

..WHERE WOULD WE GO? NO ONE BUT YOU GIVES US THE REVELATION OF ETERNAL LIFE. - Biblical Commentary by Father Alberto Maggi OSM

John 6,60-69

And when many of Jesus' followers heard these things, it caused a stir. "That's disgusting!" they said. "How could anybody accept it?" Without anyone telling him, Jesus knew they were outraged and told them, "Are you offended over my teaching? What will you do when you see the Son of Man ascending into the realm from where he came? "The Holy Spirit is the one who gives life, that which is of the natural realm is of no help. The words I speak to you are Spirit and life. But there are still some of you who won't believe."

In fact, Jesus already knew from the beginning who the sceptics were and who his traitor would be. He went on to say, "This is why I told you that no one embraces me unless the Father has given you to me." And so from that time on many of the disciples turned their backs on Jesus and refused to be associated with him So Jesus said to his twelve, "And you—do you also want to leave?" Peter spoke up and said, "But Lord, where would we go? No one but you gives us the revelation of eternal life. We're fully convinced that you are the Anointed One, the Son of the Living God, and we believe in you!"

Jesus concluded the very long speech given in the synagogue of Capernaum, a speech in which he managed to upset everyone: the crowd, who hoped to make him king, the religious leaders, the Jews, who see the danger of this Jesus who revolutionizes the relationship with God, and what is more dramatic in John's Gospel chapter 6, 60-69, a speech that will cost him the abandonment of many of his disciples. The evangelist writes "*..when many of Jesus' followers heard these things, it caused a stir. "That's disgusting!" they said. "How could anybody accept it?"*" What was offensive and insolent about Jesus' speech? Jesus took the distance from the myth of the exodus, of liberation; Jesus said clearly "*They all died in the desert*" this for them was not acceptable But they also include Jesus' invitation that they must make themselves bread, food of life for others, and they want to command, they want to reign, they don't want to serve others, and therefore "*How could anybody accept it?"*

"Jesus knew they were outraged .." exactly like the Jews, the religious authorities "*and told them, "Are you offended over my teaching?*" The verb to outrage appears here and then in chapter 16, when Jesus announces the persecution and death, so it is in reference to his death. It is death that outrages, the death of Jesus, because they think that death is the end of everything. In fact he says "*What will you do when you see the Son of Man ascending into the realm from where he came?"*". death was considered a descent and the resurrection an ascent, and here is the sentence of Jesus "*The Holy Spirit is the one who gives life, that which is of the natural realm is of no help.*" Jesus had said he would give his bread as flesh, what the Spirit means gives life and the flesh is of no use? Eating bread, the reference is to the Eucharist, without then making bread for others it is

absolutely useless *“The words I speak to you are Spirit and life.”* these are words that release in man ever growing vital energies, it is the Eucharist, which is a dynamism of love received and love communicated. . *“But there are still some of you who won't believe.”* they gave an adhesion to Jesus that is not radical, it is given for their interest, not the interest of others, they follow Jesus for their own convenience.

“In fact, Jesus already knew from the beginning who the sceptics were and who his traitor would be.” While the other evangelists announce the betrayal in context of the Last supper, the evangelist (John) inserts it here to make it clear that this long discourse is in reference to the Eucharist. *“He went on to say, “This is why I told you that no one embraces me unless the Father has given you to me.”* The Father's action is to stimulate the desire for the fullness of life, but whoever is without the Spirit of God will give it up.

Here is the dramatic ending *“ And so from that time on many of the disciples turned their backs on Jesus and refused to be associated with him...”* but Jesus is willing to stay alone rather than change his plan to manifest the love of the Father to the world. *So Jesus said to his twelve, “And you—do you also want to leave?” Peter spoke up and said, “But Lord, where would we go? No one but you gives us the revelation of eternal life We're fully convinced that you are the Anointed One, the Son of the Living God, and we believe in you!”* Simon Peter's answer in part is positive, it recognizes that Jesus has the words that release a life in man indestructible, but it is partly negative because he refers to Jesus as *“ the Anointed One ”*, with the definite article. The Anointed One was the Messiah expected by tradition, the one who came to restore the monarchy, to dominate the gentiles and to impose the law, that is, the popular expectation of the Messiah . It is exactly the expression that the possessed man used from the impure spirit always in Capernaum, always in the synagogue, as we read in the Gospels of Mark and Luke, and this throws a sinister light on what will follow and on Peter's betrayal.