

Radiant and Unfading

Take-Home • Session 11: You Love All Things That Exist

What We Found

Part III opened with its physics: by the things through which their enemies were punished, they themselves received benefit (11:5), the Nile turned to blood while the rock poured water, and one is punished by the very things by which he sins (11:16), Egypt scourged by the animals she worshiped. Then the widest sky in the book: you are merciful to all, FOR you can do all things. Mercy is grounded in omnipotence. Cruelty is so often the reflex of power that feels threatened; God's power is threatened by nothing, and Wisdom draws the conclusion itself: his sovereignty over all is what causes him to spare all, and he judges with mildness because he can act whenever he chooses (12:16-18). You love all things that exist... how would anything have endured if you had not willed it? Existence itself is God's ongoing opinion: the least lovable person you can name is, at this instant, being loved into their next moment, or they would not be there.

Then the hardest room in the Old Testament, entered with the lights on. The sage says God judged Canaan little by little, giving place for repentance, and we found his sources: Genesis 15:16, where God delays the entire judgment four hundred years because the iniquity of the Amorites is not yet complete, and Exodus 23:28-30, the conquest designed little by little, hornets sent ahead. Rahab's open door led into the Messiah's own genealogy. Israel was warned the land would judge her by the same standard. What darkness remains is permitted to wait under the same patience that waited four centuries; meanwhile the moral of the whole chapter is ours to keep: you have taught your people that the righteous man must be kind (12:19).

Voices of the Church

VOICES OF THE CHURCH

St. Faustina Kowalska • *Diary: Divine Mercy in My Soul* (20th century)

Recording the words of Jesus in her Diary, she wrote that mercy is the greatest attribute of God, and that he longs for the most hardened sinners to be the first to appeal to it. Her witness meets the Church's own prayer, that God shows his almighty power above all by sparing and having mercy, both landing on Wisdom 11:23: merciful to all, because he can do all things.

VOICES OF THE CHURCH

Julian of Norwich • *Revelations of Divine Love, Long Text ch. 5*; her 'all shall be well' is quoted in the *Catechism at CCC 313*

Shown all creation as a hazelnut in the palm of a hand, she marveled that it endured, so small and frail, and received the answer: it lasts, and ever shall, because God loves it. Later comes the line the Catechism takes up at CCC 313: all shall be well, and all manner of thing shall be well.

VOICES OF THE CHURCH

St. Gregory of Nazianzus • *Fifth Theological Oration, Or. 31.25-27* (4th century)

God leads his people by gradual additions and ascents, giving light in portions the eyes can bear, the way dawn does not blind. Gregory traces the stages: the Old Testament proclaimed the Father openly and the Son more dimly, the New manifested the Son and intimated the Spirit, and the Spirit now dwells among us in clearer light. The Old Testament's shadows belong to a pedagogy in motion, and the ascent does not stop until the whole Trinity stands in the daylight.

Live It This Week

- **Read ahead, slowly.** Read Wisdom 13, 14, and 15 with a pencil. Mark every reason people give for worshipping what they worship.
- **Pray for your Nineveh.** Daily, pray by name for the person or group you find hardest to want mercy for: Lord, you love all that exists; teach me your opinion of them.
- **Gentle one use of power.** Pick one place you hold leverage and deliberately answer with mildness where you had the right to come down hard.
- **Use the open door.** You give repentance for sins (12:19). If the invitation to Confession is still pending, this is the week; go as someone the Lord waited for on purpose.

Memory Verse

“You spare all things, for they are yours, O Lord who love the living.” (**Wisdom 11:26**)

Before next session: read Wisdom 13, 14, and 15.

Catechism references: CCC 122, CCC 313.

Scripture We Opened

- Tonight's text: Wisdom 11:1-12:27
- The discovery: Genesis 15:16 (the iniquity of the Amorites is not yet complete)
- The discovery: Exodus 23:28-30 (the hornets; little by little)
- Exodus 34:6-7 (merciful and gracious, slow to anger)
- Ezekiel 18:23 and 18:32 (Session 1's discovery, returning)
- 2 Peter 3:9 (not wishing that any should perish)
- Romans 2:4 (kindness meant to lead to repentance)
- Matthew 5:45 and Luke 6:35-36 (the Father's indiscriminate sun; be merciful)
- Deuteronomy 20 (the conquest commands)
- Wisdom 13-15 (next week's reading)
- Joshua 2 and Matthew 1:5 (Rahab, and Rahab in the genealogy)
- Leviticus 18:24-28; Deuteronomy 12:31 (the non-ethnic standard; the abominations)
- Joshua 10 with Judges 1 (conquest rhetoric and surviving peoples)
- Matthew 26:52; Matthew 18:23-35 (the sword sheathed; the unforgiving servant)
- Jonah 4:11 (should I not pity that great city)