

Homily based on the readings from June 10, 2026 (1 Kings 18.20-39;  
Matthew 5.17-19)

This morning, we continue to read about the Prophet Elijah – as he undertook what was probably his most *courageous* act of discipleship. Even though the prophets of Baal outnumbered him 450 to one – and had the unwavering support of the king and queen of Israel – Elijah *publicly* challenged them to put their false gods to the test. As we just heard, two sacrifices were set up – one for Baal and one for the Lord – with the expectation that the *true* God would send down flames to consume the offering dedicated to himself.

From a safe distance – thousands of years later and thousands of miles away – the outcome of this trial may seem obvious, but that was certainly *not* the perspective of the people who were actually present. By any reasonable standard, it appeared that Elijah was doomed to failure – and that he would ultimately lose his life in the process. Nevertheless, as is always the case, what mattered was not human

*perception*, but divine *reality*. All the false prophets in the world could not cause fire to rain down from the heavens. Only the living Lord – the “God of Abraham, Isaac, and Israel” – could accomplish that.

As followers of Christ, not only do we need to understand what God is capable of doing, but also what is beyond our *own* ability. Consider the sacrifice *we* are preparing to witness in a few moments – the Holy Sacrifice of the Mass. Everyone in this building – everyone in the City of New London – could gather around the altar, singing, dancing, shouting at the top of our lungs, and it would have absolutely no effect. None of us, by our own power, can make God present in our midst. The only way for that to happen is for this *one* man, seated right over here – the anointed priest of the Lord – to come up to the altar and humbly ask him to take the form of bread and wine. What *we* want and what *we* do is totally irrelevant. All that matters is what *God* has chosen to do – what he has *promised* to do.

That *promise* is a treasure of *indescribable* value – which has been passed down from generation to generation, through the Sacrament of Priestly Ordination. It is not something we *deserve* or something we can *earn*, but something we have been *given*. The greatest tragedy in the *history* of the Church is that our Protestant brothers and sisters *willfully* walked away from the Holy Eucharist – abandoning the true sacrifice of the Lord, just as the Children of Israel had done. As Catholics, we must follow in the footsteps of Elijah, faithfully participating in the *authentic* sacrifice, regardless of how many people – family members, fellow citizens, political leaders – decide to stand against us. We must never cease to pray that *all* Christians – remembering the example of the repentant Israelites – will one day fall to their knees and joyfully proclaim the Real Presence of our Risen Lord.