

**Work at Understanding**    Third Week of Easter    Saturday, April 16, 2016    8:15 AM  
Acts 9:31-42;    **Jn 6:60-69**    (But what he really wants is a surrender of their judgment so that they believe, and not only believe, but accept as true, what he is and what he does, which is all from the Father.)

**“As a result of this many of his disciples returned to their former way of life and no longer walked with him.”**

We see that Jesus is very provocative and calls on people to trust in him and in what he represents, which is the Father; but not everyone is willing to go the whole distance. Some are attracted to him. They are attracted to his words. They are attracted to his works. They see what he can do. **But what he really wants is a surrender of their judgment so that they believe, and not only believe, but accept as true, what he is and what he does, which is all from the Father.**

Now this particular section follows the teaching on the body and the blood: **“Unless you eat my body and drink my blood, you shall have no life in you.”** That is what they are objecting to. This is ridiculous. How can anyone give his flesh to eat.

Now surrender of the judgment does not mean that one simply believes gullibly anything at all. The point is **we have to work to understand what it is that God is revealing.** So many of them actually completely misunderstood—and John makes a point of this—**misunderstood what he was meaning.** So walking away has two sides to it: first of all those who simply don’t even want to surrender their judgment; they want to maintain that they know better. They are going to maintain control of their own lives. They are not going to surrender that control to someone else. **There’s not going to be any higher power than themselves. That’s the first group who walks away.**

**The second group doesn’t actually walk away; they simply fall away because they don’t want to work at trying to understand what it is he is getting at.** What does he mean by, “Unless you eat my body”? What does that mean? Is that recommending cannibalism? Well, we know of course not, and we have the advantage of a very rich sacramental tradition. The people in Jesus’ day did not have a sacramental tradition to rely on, so they had to really develop it. Well, whether you had to develop it or rely on it, it’s still a matter of work. **You have to try to**

**understand things. The parables were all work. He meant that people should try to understand something here.** How does this apply to you? What is this all about? They are not just stories told for entertainment sake. They are stories told to provoke a response, a response that applies to one's life these treasures, these teachings, these words of wisdom.

**In the case of the Eucharist, of course, it's a matter of understanding how the bread and the wine of the sacrament are really meant to provide substantial food for the journey, which he makes with us. He is the model.** He isn't simply presenting things to believe. He is the model of how we come to believe. His disciples also are models, but he is the first model. He is the one who first encounters all these different issues. And there are many parts of his life when he was doubting, and **many times in his life when he was questioning, and that's all part of life.** He is not exempt from it. He is part of it. He is part of life. He has assumed our lives. He has assumed our suffering. He has assumed our questions. He has assumed our pains, and he is living them. But we have to be willing also to live them the way he did, to bear them as he did, not to throw them off, not to ignore them, not to refuse them, but **to bear them as he did: our questions, our problems, our pains, our doubts.** This is the stuff of life. It's not about simple little certainties that cause us no trouble—the gospel of life.

**“Do you want to walk away too?” he asked the apostles; and Peter says, well, “Where would we go?”**