

In Their Midst

Session 6. Stand Firm and See

God did not merely lead Israel away from Pharaoh. He opened a path into freedom, faith, praise, and life in his presence.

What We Found

Israel's crisis revealed the difference between being released from slavery and learning to live as a free people. Fear distorted the people's memory, but God remained present, protected them, opened the path, and called them forward.

The Lord was the decisive agent of Israel's deliverance. Moses obeyed and the people walked, but the path itself was God's gift. By the end of the crossing, fear of Pharaoh had become reverent fear of the Lord and belief in his saving action.

The inspired apostles teach the Church to receive ancient water deliverances as figures of Baptism. This reading preserves the historical rescue of Israel while recognizing its fulfillment in the liberation Christ gives. Baptism is a real gift of grace, not magic, and the baptized remain called to faith and perseverance.

Israel's freedom flowered into praise. The song looked beyond escape toward God's holy dwelling, showing that redemption leads a people into worship, belonging, and communion with God.

Voices of the Church

St. Ambrose, d. 397

Summary of his teaching: St. Ambrose presents Israel's passage through the sea as a figure of Baptism. Pharaoh and his forces are overcome in the water, while God's people pass through into freedom.

On the Mysteries 3.12.

How this is cited. This is a summary rather than a direct quotation. The cited section explicitly connects the Red Sea crossing with the mystery of Baptism.

For the group. Invite the group to see Baptism not merely as a religious label, but as God's act of liberation and incorporation into a new people.

St. Gregory Nazianzen, d. c. 390

Summary of his teaching: St. Gregory gathers Israel's passage through the sea, the cloud, manna, and water from the rock as anticipatory signs that instruct Christians about Baptism and the life that follows it.

Oration 40.25.

How this is cited. This is an honest summary of the baptismal typology St. Gregory develops in this section, not a quotation.

For the group. Baptism begins a journey of discipleship. Rescue from bondage is followed by dependence, testing, nourishment, and growth.

St. Thomas Aquinas, 1225-1274

Summary of his teaching: answering an objection about the kinds of Baptism, St. Thomas takes up St. John Damascene's list of figurative baptisms and affirms the crossing of the Red Sea among them, a figure of Baptism in respect of our deliverance from the bondage of sin, citing St. Paul's statement that Israel was baptized in the cloud and in the sea.

Summa Theologiae III, q. 66, a. 11, ad 3.

How this is cited. Summary, not a quotation. The claim sits in a reply to an objection (ad 3), where St. Thomas endorses St. John Damascene's enumeration of figurative baptisms; the article itself asks whether Baptism of Water, Blood, and the Spirit are fittingly distinguished.

For the group. The crossing helps the group name what salvation is freedom from, and also the new allegiance and life into which God brings us.

Live It This Week

Practices

1. Read the sea-crossing account aloud once this week. Sit in silence for two minutes, name one fear honestly before God, and pray the memory verse over it.
2. When you enter a Catholic church this week, use holy water slowly and make the Sign of the Cross in grateful remembrance of your Baptism. If you are not baptized, observe the practice respectfully and ask a Catholic friend or priest what Baptism means.
3. Write a six-line prayer of praise. Make God the subject of each line by naming who he is or what he has done, rather than focusing only on what you want him to change.

Scripture Memory

Exodus 14:14

"The LORD will fight for you, and you have only to be still."

Exodus 14:14

Go Further in the Catechism

- CCC 1094. Old Covenant realities prefigure God's saving work in Christ.
- CCC 1221. The Red Sea crossing announces the liberation brought by Baptism.
- CCC 1263-1264. Baptism forgives all sin and gives new life, while certain temporal consequences remain and the struggle against concupiscence continues.
- CCC 2639. Praise glorifies God for who he is.

Before next session. Read Exodus 15:22-18:27 before we meet again.