

TAKE-HOME 1

Why Did He Use Mud?

And the Word became flesh and dwelt among us, full of grace and truth. (John 1:14, RSV2CE)

What We Found

- The Church agrees with the objection's first half: being Christian is an encounter with a person (Benedict XVI). It is a relationship.
- In Matthew 8 Jesus healed with a word from a distance. In John 9 he chose spit, clay, and a pool. The mud was not necessary. It was chosen.
- Healing in the Gospels happens at the touch (Mark 1, Mark 5), and Jesus insists the touch be named.
- The Word became flesh (John 1:14). In the Incarnation God chose to meet us bodily in the Word made flesh, and Christ continues to use visible signs in the sacraments.
- "God is spirit" (John 4:24) does not mean worship must be non-physical: the same Gospel records mud, bread, and breath afterward, and Paul calls presenting your body "spiritual worship" (Romans 12:1).
- Scripture's word for a relationship with God is *covenant*, and again and again, when God makes a covenant, he gives a physical sign: rainbow, circumcision, Sabbath, blood, cup.
- Water, oil, breath, and forgiveness spoken by men were commanded by Jesus and the apostles (Matthew 28:19; John 3:5; James 5:14; John 20:23). The Church did not add them. She obeyed.
- "Saul, why do you persecute me?" (Acts 9:4). Christ will not be separated from his Body.

Voices of the Church

Pope Benedict XVI *Deus Caritas Est 1*

"Being Christian is not the result of an ethical choice or a lofty idea, but the encounter with an event, a person, which gives life a new horizon and a decisive direction."

St. Leo the Great *Sermon 74.2*

What was visible in our Redeemer has passed over into the sacraments. Christ did not leave the physical world when he left our sight. (A summary of St. Leo's sentence.)

St. Augustine *Tractates on John 80.3*

The word is joined to the element, and the result is a sacrament: a visible word. Take away the word and the water is only water. (A summary.)

Live It This Week

- At Mass, pick five physical things you notice, such as water, bread, wine, hands, a book, or a candle. For each, ask silently: why this?
- Read John 9 aloud, slowly, once, by yourself. Stop at verse 7 and stay there a minute.
- Before next session read Hebrews 7:23-28; 9:11-14, 23-28; and 10:1-18. Do not try to resolve anything. Just read.

Memory Verse

And the Word became flesh and dwelt among us, full of grace and truth; we have beheld his glory, glory as of the only Son from the Father. (John 1:14)

Catechism

CCC 1131; 1115-1116; 515; 774-776; 1084; 1127-1128; 819.

My Guess (write, fold, seal; opens next session)

What can you offer God to gain entrance into heaven? Answer in one or two honest sentences, in your own words.

Fold this sheet so the box is hidden and seal it with tape. Nobody reads it until next session, including your leader.