

Judged on Love

Deep Calls to Deep · Praying the Scriptures with St. John of the Cross and St. Teresa of Avila

What We Found

The final exam was posted from the beginning: love God with all your heart, soul, and might (Deuteronomy 6:5), and your neighbor as yourself (Leviticus 19:18). St. Paul renders the verdict on everything else: tongues, prophecy, knowledge, even mountain-moving faith and martyrdom, "but have not love, I am nothing" (1 Corinthians 13:1-3). And the Catechism describes our meeting with Christ at death in St. John of the Cross's words: at the evening of life, we shall be judged on our love (CCC 1022).

Watch how the Judge examines: at a charcoal breakfast (John 21:9), three questions long heard as answering Peter's three denials (John 18:15-27), "Do you love me?", and every confession answered not with probation but with commission: feed my sheep; follow me (John 21:15-19). He asks for love, absorbs our failures into the asking, and entrusts us with what he loves. Judged on love means judged on Tuesdays: the hungry fed, the sick visited, "you did it to me" (Matthew 25:35-40). And even the love is grace, "poured into our hearts through the Holy Spirit" (Romans 5:5).

So the study ends where St. John Paul II ended the Jubilee: *Duc in altum*, put out into the deep (Luke 5:4). Deep calls to deep: the depths of God have been calling to yours for twelve weeks, and the appointment does not end tonight. Keep the fifteen minutes for life; the door of the castle stays open. And when he asks you Peter's question, answer with Peter's answer: Lord, you know everything; you know that I love you.

Voices of the Church

ST. JOHN OF THE CROSS

The saying the Church chose to describe our meeting with Christ at death: at the evening of life, we shall be judged on our love. In its home among his maxims, the counsel continues in substance: learn to love as God desires to be loved, and leave your own way of acting. It is the entire Carmelite doctrine in a sentence: everything, the nada, the nights, the flame, was only ever about learning to love; and the God who will examine us on love is the same who spent our whole life teaching us the subject and supplying the answers.

Sayings of Light and Love, as quoted in CCC 1022.

ST. TERESA OF AVILA

Teresa's last counsels in the Interior Castle are startlingly practical: the Lord does not look so much at the greatness of our works as at the love with which they are done; do what lies in your power, and fix your eyes on the Crucified, and everything will seem small to you. She dismantles every excuse of littleness: if love is the measure, then no life is too small for greatness, and the sisters' hidden duties, done with great love, weigh more than famous deeds done without it. The judgment on love is, in her hands, the most democratic doctrine in the Church.

The Interior Castle, Seventh Dwelling Places, ch. 4, summarized.

ST. JOHN PAUL II

Closing the Great Jubilee, St. John Paul II gave the Church her sailing orders in Christ's words to Peter: *Duc in altum*, put out into the deep (Luke 5:4). Remembering that word, he said, we are called to trust the Lord's promise and lower the nets. The apprentice of the Krakow tailor, formed on St. John of the Cross, ended his letter not with a program but with a Person to be contemplated and a deep to be dared. For a study named Deep Calls to Deep, it is the destined last word: the depths of God that have been calling to our depths now send us out upon the deep.

Novo Millennio Ineunte 1 and 58, on Luke 5:4.

Live It This Week

- Keep the fifteen minutes for life. It was never a twelve-week program; it was the door of the castle, and it stays open.
- Do one of Matthew 25's six mercies this week, in person, and let it be your closing act of the study.
- Choose your next step tonight (adoration hour, the next study, Story of a Soul or Teresa's Life) and tell one person in this group, who is allowed to ask you about it.

MEMORY VERSE · 1 CORINTHIANS 13:13

"So faith, hope, love abide, these three; but the greatest of these is love."

Before next session: Read 1 Corinthians 13 once more this week, slowly. Then: one of Matthew 25's mercies, in person, and the appointment kept, every day, for the rest of your life.

Catechism references for this session: CCC 1022, 1826-1829, 1821.