

Take-Home • Session Nine

Partakers of the Divine Nature • 2 Peter 1:1-11

What We Found

The second letter opened at the summit of everything: God's promises exist so that you may become a partaker of the divine nature. Salvation is bigger than acquittal; pardon is the porch and participation is the house. Athanasius, Irenaeus, and Aquinas all bore witness to this exchange in nearly the same sentence: the Son of God became man so that we might come to share in the life of God. His divine power has already granted everything needed for godliness, which retires the excuse of not having what it takes. The eight-rung ladder gave growth its order, from faith to love, and verse 9 diagnosed the stalled Christian precisely: baptismal amnesia. The command to confirm your call and election keeps assurance honest: hope, zeal, and no presumption.

Voices of the Church

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St. Athanasius of Alexandria (d. 373), On the Incarnation 54

The champion of Nicaea states the exchange in one immortal sentence: the Son of God became man so that we might become God, that is, sharers by grace in the divine life. The Catechism quotes him on exactly this point (CCC 460), and his logic guarded Christmas itself: only one who is truly God can give creatures a share in God.

Voices of the Church

St. Irenaeus of Lyons (d. c. 202), Against Heresies, Book V, Preface

A spiritual grandson of the apostles (his teacher St. Polycarp knew St. John), St. Irenaeus writes that the Word of God, through his transcendent love, became what we are, that he might bring us to be what he himself is. The wonderful exchange was the Church's teaching little more than a century after Peter's death, and the Catechism sets his sentence beside Athanasius's under 2 Peter 1:4 (CCC 460).

Voices of the Church

St. Thomas Aquinas (d. 1274), Opusculum 57 on Corpus Christi

The Angelic Doctor, in his office for Corpus Christi, teaches that the only-begotten Son of God, wishing to make us sharers in his divinity, assumed our nature, so that he, made man, might make men gods. That this line stands in a Eucharistic work is no accident: the sacrament of his Body is where the partaking of

1:4 touches our lips. It is the third voice the Catechism gathers under tonight's verse (CCC 460).

Live It This Week

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This week: (1) Memorize 2 Peter 1:4 (from “he has granted” through “divine nature”). (2) Each morning, name your rung and ask for its grace in one sentence. (3) Before Communion this Sunday, pray St. Thomas's line: you assumed our nature to make us sharers in yours. (4) Write the eight rungs on a card and keep it where you will see it; we will meet the ladder's final rung again in Session Twelve.

Scripture Memory

“...he has granted to us his precious and very great promises, that through these you may escape from the corruption that is in the world because of passion, and become partakers of the divine nature” (2 Peter 1:4, RSV2CE)

Before next session: Read 2 Peter 1:12-21 before Session Ten, and keep your Ladder card handy this month.

Go deeper in the Catechism: CCC 460; 1996-1997; 2008-2010; 2016