

What Do You Seek?

Take-Home 5: Born Again at Night

One piece of homework: find your Week 1 sheet, keep it folded, bring it next week.

What We Found

A man who sold his game for 2.5 billion dollars posted from the far side of the jackpot that he had never felt more isolated: the reset arrived and the new life did not. Then we met the most credentialed man in John's Gospel carrying his real questions through the dark, and heard Jesus offer him something no reset can deliver: not a renovation but a birth, "anew" and "from above" at once, of water and the Spirit. We found the strange old story Jesus chose as His own diagram: the bitten in the wilderness who looked at the lifted image and lived, faith as a wound turning its eyes to the remedy. We heard the engine behind everything: God so loved the world that He gave, sent not to condemn but to save. And we watched the light arrive uninvited while the coming-to-it stayed free. Piece Five went on the table: the gift, and how it is received: grace first, faith that looks, a new birth Catholics have always found in baptism, and full permission, straight from John's Gospel, to arrive at Nicodemus speed.

The Story So Far

Piece One: You were made, on purpose, for a relationship with God; the restlessness is a homing signal.

Piece Five: What He did is offered to you as a gift: grace, faith, new birth of water and the Spirit. It can be received slowly.

Piece Four: On the cross, God paid for the wall in person; two men, same distance, only one asked.

Piece Three: The answer is a person, who asks each of us directly who we say He is.

Piece Two: Something real stands between us and what we were made for; a disease with a physician.

Voices Worth Keeping

St. Justin Martyr *First Apology (summary, c. AD 155)*

Explaining the faith to a pagan emperor: converts are brought to water and reborn, and baptism is called illumination, for the newly born receive light.

St. Cyprian of Carthage *To Donatus (summary)*

His own adult conversion, from the inside: the new start he had thought impossible for a man already formed by his habits, actually happening in the water of rebirth.

St. Gregory of Nazianzus *Oration 40 (summary)*

His names for baptism: gift, grace, illumination, garment of incorruption, bath of rebirth, seal. The vocabulary of baptism is the vocabulary of gift.

Live It This Week

1. Find your Week 1 sheet. Keep it folded. Bring it next week.

2. Reread John 3:16-17 once, slowly. Let it say what it says.
3. No advance reading for the finale. Come as you are.

SCRIPTURE MEMORY VERSE

“For God so loved the world that he gave his only Son, that whoever believes in him should not perish but have eternal life.” John 3:16

Before Next Session

Next week we go back to the very beginning of the story, and we finish what we started in Week 1. Bring your sealed sheet.

Catechism references from tonight: CCC 1996, 1257, 2002.