



Many of the disciples of Jesus who were listening said, "This saying is hard; who can accept it?" Since Jesus knew that his disciples were murmuring about this, he said to them, "Does this shock you? What if you were to see the Son of Man ascending to where he was before? It is the spirit that gives life, while the flesh is of no avail. The words I have spoken to you are spirit and life. But there are some of you who do not believe." Jesus knew from the beginning the ones who would not believe and the one who would betray him. And he said, "For this reason I have told you that no one can come to me unless it is granted him by my Father." As a result of this, many of his disciples returned to their former way of life and no longer accompanied him. Jesus then said to the Twelve, "Do you also want to leave?" Simon Peter answered him, "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."

Introductory Prayer: Lord, I believe that you are present here and now as I turn to you in prayer. I trust and have confidence in your desire to give me every grace I need to receive today. Thank you for your love, thank you for your immense generosity toward me. I give you my life and my love in return.

Petition: Lord, help me to embrace fully all that you have revealed.

1. Hard Words to Swallow: Many of the Jews would not accept that Jesus was one with the Father—that he was God. For some, Christ's divinity was a leap greater than they were ready to make. His message had not yet penetrated into their hearts. So, when he

explained how he would give himself to them in the Eucharist, they balked. The first act of faith (belief in his divinity) was crucial for them to be able to make the second act of faith (belief in his Eucharistic presence). Each truth that Christ reveals about himself is connected to other truths he wants to reveal about himself. If we don't accept one, the others can become difficult, too. Conversely, as we grow in our knowledge, faith, and love of Christ, other difficulties in our spiritual life become easier.

2. Do You Also Want to Leave? Christ's invitation to accept his truth and his love is always just that: an invitation. He doesn't force himself on us. Each saving truth he presents is free to be accepted by us, or left aside. But we are impoverished by rejecting any truth about Christ, since he is truth itself. It is the same with each grace he offers us. After this discourse on the Eucharist, many of Christ's disciples left and no longer accompanied him. As he had invited them to follow him freely, so were they free to go. But would they be able to share in the joy of his resurrection? Would they receive the fullness of life that he had promised them? Would they find what their hearts needed and wanted most if they no longer walked with Christ? All judgment is left to God's mercy alone.

3. To Whom Shall We Go? Peter already believed in Christ's divinity. "We have come to believe and are convinced that you are the Holy One of God." Anything else Christ might teach or say Peter could accept, even if it was something he couldn't fully understand. Peter's confidence and trust in Christ enabled him to cut to the chase: What could he possibly gain by going anywhere else or to anyone else? Even if the path with Christ is strewn with obscurity and great suffering—as it would be—what other direction could Peter possibly take that could be better?

Conversation with Christ: Lord Jesus, I too have come to believe and am convinced that you are the Holy One of God. How could I possibly find meaning and peace of soul anywhere except in you? Your words and your presence in the Eucharist are life for my soul.

Resolution: Today I will accept any suffering that comes my way, confident that it is somehow part of God's loving plan.