

Take-Home Five

Reading Like the Apostles

Unless Someone Guides Me | Session Five

What We Found

We opened the envelopes, and most of us had written the same verse. Which surfaced the thing this study has been circling since the first night: we all accept the same Bible. The disagreement was never about whether Scripture is true. It is about who says what it means.

Then we read Hosea 11:1 on its own and found it is not a prediction at all. It remembers the Exodus, in the past tense, and the son is Israel. Matthew applies it to the child Jesus and calls it fulfilled, because he is claiming that Jesus is Israel gathered into one person. Nobody reading Hosea alone would arrive there.

The same holds for the rock that was Christ, Adam as a type, baptism answering to the flood, and the bronze serpent. The apostles read with a key, and the key was handed to them on a road outside Jerusalem. What keeps that reading honest is a public rule: the literal sense is the foundation, the whole canon constrains, and no reading may contradict the faith.

Voices of the Church

Voice of the Church

St. Augustine

Questions on the Heptateuch (summary)

In the Old Testament the New lies hidden; in the New the Old lies open. Each Testament keeps doing something to the other.

Voice of the Church

St. Melito of Sardis

On Pascha (summary)

Preaching in the second century, he reads the Passover throughout as the shape of what Christ has done. The date matters: this is what Christian preaching looked like within about a century and a half of the Resurrection.

Voice of the Church

St. Gregory the Great

Moralia on Job, Letter to Leander (summary)

Scripture is like a river both shallow and deep, in which a lamb can walk across and an elephant can swim. Inexhaustible depth, which is not the same as every reader's depth being equally reliable. Elsewhere, in his Homilies on Ezekiel, he says the divine words grow with the one who reads them.

Ready Response

Three ways this comes up, and what to do.

“Typology lets you find anything anywhere.” Agree that it can, and that Catholics have done it badly; you have probably sat through a homily that proved his point. Then say what you were given instead of a shrug, because you can state it from memory now: the literal sense is the foundation, the whole canon constrains the reading, and nothing may be read in a way that contradicts the faith. Then the honest question. Matthew, Paul, Peter and Hebrews all read this way, so it was never a question of whether you and he are allowed to. It is a question of who gets to say when someone has got it wrong. You have an answer to that. Ask him what his is.

“Matthew is misusing Hosea.” You read Hosea 11:1 on its own, so you can say his point before he says it: it is a memory, in the past tense, and the son is Israel. Nobody reading it cold arrives at Bethlehem. Then say what Matthew is actually claiming, which is far bigger than a proof text: that Jesus is Israel gathered into one person, living the nation’s history over again. That is dense, not careless. Whether you accept it turns on whether the apostles were handed a key, and that is the conversation worth having slowly.

“You are reading your conclusions back into the text.” Say yes. Everybody does it, you included, and it is a fair warning rather than an argument. Then hand him the one piece of evidence you did not get to arrange: in 1 Corinthians 10:4 Paul says the rock was Christ, and Exodus says nothing of the kind. Either an apostle was reading with something the text alone does not supply, or he made it up. That is not a choice any Catholic constructed, and it sits in his Bible exactly as it sits in yours.

Live It This Week

- Read Luke 24:13-35 slowly and notice how much of it Christ does to them rather than for them.
- Pick one Old Testament story you know well and ask what it is a pattern of. Do not force it.
- At Sunday Mass, notice the relationship between the first reading and the Gospel. Outside the Easter season the two are deliberately paired, often typologically. On weekdays the two readings usually run on their own tracks, so do not force a link that is not there.
- Say thank you to whoever has been your guide.

Memory Verse

“Then he opened their minds to understand the scriptures.” **Luke 24:45**

Before Next Session

Read: 1 Peter 3:15-16. Two verses. Count how many of the words are about how you speak rather than what you say.

Catechism: CCC 112-114, 116, 128-130.