

Take-Home: Session 3, Show Us the Father

WHAT WE FOUND

Tonight the sealed envelopes opened, and we discovered that our question had already been asked, twice. At Sinai (Exodus 20:18-19), when God spoke as directly as a crowd could bear, the people begged for a mediator: let not God speak to us, lest we die. And at the Last Supper an apostle asked a question strikingly close to our sealed sentences: Lord, show us the Father, and we shall be satisfied. The answer he received is the Christian claim entire: he who has seen me has seen the Father. In many and various ways God spoke of old to our fathers by the prophets; but in these last days he has spoken to us by a Son (Hebrews 1:1-2). One question stays open on purpose: how a Word spoken then reaches each of us now. The study is headed exactly there.

VOICES OF THE CHURCH: ST. IGNATIUS OF ANTIOCH

Writing on the road to martyrdom, St. Ignatius teaches in his *Letter to the Magnesians* that the one God manifested himself through Jesus Christ his Son. The claim is the session in one line: whatever silence the seeker knows, a Word has come out of it, in the flesh.

VOICES OF THE CHURCH: ST. IRENAEUS OF LYONS

St. Irenaeus (*Against Heresies* IV.20.7): the glory of God is the living human being, and the life of the human being is the vision of God. The Son is how the invisible Father becomes seeable without destroying the seer.

VOICES OF THE CHURCH: ST. ATHANASIUS

St. Athanasius teaches, in substance, in *On the Incarnation* that the Word took a visible body so that those who could not lift their eyes to invisible things might know the Father through his works in the flesh. Not God shouting louder: God translating himself.

LIVE IT THIS WEEK

- Read one chapter of a Gospel this week, any chapter, with a single question in mind: if Jesus, the incarnate Son, perfectly reveals the Father, what is the Father like?
- Keep your unsealed guess somewhere you will see it. The study is not done with it, and neither, perhaps, is God.

SCRIPTURE MEMORY VERSE

“He who has seen me has seen the Father.” John 14:9 (RSV2CE)

BEFORE NEXT SESSION

Read Psalm 139, slowly, once. Notice who is doing the searching in it, and who is being searched.

CATECHISM REFERENCES

CCC 65; 73; 516.