

## TAKE-HOME • SESSION 13

# Witnesses

## What We Found

Jesus' last sentence before ascending gave the confirmed their job title: "you shall be my WITNESSES." The Greek word is *martys*, courtroom testimony, and within a hundred years so many witnesses paid for their testimony with their lives that the word grew its second meaning: martyr. We saw the sacrament's before-and-after photo: Peter, routed by a servant girl's question at a charcoal fire, and the same man, filled with the Holy Spirit, standing before the council that had opposed Jesus and handed him over, so bold that the council's only explanation was that he "had been with Jesus." We found Stephen, praying for his executioners as the stones fell, while a young man named Saul held the coats; the coat-minder would become St. Paul, whose letters form a major part of the New Testament. And we met the two companions the Church commends: a sponsor on earth where possible, the wider Church physically showing up, and, by cherished custom, a patron in heaven, an ally, a syllabus, and a name to grow into. Nobody is sent out alone.

## Voices of the Church

### VOICES OF THE CHURCH

**St. Ignatius of Antioch** (*Letter to the Romans, around AD 107*)

Traveling under guard to his execution, Ignatius begged the Roman Christians not to rescue him: I am God's wheat, and am ground by the teeth of wild beasts, that I may be found pure bread of Christ. Witness, for Ignatius, was not a tragedy interrupting his faith; it was his faith arriving at its destination.

### VOICES OF THE CHURCH

**St. Polycarp of Smyrna** (*the church of Smyrna's Martyrdom of Polycarp, around AD 155*)

Offered his life for one small blasphemy, Polycarp answered, as the church of Smyrna's account records: eighty-six years I have served him, and he has done me no wrong; how can I blaspheme my King who saved me? Long fidelity, and a loyalty that will not trade the King for anything: fear of the Lord at full maturity.

### VOICES OF THE CHURCH

**Tertullian of Carthage** (*Apology, around AD 197*)

Writing to the Roman authorities in defense of the persecuted: the more you mow us down, the more we grow; the blood of Christians is seed. Witness under pressure did not shrink the Church. It planted her.

## Live It This Week

**Parent and candidate together: two appointments.** Each evening, read one short saint's life together, five minutes; by next week the candidate should have a patron chosen or a shortlist of two. And this week the candidate personally asks their intended sponsor, by call or face to face; parents help rehearse the ask, then step back.

## Memory Verse

*"But you shall receive power when the Holy Spirit has come upon you; and you shall be my witnesses in Jerusalem and in all Judea and Samaria and to the end of the earth."* (Acts 1:8)

## Table Talk

*One question for the drive home or the dinner table:* Peter's only credential was that he "had been with Jesus." What in our week would show someone we had been with him?

## Before Next Session

**Bring Take-Home 1, with both sealed boxes STILL SEALED.** On your honor: one more week. And read Acts 2:36-42 once more, slowly.

**Catechism references for this session:** CCC 1285, 2473, 2683.