire of "*Habits*" books for families, teens, and kids; as well as seminars, and videos, and audio programs.

In the Second Reading, as we continue hearing from St. Paul's Letter to the Ephesians, we are admonished to become "*imitators of God*" and to "*live in love*" by following the example of Jesus Christ and offering our lives as a "*sacrificial offering to God for a fragrant aroma.*"

St. Paul goes on to give us guidance to "*remove*" six bad habits, namely: "*bitterness, fury, anger, shouting, ... reviling [and] malice*" ... and to take on three good habits by being "*kind ... compassionate, [and] forgiving ... as God has forgiven [us]*".

In the Old Testament, we hear of the Prophet Elijah, who has just defeated the prophets of Ba'al, but then flees the wrath of the Queen by running into the desert. Elijah is exhausted, fed-up, and afraid for his life - and so he tells God that he's had enough. He lays down and expects to die, but God isn't done with him yet.

Instead, Elijah is fed by angels and given the strength for 40 days worth of travel.

Finally, in the continued reading from St. John's Gospel, Jesus continues to try to get the people to think in terms of the Divine, instead of focusing on the mundane and base. Last week He told them that He is the "*Bread of Life*" and now they are wondering who He thinks He is!

Instead of rising up to the level of Christ, the crowd begins to murmur and tear Jesus back down to Who it is *they* want Him to be - just another one of the townspeople.

Oftentimes, our daily life can seem like too much - like Elijah, we may even cry out that we've had enough. The world can drag us down to the lowest level; and we struggle to rise up to our lofty calling - as St. Paul calls us "*beloved children*" of God.

The Food for our daily journey is the Bread of Angels - Jesus Christ ... who offers Himself as the Bread of Life in sacrifice on this altar.

God isn't done with us. And like the food provided for Elijah in the desert, He provides us with the Eucharist as nourishment so that we might persevere in living His Life of Grace by living in His love in a world which at times can be a spiritual desert. Through His supernatural help, we can transcend our fallen human nature and truly imitate God through His Love - and manifest His kindness ... His compassion ... and His forgiveness in our own lives.

As we approach this altar to receive the Bread of Angels ... the Eucharist ... the Bread of Life ... the Body and Blood, Soul and Divinity of Jesus Christ - let us desire to truly become imitators of God ... not imitators of the world. Let us remove from our hearts and minds and lives any hinderances to embracing the habits of God - Love, forgiveness, kindness, compassion ... so that we may attain, through His grace, our status as beloved children of God the Father, redeemed in Christ, and filled with the Holy Spirit.