

TWENTY-FIRST SUNDAY IN ORDINARY TIME

August 23, 2009

Gospel: (John 6: 60-69)

Many of Jesus' disciples who were listening said, "This saying is hard; who can accept it?"... Jesus said, "*It is the Spirit that gives life...the words I have spoken to you are spirit and life.*" 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."

Reflection:

Believing in Jesus and his teaching requires letting go of what we think we know of God and allowing God to act in a whole new way. Israel's expectations of who the Messiah would be blocked the way for some to see God acting in a new way and offering a whole new way of relating to us. Never before had Israel heard of a God who becomes incarnate and dwells among the people. Believe or leave is a pretty clear choice. Many of us make the choice to stay with Jesus but live the new, self-giving life only halfheartedly. Liturgy invites us to constantly assess the depth of our belief-commitment. We judge our belief not on what we say or think but on what we do. Self-giving always leads to new life and this is why we are able to make the choice to stay with the Master-for we have come to know and believe that he has the words of eternal life. (Living Liturgy, p.196)

Vincentian Meditation:

In prayer, the emphasis must always be on the presence of the personal God, to whose word we must listen attentively, as he speaks to us the good news of his love for us and for others. In an era when there is much noise, where the media, if we so choose, speak to us all day long, we must ask ourselves: Are we able to distinguish the voice of God among the many voices that are speaking? Is God's word able to say "new things" to us? Are we still capable of wonder? The word "wonder" has a kinship with the word wound. Is the word of God able to wound us, to penetrate the membrane that seals us off, that encloses us within ourselves? Can it break into our consciousness and change us? (Maloney, Go! On the Missionary Spirituality of St. Vincent de Paul, p.24)

Discussion: (*Share your thoughts after a moment of silence*)

How is the Holy Spirit calling us to change- to become "new"?

Closing Prayer:

Jesus is ever present with God, and ever present with us, and so we pray,
-Lord to whom shall we go? You have the words of eternal life.
We ask for strength to continue as your faithful disciples,
-and may we always let your word break into our consciousness and change us. Amen.

