

Take-Home · Session 4

My Soul Is Very Sorrowful · Mark 14:32-42

WHAT WE FOUND

In Gethsemane the Gospels give Jesus some of their strongest emotional language: "greatly distressed and troubled," "my soul is very sorrowful, even to death," and sweat that "became like great drops of blood." And hidden in his sentence we found last week's psalm: "very sorrowful" (*perilypos*) is the very word of the Psalm 42-43 refrain in the Greek Old Testament, "Why are you cast down, O my soul?" He does not recite the refrain; he speaks its language as his own, which is more than enough. The prayer book of the anxious is the prayer book of Christ. Then we opened our envelopes. The answer, from the garden: the involuntary felt experience of anxiety is not itself sin. The sinless One was "in every respect... tempted as we are, yet without sinning" (Heb 4:15); the Church teaches that the passions in themselves are neither morally good nor evil, taking their moral quality from how reason and will engage them (CCC 1767-1768); and responsibility for an act can be diminished or even nullified by fear (CCC 1735). The feeling, as feeling, never was the sin. Freedom enters in what we do with fear, and Jesus showed us what to do with it: "Abba, Father" (intimacy), "remove this cup" (honesty), "yet not what I will, but what you will" (the anchored yes). The Father's answer was not removal but an angel with strength, help inside the trial. And Hebrews draws the conclusion for us: "Let us then with confidence draw near to the throne of grace." The one on the throne knows trembling from the inside.

VOICES OF THE CHURCH

St. Thomas Aquinas (Summa Theologiae III, q. 15, aa. 6-7, in substance): there was true sorrow and true fear in Christ, who assumed a complete human nature. These movements of the soul belong to real humanity and are not themselves sins.

St. John Henry Newman (discourse on the mental sufferings of our Lord, in substance): Christ refused every anesthetic of distraction or denial and let the full weight of interior anguish come, above all the weight of the world's sin.

St. Maximus the Confessor (on the two wills of Christ, in substance): in the garden a true human will, with its natural shrinking from death, freely conformed itself to the Father. Our old "no" is healed inside his costly "yes." The Church defined this teaching after him, at Constantinople in 680-681.

LIVE IT THIS WEEK

- **The Gethsemane pattern, nightly:** Abba (intimacy), honesty (name the thing; ask for what you want), yet (hand it over).
- **Watch one hour.** A real hour or half hour of quiet with the Lord this week, ideally before the Blessed Sacrament. Bring nothing to fix.
- **Retire the shame that was never yours.** If what you wrote condemned you simply for feeling fear or for symptoms you did not choose, write beside it that the feeling itself is not a sin, and tear that condemnation up. If it names something you know you chose, keep it and bring it to confession, where mercy is waiting.

Memory verse: "Abba, Father, all things are possible to you; remove this cup from me; yet not what I will, but what you will." (Mark 14:36)

Before next session: read Philippians 4:4-9.

Catechism this week: CCC 612; CCC 2600 and 2606; CCC 1767-1768; CCC 1735.

This study walks alongside professional care; it never replaces it. If tonight stirred more than it settled, tell someone: your leader, a priest, a professional. That is strength, not weakness.