

Take-Home: Deep-Dive, Those Who Never Hear

WHAT WE FOUND

We read what the Church actually teaches about the billions who never hear the Gospel through no fault of their own, and for many of us it was the first time. God desires all to be saved and to come to the knowledge of the truth, through the one mediator who gave himself as a ransom for all. God is not far from anyone: the nations were arranged for seeking, and the law's work is written on every heart, with conscience bearing witness. So those who, through no fault of their own, never know the Gospel, but seek God sincerely and follow conscience under grace, may achieve eternal salvation: saved by Christ alone, in ways known to God, who has bound salvation to Baptism but is not bound by his sacraments. The Church defines the hope and declines to invent the mechanism, and in the very next paragraph (CCC 848) renews the mission: at Cornelius's house (Acts 10), God's prior work in a pagan was not a reason to leave him there. It was the reason Peter commanded the household to be baptized (Acts 10:48).

VOICES OF THE CHURCH: ST. JUSTIN MARTYR

From his *First Apology*: the *Logos*, in whom the whole race shares, sowed truth before the Incarnation, so that those who lived according to the Word, Socrates among them, were in a real sense Christ's own before Christ came.

VOICES OF THE CHURCH: ST. THOMAS AQUINAS

In substance, from *De Veritate*: if someone were raised beyond all reach of the Gospel and followed reason in seeking good, God would most certainly provide what is necessary for salvation, by inward inspiration or by sending a preacher. No one perishes for lacking what they had no way to obtain.

VOICES OF THE CHURCH: ST. JOHN PAUL II

In substance, from *Redemptoris Missio*: Christ's salvation genuinely reaches, by grace, those outside the visible Church who are inculpably ignorant of the Gospel; and precisely because Christ is the one Savior of all, the missionary mandate loses none of its urgency. The hope and the zeal are one conviction twice.

LIVE IT THIS WEEK

- Pray daily, by name if you have one, for someone who has never heard the Gospel or long ago stopped listening, entrusting them to the God who desires all to be saved.
- Take one concrete Peter-step toward your Cornelius: an invitation, a conversation, a kindness with your reason for it visible.

SCRIPTURE MEMORY VERSE

"God our Savior, who desires all men to be saved and to come to the knowledge of the truth." 1 Timothy 2:3-4 (RSV2CE)

GOING FURTHER

Read Acts 10 in one sitting this month, watching for how many things God has already done before Peter ever knocks.

CATECHISM REFERENCES

CCC 846; 847; 848; 1257; 1260.