

Take-Home 2: Without Excuse

Romans 1:18-32 · Keep this sheet; bring it back each week

What We Found

Creation is not silent. God's "eternal power and deity" are perceived in the things he has made, "so they are without excuse" (1:20), and Paul learned that argument from a Catholic page: Wisdom 13, where the Maker is known "from the greatness and beauty of created things" (Wis 13:5). The fall into idolatry began with a refusal of honor and thanks, with no honor and no thanks (1:21), and became an exchange: the glory of the immortal God traded for images (1:23), described in almost the very words of the Greek psalter's golden-calf verse, "they exchanged the glory of God for the image of an ox that eats grass" (Ps 106:20).

And the judgment? Three times, quietly: "God gave them up" (1:24, 26, 28), handed over to what was chosen. Being handed over to further sin is judgment on persistent refusal. The chapter's closing list runs all the way down to envy, gossip, boasting, and disobedience to parents (1:29-31), which reaches into every ordinary life and lets the whole argument close over everyone in chapter 2. Sit with that this week.

Voices of the Church

VOICE OF THE CHURCH: ST. AUGUSTINE OF HIPPO

"Question the beauty of the earth, question the beauty of the sea... question all these realities. All respond: 'See, we are beautiful.' Their beauty is a profession. These beauties are subject to change. Who made them if not the Beautiful One who is not subject to change?" (Sermon 241, quoted in CCC 32). The world testifies; the honest questioner hears it.

VOICE OF THE CHURCH: ST. ATHANASIUS

St. Athanasius, in his work *Against the Pagans*, teaches in substance that idolatry is a fall in stages: the soul made to contemplate God turned to itself and the things of sense, and having lost sight of God began to deify what it could see. Worship never disappears; it migrates: the study's shorthand for his teaching.

VOICE OF THE CHURCH: ST. BONAVENTURE

St. Bonaventure teaches, in substance, that creation is like a book in which its Maker can be read: every creature a word, the whole world a text leading the attentive reader upward to the One who wrote it. Romans 1 says we shut the book; St. Bonaventure teaches us to read it again.

Live It This Week

- Each day, thank God out loud for three specific created things, and let each one point past itself to its Maker (Wis 13:5).

- Identify your strongest modern idol: a created good treated as ultimate, whose claim outranks God's in practice (your time, money, or anxiety may point to it). Fast from it once this week and give the hour to prayer.
- Reread Romans 1:29-31 once, prayerfully, and let it read you. Bring what it finds to Confession if it has been a while.

Memory Verse

"Ever since the creation of the world his invisible nature, namely, his eternal power and deity, has been clearly perceived in the things that have been made. So they are without excuse."

Romans 1:20 (RSV2CE)

Before Next Session

Read Romans 2:1-3:8 once, slowly. Catechism references for this session: CCC 31-32, 2113. Keep your sealed My Guess sheet safe; it opens in Session 8.