



## Saint John the Apostle: Faith

**Introductory Prayer:** Lord, I thank you for gathering us here again as a parish family. I believe that you have called each of us to holiness and I trust in your grace to make it happen in my life. You are love itself, and you ask me each day to receive your love, and to give your love to others. May Saint John the Apostle intercede for us that we may grow in faith, hope and love.

*Feast Day: Dec. 27* **Father James Kelleher, SOLT video #1:** ([www.youtube.com/watch?v=5r4dCt20x8k](http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=5r4dCt20x8k))

### **John 6:56,60-69** Master, to whom shall we go?

Jesus said: “He who eats my flesh and drinks my blood abides in me, and I in him.” 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.”

**Father James Kelleher, SOLT video #2** (<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=QKipj1HCmOo>)

**Discussion questions** (credit to Father Daniel Ray, LC for reflections):

**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 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.

- a) Have we experienced this in our lives or seen it in the lives of others close to us?
- b) Our participation in the Eucharist is a gift of faith as well as an act of faith. How can we grow in our faith in Christ’s true presence?

**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.

- a) Most of us know either family members or friends that have rejected the faith. What can we do to encourage their faith in Christ and His Church?
- b) Is Christ inviting us to a deeper faith? How is he doing this?

**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?

- a) St. Anselm's motto was "faith seeking understanding." Are we willing to believe like Peter – that is, to have an active love of God that seeks deeper knowledge of Him? How often do we read a spiritual book or listen to a talk on a Christian subject?
- b) Our confidence and trust in Christ and His promise of salvation will lead us through the valley of suffering, difficulty, and death. Do we trust God in our difficulties? Do we trust God even when the sins of others in the Church are brought to light?

**Men's / Women's parish team resolution for the month** (choose one or suggest your own):

- Commit to reading one spiritual book in the next month.
- Visit Christ in the Blessed Sacrament daily.
- Attend at least one daily Mass per week (Saturday mornings work for many people).

**Closing Prayer:** One decade of Scripture Rosary: the first Sorrowful Mystery, the Agony in the Garden.

Verses to be recited before each Hail Mary:

1. Jesus came with them to Gethsemane and He began to be saddened and exceedingly troubled. (Matt. 26:36-37)
2. Then He said to them, "My soul is sad, even unto death. Wait here and watch with Me." (Matt. 6:38)
3. And going forward a little, He fell on the ground and began to pray. (Mark 14:35)
4. "Father, if Thou art willing, remove this cup from Me; yet not My will but Thine be done." (Luke 22:42)
5. And there appeared to Him an angel from heaven to strengthen Him. (Luke 22:43)
6. And falling into an agony He prayed the more earnestly. (Luke 22:43)
7. And His sweat became as drops of blood running down upon the ground. (Luke 22:44)
8. Then He came to the disciples and found them sleeping. And He said, "Could you not, then, watch one hour with me?" (Matt. 26:40)
9. "Watch and pray, that you may not enter into temptation." (Matt. 26:41)
10. "The spirit indeed is willing, but the flesh is weak." (Matt. 26:41)

(Taken from [www.ourcatholicprayers.com](http://www.ourcatholicprayers.com))

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