

Take-Home: Session 5, Honest Doubt

WHAT WE FOUND

We watched Jesus handle doubters, four times, on the record. A father confessed belief and unbelief in one breath, and his son was healed. John the Baptist's searching question came from prison, his own doubt or his disciples', and was answered with evidence, then he was praised as the greatest born of women. Thomas set conditions, and the risen Christ arrived and met them, wounds first, before pointing beyond them. And at the Great Commission itself, some doubted, and he commissioned that exact group. Scripture even makes engaging doubters a command: convince some, who doubt. The Church's precision helps: the honest hesitation a person cannot switch off is not the same as refusal, and a difficulty is not yet a doubt. Doubt is met, not celebrated; honest, involuntary doubt places no one beyond Christ's mercy. Bring it to him rather than cultivating refusal.

VOICES OF THE CHURCH: ST. JOHN HENRY NEWMAN

From his *Apologia Pro Vita Sua*: ten thousand difficulties do not make one doubt (as he understood the subject). In this study's gloss: a difficulty is a question not yet resolved; a doubt is a verdict. An honest mind can carry unresolved difficulties inside a settled trust.

VOICES OF THE CHURCH: ST. GREGORY THE GREAT

From his *Homilies on the Gospels* (Homily 26): the disbelief of Thomas has done more for our faith than the belief of the other disciples. Because Thomas touched and was convinced, every later generation's doubt finds its answer in his.

VOICES OF THE CHURCH: ST. TERESA OF CALCUTTA

Her letters, published in *Come Be My Light*, reveal decades of felt darkness through which she continued to pray, serve, and believe, and the Church canonized her. Felt certainty is not the measure of faith; fidelity in the dark is.

LIVE IT THIS WEEK

- Pray Mark 9:24 once a day, in those words, whatever your ratio of belief to unbelief currently is.
- When doubt surfaces, try Psalm 77's move once: deliberately list three things, evidence, experiences, people, that originally made God seem possible or real to you, and look at the list before you rule.

SCRIPTURE MEMORY VERSE

"I believe; help my unbelief!" Mark 9:24 (RSV2CE)

BEFORE NEXT SESSION

Read Psalm 34, slowly, once. Notice what verse 8 invites you to do, and what kind of knowing it assumes.

CATECHISM REFERENCES

CCC 157; 164; 2088.