

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 walked with 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.”

“Master, to whom shall we go? You have the words of eternal life.”

To whom shall we go... Following the Lord is always risky business. We see
this in the demise of the twelve, well the eleven... John got to die the good old
fashioned way. Beheading, filet-ing, crucifying, piercing, stabbing, beaten, imprisoned,
scorned, derided, and killed with horrific bloodshed, all because they claimed the
name of Christian. All because they followed the crucified one. And to many, it would
seem foolish. Why follow a man crucified, nailed, and killed upon a tree? But the

twelve knew something more. They knew that the cross was just the beginning. They had broken bread with Him, eaten with Him, journeyed with Him, and because of that, they saw Him in His glory. They saw Him after the Third day. They saw God laugh in the face of death. They saw God victorious as he rose up from the grave, they saw the light of the world by darkness slain, bursting forth into glorious day, and they believed. They said yes. They followed.

“Master to whom shall we go? You have the words of eternal life.”

To follow the Lord is the first stage of wisdom, the prophets say. To follow the Lord, to remain faithful to the Lord, to embrace death with the Lord is foolish the world says, but to the one who believes, the one who knows the truth, the one who has heard the Words of eternal life, it is the blessed journey of a lifetime.

There is none other who followed the Lord more closely than His Blessed Mother. She who brought him into the world, held Him in her arms again as he was taken down from the Cross. She who mourned and wept at his death rejoiced at the sight of her Son, her love, her Lord risen from the dead. Even there in the midst of the sorrow of Good Friday, Mary experienced and lived the joy of her Son. She lived the joy of his life, the joy of His resurrection to come. Because Mary had the privileged seat as the favored one, the one full of grace there at the feet of the Lord throughout His earthly life. Mary journeyed with her son and in doing so she received the joy of love risen from the dead in a special way.

While our Blessed Mother is always with us, especially here in the presence of our Lord in the Blessed Sacrament, leading us and pointing us as she did in Cana to follow Him, the eternal Word made flesh. We have another favored one, another “graced” one here in our midst, showing us and pointing us to the Eternal Word made flesh. Hannah of course means one who is favored, one who is graced, and as we gather here this evening with you we recall and pray in thanksgiving for the grace of your friendship, your joyfulness, your laughter and humor, but most importantly your example of faith. And we give thanks to our Lord for that great gift.

Like Mary at the foot of the Cross, Mary weeping with joy at the news of the resurrection, Mary pondering the paschal mystery in her heart, you, my dear Hannah are embarking upon a journey with our Blessed Mother. A journey to the foot of the Cross, a journey to the empty tomb, a journey closer to the Lord Jesus. Life always has a roundabout journey and with the Lord, we tend to drive in more circles than we do straight paths. A Whitesville native hearing the voice of the Lord, calling her to say yes, calling her to follow the one with the Words of Eternal Life, hearing His voice and knowing that she can do nothing but follow Him going in search of where He might be calling. And while nun runs and visits to different communities bore fruit in your discernment, it probably came as a bit of a surprise to find yourself back in Whitesville, hearing and feeling a call to Passionist Life in Saint Joseph Monastery, so close to home.

But where else could you go? Where else should you go? Than to where you have heard His voice, heard the Words of Eternal Life. My dear Hannah, as we pray with you this evening, know that we pray that you continue to be favored and graced in your journey as you hear His voice, as you hear His words of Eternal life. Like our Lady, follow Him. Follow Him to the Cross, follow Him to the empty tomb, Follow Him deeper into the very mystery of our redemption. And as you continue to do so, may you hear His voice more clearly with each passing day, the voice which calmed the storms, healed the sick, raised the dead, and called you by name in love to follow Him. Where else can you go Hannah? To whom else can you turn, other than to Him, here present in this Holy Eucharist, The Word made flesh, The one who promises Eternal Life, the one who in love said, "Hannah, follow me."