

Pastor Roy's Sermon from August 23, 2015

Jesus asks, "Are you going to leave too?" Yes, he is asking the disciples this, but can we hear him asking us too? He's not pleading. He isn't begging. He is asking. Have you ever thought of Jesus asking you anything?

The crowds have rejected his talk of unity with God and that they must all but eat his flesh and drink his blood. Now John makes clear he is not speaking of cannibalism when he says, the flesh is useless. It's not about his flesh and blood, it's about his unity with God. And he invites us to be joined with him as he shares God's nature. We make Jesus part of us. We embrace his life, his teachings, his sacrifices, his love--his unity with God--and we make it our own.

Or better yet, we accept that God has made us God's own. Quite frankly, it matters less what we think with our heads and it matters much more what God has done for us. We are safe in God's care. No matter what we think, for our thoughts can be random and impulsive. If there is randomness and impulsiveness in God, it is more along the lines of random acts of love and kindness. It's not what we think that matters, it's the reality God has revealed to us, in us, and around us. We are welcomed into this union: "From God. With God. Eat my flesh. Drink my blood." True life. This is good news.

In the past, the Western part of Christianity has made a big deal about the difference between us and God. But Jesus, and the saints--the humble who have not given themselves over to power and controlling everything and everyone around them, *these* do not focus on the differences but unity and communion in all their relationships. With generous giving and receiving, with communion comes hope. This is one of the reasons Holy Communion is so vital to our services. It's not an isolated piece of our theology and ritual, it is the essence of our existence. So with Baptism. Freely given, freely received.

There is one true God. God of Good, of Love, of Creation. Of course, our knowledge of God must be held with utter humility because we in our smallness, cannot contain or fathom or perceive this ultimate God of all being. We just can't. But we do have daily glimpses of God. We find God in the sunrise. We find God in the embrace of a friend or family member. We hear God in the rain, we see God in the flash of a meteor. We meet God when we gather humbly, to receive of the promised Spirit. God is love. God is life. God is far, faithfully, and completely beyond the images of our minds and our small selves.

We can be caught up in the all-embracing presence of God. But anything in us, about us, in our minds, in our ambitions that is not of God, from God, with God--of these we must let go. When we experience deep contempt toward ourselves or others, we confess it as brokenness and sin, but this is not the body and blood of our Lord. This is not the good news. The good news is when Jesus talks about his coming from God and returning to God. When he talks of us consuming everything he gives us. The Good News is being united with him in God. It is to courageously struggle into love and peace.

And so his disciples say, "Lord, to whom can we go? You have the words of eternal life. We believe, we know you to be the Holy One of God." That's what they told Jesus, what do we tell Jesus? How do we seek to be united with him as he is with God? How do we look to Jesus, with prayer, and then live our lives in this communion with his loving justice lived in the presence of God? May this union give us courage to act for peace.

Thanks be to God.