

Take-Home 13: Put On the Lord Jesus Christ

Romans 13 · Keep this sheet; bring it back each week

What We Found

Written under Nero: authority is "from God," and the ruler is "God's servant for your good" (13:1, 4), derived, diaconal, directed, and audited: "your dominion was given you from the Lord... who will search out your works" (Wis 6:3). So the duty is real (taxes, respect, honor, 13:7) and the limit is real: the apostles set it in a courtroom, "We must obey God rather than men" (Acts 5:29), and paid for it. Refusal of the evil command, willingness to bear the cost, with lawful challenge open and CCC 2243's strict conditions acknowledged: St. Thomas More's seven words hold both.

One debt never retires: "Owe no one anything, except to love one another" (13:8). "Love your neighbor as yourself" turned out to be Moses (Lev 19:18), and love "is the fulfilling of the law" (13:10): the commandments are love's job description, not its rival. And the hour is late in the best way: "salvation is nearer to us now than when we first believed" (13:11); cast off darkness, wear the armor of light, and the chapter ends in the passage (13:13-14) that ended St. Augustine's long struggle, met on our study's first night and arriving now in course: "put on the Lord Jesus Christ" (13:14).

Voices of the Church

VOICE OF THE CHURCH: ST. JUSTIN MARTYR

Writing to the emperor around AD 155, St. Justin explained: we more readily than all men pay the taxes to those you appoint, as Jesus taught; we render worship to God alone, but in all other things we gladly serve you (First Apology 17). Taxes gladly, worship never, written openly to the emperor by a man Rome would behead.

VOICE OF THE CHURCH: ST. THOMAS MORE

On the scaffold in 1535, St. Thomas More declared, as the earliest report records it, that he died "the King's good servant, and God's first." Romans 13 in seven words: real loyalty, real limit; no rebellion, no surrender of conscience; the cost accepted, the king blessed from the block.

VOICE OF THE CHURCH: ST. JOHN OF THE CROSS

"At the evening of life, we shall be judged on our love" (St. John of the Cross, quoted at CCC 1022). Since love is the fulfilling of the law (13:10), the final audit and the law's whole demand are one question, and it is not the easy exam; it is the total one.

Live It This Week

- Pay one debt of honor deliberately this week: genuine respect to someone in rightful authority over you, in word or writing (13:7; the principle extends past civil rulers by analogy).

- Identify one provision for the flesh and remove it: the app, the stash, the bookmark, the route past the occasion (13:14).
- Each night, pray one sentence before sleep: Lord, the night is far gone; clothe me in Christ for the day at hand.

Memory Verse

"But put on the Lord Jesus Christ, and make no provision for the flesh, to gratify its desires."

Romans 13:14 (RSV2CE)

Before Next Session

Read Romans 14:1-15:13 once, slowly. Catechism references for this session: CCC 1899-1900, 2242, 1022.