

Take-Home • Session Three

Living Stones, Royal Priesthood • 1 Peter 2:1-10

What We Found

The man Jesus renamed Rock taught us to read the stone texts: the cornerstone rejected by the builders, a reading Peter learned from Jesus' own mouth and repeated to the court that condemned him. We found the source of the Church's grandest titles sitting in Exodus 19: chosen race, royal priesthood, holy nation, spoken first at Sinai and handed by Peter to ex-pagan nobodies. Israel's grammar dissolved the false choice about priesthood: a whole priestly people and an ordered ministry within it coexisted for centuries without rivalry, and in the Church the common and ministerial priesthoods still stand together, differing in essence yet ordered to one another (CCC 1547). And Hosea's renamed children reminded us the whole paragraph is mercy: once not a people, now God's people.

Voices of the Church

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St. Augustine of Hippo (354-430), *The City of God*, Book XX, Chapter 10

St. Augustine teaches that all Christians are called priests because they are members of the one Priest, Christ, just as all are called anointed ones because of the mystical chrism; and yet the Church still properly calls her bishops and presbyters priests in a distinct sense. Eleven centuries before the Reformation debates, the common and ministerial priesthoods stood side by side in the Church's greatest doctor without any sense of rivalry.

Voices of the Church

St. Cyril of Jerusalem (d. 386), *Mystagogical Catecheses* 5

Instructing the newly baptized on the Mass, St. Cyril tells them that at Communion they hear the chanter invite them with Psalm 34: taste and see that the Lord is good. The verse Peter cites at 2:3 was already the Church's Communion song in the fourth century, and the Fathers heard "you have tasted" as more than a metaphor.

Voices of the Church

St. Bede the Venerable (673-735), *Commentary on the Catholic Epistles*, on 1 Peter 2

St. Bede reads the living stones as the faithful made alive by union with the living Stone, each squared and set by trials and teaching into the one temple whose foundation is Christ. A stone outside the building, he notes in substance, serves no purpose; the dignity of the stone is its place in the structure.

Private, unattached Christianity is foreign to the letter's whole image.

Live It This Week

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This week: (1) Memorize 1 Peter 2:9. (2) Each morning, offer the day as a priest: one sentence placing your work, prayers, joys, and sufferings on the altar with Christ's sacrifice. (3) Declare one wonderful deed of God out loud to one person. (4) Read Hosea 2:14-23 and hear your own renaming.

Scripture Memory

"But you are a chosen race, a royal priesthood, a holy nation, God's own people, that you may declare the wonderful deeds of him who called you out of darkness into his marvelous light" (1 Peter 2:9, RSV2CE)

Before next session: Read 1 Peter 2:11-25 before Session Four.

Go deeper in the Catechism: CCC 782-786; 1268; 1546-1547