

The Flood

What We Found

- The flood is creation replayed: the deep returns (Genesis 7:11), God sends a *ruach*, a wind, the very word for the Spirit of Genesis 1:2, over the earth so that the waters subside (Genesis 8:1), and a new world emerges with Noah blessed as a new Adam (Genesis 9:1).
- St. Peter himself reads the flood as the pattern of Baptism: eight persons were *saved through water*, and *Baptism, which corresponds to this, now saves you* (1 Peter 3:20–21).
- Peter's qualification does not point away from Baptism; it tells us what Baptism is: not a removal of dirt from the body, but an appeal to God for a clear conscience, with all its power from Christ's resurrection.
- The flood water judges and carries at the same time: in Baptism, an old self is drowned and a new self is carried.

Voices of the Church

St. Justin Martyr • *Dialogue with Trypho*

St. Justin, writing in the mid-second century, teaches in substance that the flood was already a mystery of salvation: righteous Noah, saved with his family through water and wood, prefigures the new humanity saved through the water of Baptism and the wood of the cross, and the eight persons point to the eighth day, the day of Christ's resurrection.

St. Cyprian of Carthage • *Letters*

St. Cyprian, the third-century bishop and martyr, teaches in substance that the ark of Noah was a type of the one Church: as those inside the ark were saved through the water that destroyed the world outside, so the saving water of Baptism belongs to the Church, the ark God has built for the salvation of the human race.

St. Augustine • *City of God, Book 15*

St. Augustine teaches in substance that the ark is a figure of the Church sojourning through the flood of this age, and he lingers over one detail: the door set in the ark's side, through which every saved creature entered, signifies the wound opened in the side of the crucified Christ, from which flowed the sacraments by which those who believe enter the Church.

Live It This Week

- Pray for the dead of your family by name once this week, entrusting them to the mercy of the God who remembered Noah.
- Read 1 Peter 3:18–22 once more, alone, slowly, and sit for two minutes with the sentence *Baptism now saves you* without arguing with it in either direction.
- Next time you enter the church, touch the holy water and remember: this is ark water. Something drowns; someone is carried.

Memory Verse

Baptism, which corresponds to this, now saves you, not as a removal of dirt from the body but as an appeal to God for a clear conscience, through the resurrection of Jesus Christ

1 Peter 3:21 (RSV2CE)

Before next session: Read Exodus 14, the crossing of the Red Sea. Notice where the water is, where the cloud is, and who does not make it across.

Catechism references: 1219–1220, 845, 701