

A Short Teaching on Hard Saying
by Deacon Gerry Palermo

Greetings on this Twenty-first Sunday in Ordinary Time

Readings: Jos 24:1-2a, 15-17, 18b; Eph 5:21-32; Jn 6:60-69

The Church reads the Gospel of John, Chapter Six over the course of five weeks. This is week five. In the fifth week, the fifth question: “This saying is hard; who can accept it?” Jesus’ flesh is food to be eaten. This he clearly stated.

“This saying is hard; who can accept it? At this question, Jesus offers an invitation. What if you were to see the Son of Man ascending to where he was before? Jesus is inviting those who doubt the Bread of Life discourse to reconsider once he ascends (crucified, died, buried, resurrected, and ascended). How patient a God who offer the invitation to believe after he is Risen!

The most heart breaking words that God every spoke come next. Do you also want to leave?

Having revealed the depths of God’s love to offer His essence as flesh-in-bread, and being rejected by the people, he asks his closest friends, The Twelve, Do you also want to leave?

Simon Peter asserts faith in these flesh-bread-life words by replying: “Master, to whom shall we go? You have the words of eternal life. We have come to believe and are convinced that you are the Holy One of God.”

Jesus’ words are spirit and truth delivered in the flesh. Jesus tells us that flesh (the six senses) are not enough to understand. Trust God to understand flesh-bread. The Twelve came to know him in faith and by witness of his works. He is saying his work of resurrection to life includes this Eucharistic Bread and Wine. The Twelve had to decide: Is he who and what he says he is or not.

That question came down to the ‘What is it?’ bread. Then, what is it? Is this a hard saying for you? Can you accept what Jesus said? Do you believe he is the Son of Man who ascended to where he was before?

Why do Catholics make so much of the Eucharistic Bread and the sharing of the same? Because He said to them, “Give them some food yourselves.” (Lk 9:13).

Come to the feast of Heaven and Earth, come to the table of plenty!

Peace be with you.

Deacon Gerry