

Session 5: The Demolition Charges

Keep this sheet. It is yours, and it is private.

WHAT WE FOUND

The “divine power to destroy strongholds” has street addresses. At the confessional: the risen Jesus breathed on men (a deliberate echo of the breath of Eden, Genesis 2:7) and said “If you forgive the sins of any, they are forgiven” (John 20:23): forgiveness deliberately routed through authorized men, because a wall built in the body is torn down in the body: your voice dragging the lie into daylight, and Christ’s voice answering out loud through his priest: absolved. Naaman taught us why we resist it: “Are not Abana and Pharpar... better?” (2 Kings 5:12): we would attempt some great thing sooner than the humble thing that works, because pride is a load-bearing beam in many a wall. He washed in the muddy Jordan, and his flesh came back like a child’s.

At the altar: “He who eats my flesh and drinks my blood abides in me, and I in him” (John 6:56). Abides: the occupancy word. The swept house of week one is answered: the Stronger One does not just evict; he moves in, and this food strengthens charity, wipes away venial sin, and preserves us from future mortal sins (CCC 1394-1395). And in our own mouths: the baptismal renunciation, renewed every Easter, unsheathed in the first person: “In the name of Jesus, I renounce the lie that...” Resist and renounce: ours by baptism; never converse, never command. The Wall opened tonight: read, renounced, resolved. The sentence on it deserves better than paper: bring your own sins connected with it, if any, to Confession; wounds are not sins, and are entrusted rather than confessed.

VOICES OF THE CHURCH

VOICE OF THE CHURCH St. John Vianney

The Curé of Ars

The patron of parish priests, who spent long hours day after day in the confessional, taught in substance that beside God’s mercy our sin is as a grain of sand beside a torrent, and that souls stay chained for years to sins one honest confession would have struck off.

A summary of his constant teaching and practice; not a verbatim quotation.

VOICE OF THE CHURCH St. Ignatius of Antioch

Letter to the Ephesians (ch. 20), early second century (traditionally c. 107)

Writing in chains on the road to martyrdom, St. Ignatius calls the one bread of the Eucharist “the medicine of immortality, the antidote against death.” If it is medicine against death itself, it is medicine against every lesser death first: including the slow one a stronghold deals.

The quoted phrase is his, as commonly rendered in English.

VOICE OF THE CHURCH St. Cyril of Jerusalem

Mystagogical Catecheses (Lecture 1)

St. Cyril reminds the newly baptized how they faced the west, the region of darkness, and renounced Satan to his face “as though he were present”: a treaty publicly torn up: then turned bodily east to profess Christ. Tonight’s renunciation is your own baptism, unsheathed.

A summary of Lecture 1; the lectures are transmitted under St. Cyril’s name, though some scholars attribute their final form to his successor John.

LIVE IT THIS WEEK

- **Go.** Bring your sentence to Confession this week. If it has been years: “Father, it has been a long time, and I need help making this confession.” That sentence has never once been bad news to a priest.
- **Receive on purpose.** At Communion this week, one silent word before you leave the pew: “Abide.” Let the Amen mean: the house is yours.
- **Renounce at the gate.** When the old suggestion arrives: “In the name of Jesus, I renounce the lie that __,” then your countersword verse. Gate, renunciation, sword: thirty seconds.

SCRIPTURE MEMORY

“If we confess our sins, he is faithful and just, and will forgive our sins and cleanse us from all unrighteousness.”

1 John 1:9

Before next session: Read Romans 12:1-2 and Philippians 4:4-9.

From the Catechism: CCC 1468; 1394-1395; 1237.