

In Their Midst

Session 1. God Heard Their Cry

God's saving work is already moving through courageous faithfulness, even before Israel can see a way out.

What We Found

Pharaoh responds to Israel's growth with fear, forced labor, and escalating violence. His power is real, but it cannot stop the people from multiplying or compel every person to cooperate with evil.

Shiphrah and Puah fear God more than the king and preserve life. Moses is then preserved through the courageous choices of his mother, his sister, and Pharaoh's daughter. God's providence often works quietly through people who freely choose faithfulness.

Voices of the Church

St. Augustine, 354-430

Summary of his teaching: God is so good and powerful that he would not permit evil unless he could bring good from it.

Enchiridion 11.

How this is cited. This is a close summary of St. Augustine's well-known statement in Enchiridion 11, not a direct quotation.

For the group. Pharaoh's evil remains evil, but it cannot place Israel outside God's providential care.

St. Thomas Aquinas, 1225-1274

Summary of his teaching: every created thing falls under divine providence, although God ordinarily governs creatures through real secondary causes.

Summa Theologiae I, q. 22, aa. 2-3.

How this is cited. Summary drawn from two articles, not a quotation. Article 2 establishes that all things are subject to providence; article 3 is where St. Thomas argues that God provides for all things immediately in his plan while executing that plan through intermediate causes.

For the group. The women's free decisions are not rivals to God's action. They are among the means through which his care unfolds.

St. John Paul II, 1920-2005

Summary of his teaching: a civil law that authorizes or requires the violation of innocent human life lacks binding moral force, and conscientious objection to such commands is required.

Evangelium Vitae 73.

How this is cited. This is a summary of Evangelium Vitae 73, which addresses intrinsically unjust laws against human life and the duty not to obey or participate in them.

For the group. Shiphrah and Puah show that reverence for God can demand courageous refusal of an unjust command.

Live It This Week

Practices

1. Pray with Exodus 1:15-21 once this week. Name one pressure that makes faithful action difficult, then ask God for the midwives' courage.
2. Perform one concrete act that protects or supports vulnerable human life, such as assisting a pregnancy resource center, checking on someone who is isolated, or giving practical help to a struggling parent.
3. Choose one person whose faithful work is usually overlooked. Thank that person specifically and by name.

Scripture Memory

Exodus 1:17

"But the midwives feared God, and did not do as the king of Egypt commanded them, but let the male children live."

Exodus 1:17

My Guess

Seal this and do not look at it again until we open it

Complete this sentence: God is bringing Israel out of Egypt so that Israel can...

Go Further in the Catechism

- CCC 302-303. God's providential care extends throughout creation.
- CCC 307. Human beings freely cooperate with God's providence.
- CCC 2242. An unjust civil command must not be obeyed.
- CCC 2258. Every human life is sacred.
- CCC 2485. A good purpose does not make lying good.

Before next session. Read Exodus 2:11-4:17 before we meet again.