

**Wonder and Appreciation**    Third Week of Easter    Friday, May 5, 2017    8:15 AM  
Acts 9:1-20;    **Jn 6:52-59**    (Need for a willingness to open ourselves to beauty, to joy, to mystery.)

**“How can this man give us his Flesh to eat?”**

There’s absolutely nothing wrong with this question. And the mysteries of God revealed in Christ spark many questions. And that’s good; we should wonder. Aristotle says, **“Wonder is the passion that leads to understanding.”** And to wonder about and to question is a wonderful thing; **it leads to enlightenment eventually if we pursue it faithfully.** But this group are not asking this question with a spirit of wonder. **They are actually asking it in a sort of spirit of almost derision or even contempt.**

Now this is **in Capernaum.** At another time the gospel says that in Capernaum Jesus could work no mighty works except for healing a few people because of their, in Greek, *apistis*, translated unfortunately in many Bibles “lack of faith.” But *apistis* doesn’t really mean lack of faith; it really means **disbelief.** That’s very different. It’s not just something missing; it’s something there that shouldn’t be there. That’s very different.

And that’s what we have here. We have *apistis*. We have a disbelief. We have an **unwillingness to listen.** We have a prejudice, a prejudgment. **It is an attitude of pride:** we know what’s possible, and we know what isn’t; and his teachings don’t fit into what we think is or what we know to be so and possible. That is pride. As Pope Francis constantly emphasizes, **Jesus’ disciples have to be marked with humility.** And humility begins with **recognizing we really don’t know much.** And although it’s true the human mind is quite marvelous, it isn’t quite as marvelous as the rest of creation or the whole of creation and cannot really comprehend it. It can only try to appreciate it. And **our ability to comprehend is very limited.**

**However our ability to appreciate is greater.** And appreciation has to do with our willingness—and it's **a willingness—to open ourselves to beauty, to joy, to mystery,** and to not have the answers, and to not be able to explain; but to be able to enjoy and to live with life and **the author of life, who approaches in so many different ways every day, although we are often not paying attention.** We are too busy with our little world and our sense of meaning and so on. So this gospel is really inviting people to let go of what they think is possible and what they think is for real, and let God become the teacher. **God the Holy Spirit is our teacher if we only would become his disciples.**