

The Word of Life

1 John 1:1-4

WHAT WE FOUND

John opens his letter the way the Bible opens: "that which was from the beginning." But this eternal Word has been *heard, seen, looked upon, and touched with our hands*. The apostle who leaned on the Lord's breast writes as a sworn eyewitness, and the risen Jesus himself had invited exactly that touch: "Handle me, and see" (Luke 24:39).

At Sinai, Israel "heard the sound of words, but saw no form" (Deuteronomy 4:12). In Jesus, that long ache is answered. The invisible God has shown his face, and the men who saw it were sent to tell.

Why tell? "So that you may have fellowship with us; and our fellowship is with the Father and with his Son" (1:3). The word is *koinonia*, shared life. Communion with God comes to us through the living testimony of the apostles, carried in his Church, and John says that sharing it completes his joy.

VOICES OF THE CHURCH

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St. Augustine *Ten Homilies on the First Epistle of John, Homily 1*

Augustine marvels that the Life which only the heart could see was manifested in the flesh so that eyes could see it too, and in seeing, the heart itself might be healed. The apostles handled the Word of life with their hands, he preaches, and it is through their testimony, handed on in the Church, that the same touch now reaches us.

VOICES OF THE CHURCH

St. Ignatius of Antioch *Letter to the Smyrnaeans 1-3*

Writing within a few years of this letter, on his way to martyrdom, Ignatius insists that Jesus was truly born, truly crucified, and truly raised, and that even after the Resurrection the disciples touched him and knew he was no bodiless phantom. The earliest Church staked its blood on exactly the reality John's prologue describes.

VOICES OF THE CHURCH

St. Bede the Venerable *Commentary on the Seven Catholic Epistles, on 1 John 1*

Bede reads the opening as John's deliberate return to the beginning of his own Gospel: the eternal Word truly assumed flesh, and the apostles' seeing, hearing, and touching is the foundation on which the Church's proclamation rests. Our fellowship, he teaches, is built not on speculation but on testimony.

LIVE IT THIS WEEK

1.

Once this week, read John 1:1-18 side by side with 1 John 1:1-4 and mark every echo you find between them.

2.

Write down the name of one person whose testimony carried the faith to you. Thank God for them by name every day this week, and if it is possible, thank them directly.

3.

At Mass this Sunday, at the elevation of the Host, silently pray verse 1: "which we have looked upon and touched with our hands."

MEMORY VERSE

"That which we have seen and heard we proclaim also to you, so that you may have fellowship with us; and our fellowship is with the Father and with his Son Jesus Christ." (1 John 1:3, RSV2CE)

MY GUESS · seal it and do not peek

Twice in this letter, John will complete the sentence "**God is** ____." He does it once near the beginning and once near the middle, with two different words. Both are one syllable in English.

Write your two guesses below. Then fold this panel closed and do not open it until your leader tells you. No peeking ahead in the letter; that is the whole game.

God is _____

and God is _____

Fold here, seal with tape or a paperclip, and bring this sheet back every week.

BEFORE NEXT SESSION

Read **1 John 1:5-2:2** slowly, twice if you can, once with your eyes and once out loud. Notice every mention of light, darkness, and sin.

Catechism Connection: CCC 425; 75-79; 949-953