

## GOSPEL

*John 6:60-69*

After hearing his doctrine many of the followers of Jesus said, 'This is intolerable language. How could anyone accept it?' Jesus was aware that his followers were complaining about it and said, 'Does this upset you? What if you should see the Son of Man ascend to where he was before?'

'It is the spirit that gives life,  
the flesh has nothing to offer.  
The words I have spoken to you are spirit  
and they are life.'

'But there are some of you who do not believe.' For Jesus knew from the outset those who did not believe, and who it was that would betray him. He went on, 'This is why I told you that no one could come to me unless the Father allows him.' After this, many of his disciples left him and stopped going with him.

Then Jesus said to the Twelve, 'What about you, do you want to go away too?' Simon Peter answered, 'Lord, who shall we go to? You have the message of eternal life, and we believe; we know that you are the Holy One of God.'

## A REFLECTION OF ST JOHN PAUL II

*21 August 1991, Excerpt, Translated from Italian*

Saint John, in today's Gospel passage, at the end of Jesus' speech on the "bread of life" (cf. John 6:35), continues: "many of his disciples, after listening, said: "This language is harsh ; who can understand it?". And he adds with a note of sadness: "from then on many of his disciples withdrew and no longer went with him" (Jn 6, 60.66). In reality the Gospel is demanding and demanding. Faced with rejection, however, Jesus does not compromise. He reminds everyone of their responsibilities by asking: "Does this shock you? What if you saw the Son of Man go up where he was before? It is the Spirit that gives life, the flesh is of no use; the words that I have spoken to you are spirit and life" (Jn 6, 61-63). These words highlight the supernatural character of the Revelation of Christ: through faith and listening to his word, men are exhorted to personally encounter the incarnate Word , with the awaited Messiah, the only mediator between God and 'humanity.

The acceptance of faith brings with it immediate consequences in the moral behavior of the believer: there is no doubt that following Christ is not an easy task. Christian ethics in fact indicates an arduous path, it invites us to enter through the narrow door, the only one that leads to true life.

The text of the letter to the Ephesians, proposed by the liturgy of this twenty-first Sunday of ordinary time, illustrates, for example, what the way Christians should behave in the specific field of the family. The apostle Paul underlines the mutual love between husband and wife, united not by a simple promise of fidelity, but by an indissoluble bond elevated to a sacrament, a sign of the union of Christ with his Church. He then points to the search for mutual spiritual edification and sanctification as the ideal of family life, so that the family can shine as a "domestic church". This is certainly a high and difficult ideal that requires a continuous response of enlightened, profound and convinced faith. An effort to be renewed every day.

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## REFLECTION QUESTIONS

What stood out to you from the Gospel or Reflection/ Homily?



**Head:** St John Paul II tells us "The acceptance of faith brings with it immediate consequences in the moral behavior of the believer." What "consequences" do you believe he is speaking of?



**Heart:** "Following Christ is not an easy path" – which aspects of following Christ do you find to be easy? Which aspects are hard?



**Hands:** How can we support one another to follow Christ more closely? In what ways will this help each of us? (e.g. faith sharing in our Faith Circle helps us to better know Jesus and one another)

## PRAYER

Spend some time in prayer with one another:

1. Conscious of what has just been shared, members briefly name/ describe their prayer needs.
2. Intentionally call on the Holy Spirit to be present (e.g. "Come Holy Spirit, please be present as we pray")
3. Offer prayers of thanks and praise to God.
4. Pray for each others' prayer needs. Where appropriate, you may like to encourage the group to place a hand on the shoulder of the individual that you are currently praying for.
5. Conclude your prayer time with another prayer of praise, perhaps praying the 'Glory Be'.