

In Their Midst

Session 14. The Glory Filled the Tabernacle

Exodus ends with a redeemed people gathered around God's dwelling and guided by his presence.

What We Found

The escape from Egypt was not the final goal of the Exodus. God freed Israel, formed the people by covenant, restored them after grave sin, and established his dwelling in their midst.

Moses' careful obedience prepares the sanctuary, but only God can fill it with glory. The cloud makes his presence known and directs both Israel's movement and its waiting.

The ending is both fulfillment and expectation. God has come to live among them. Even so, the tent is not yet fully open and the road is not finished. The rest of Scripture carries this hope toward Christ, his Church, and the final communion of God with humanity.

Voices of the Church

St. Irenaeus of Lyons, c. 130-c. 202

St. Irenaeus teaches that God's glory is manifested in the human person fully alive, while true human life consists in seeing God. God's self-revelation does not diminish human life. It brings humanity to the life for which it was created.

Against Heresies 4.20.7.

How this is cited. This is a summary of the well-attested teaching in the cited locus, not a direct quotation, because English translations vary.

For the group. God's presence is not an accessory to a full life. Communion with him is the goal of human life.

St. Augustine, 354-430

Summary of his teaching: preaching on the Word made flesh, St. Augustine says the Physician made an eye-salve of flesh for eyes that flesh had blinded, coming by flesh to put out the vices of the flesh and by death to slay death, so that we might be able to say that we have beheld his glory.

Tractates on the Gospel of John 2.

How this is cited. Summary of St. Augustine's exposition of John 1:14 in the second tractate, not a quotation, and no section number is given because the numbering varies between editions.

For the group. The tabernacle theme reaches a new depth in the Incarnation: God the Son comes among us in a true human nature.

St. Teresa of Avila, 1515-1582

St. Teresa compares the soul to a radiant castle with many rooms and urges Christians to recognize the dignity of a soul in which God desires to dwell. Growth in prayer is a journey toward deeper communion with the Lord who is already near.

The Interior Castle 1.1.1.

How this is cited. This is a summary of St. Teresa's own castle image and teaching in the cited locus. The image belongs to her, not to this study.

For the group. The God who dwells among his people also calls each baptized person to attentive, interior friendship with him.

Live It This Week

Practices

1. Make one visit to a Catholic church outside Sunday Mass. Spend ten quiet minutes before the tabernacle, acknowledging Christ's Eucharistic presence and asking for grace to follow his guidance.
2. Before one significant decision each day, pause and pray: 'Lord, lead me when it is time to move, and make me faithful when it is time to remain.'
3. Choose one concrete act of reverence at Mass this week, such as arriving early, genuflecting attentively, observing the Eucharistic fast, or remaining for a few minutes of thanksgiving after Communion.
4. Read Exodus 40 again at the end of the week. Write one sentence completing this prompt: 'God's deliverance is leading his people toward...'

Scripture Memory

Exodus 40:34

"Then the cloud covered the tent of meeting, and the glory of the LORD filled the tabernacle."

Exodus 40:34

Ready Response

Complete the study in one sentence:

The Exodus is not only a journey out of slavery. It is a journey toward...

Go Further in the Catechism

- CCC 260. Communion with the Trinity is the goal of God's plan.
- CCC 300. God transcends creation and is present to it.
- CCC 697. Cloud and light are biblical signs of the Spirit's manifestation.
- CCC 1094. Old Covenant realities prefigure fulfillment in Christ.
- CCC 1179, 1197. New Covenant worship is not confined to one earthly place, because Christ is the true temple and Christians are living stones built into it.
- CCC 1181. Church buildings are sacred houses of prayer and Eucharistic reservation.
- CCC 1373. Christ is present to the Church, most especially in the Eucharist.
- CCC 1044. The renewed creation brings God's dwelling with humanity to completion.

Before next session. For continued prayer after this final session, reread Exodus 1:1-40:38 and mark each stage by which God brings Israel from slavery toward his dwelling presence.