

WHAT WE FOUND

Luke opens like a historian: he investigated everything from the beginning, drew on what was handed down by the eyewitnesses, and wrote an orderly account so that Theophilus could know the certainty of what he had been taught. The word Luke uses for taught is *katecheo*, the root of catechesis. This study is that verse in action.

We met Gabriel twice, and traced him back to Daniel 9, where he delivered the seventy-weeks prophecy so many in the first century read as a messianic countdown. His reappearance after five centuries of silence is Luke's signal that the waiting is over. We compared Zechariah's question (give me proof) with Mary's (how will God do this) and found that faith is not the absence of questions but their direction. We mapped Gabriel's promise in Luke 1:32–33 onto the covenant with David in 2 Samuel 7, phrase by phrase: the child Mary is asked to bear is the King the promise had waited a thousand years for. And we sat with the greeting *kecharitomene*, having-been-and-remaining-graced, a title in place of her name.

MY GUESS: SEAL IT AND SIT ON IT

Gabriel told Mary the power of the Most High will **overshadow** you (Lk 1:35). Somewhere in the Old Testament, God's presence overshadows something. Write your guess below, then leave it alone. No looking it up, no comparing notes. We will open these together in a few weeks, and the answer is better than you think.

My guess: _____

VOICES OF THE CHURCH

VOICES OF THE CHURCH

St. Irenaeus of Lyons (*Against Heresies* III, 22, 4)

The knot of Eve's disobedience was untied by Mary's obedience; what the virgin Eve bound through unbelief, the Virgin Mary loosed through faith. Written by a bishop who as a boy heard St. Polycarp, a disciple of the apostle John (one living link from the apostolic age), and quoted by the Catechism itself in CCC 494.

VOICES OF THE CHURCH

St. Ambrose of Milan (*Exposition of the Gospel According to Luke, Book II*)

Zechariah doubted and asked for proof; Mary, promised something far harder to believe, did not doubt but asked only how it would come about. Her question was faith seeking understanding, which is why the angel silenced one and answered the other.

VOICES OF THE CHURCH

St. Bernard of Clairvaux (*Homilies in Praise of the Blessed Virgin Mother, Homily 4*)

Bernard pictures all creation holding its breath between the angel's question and Mary's answer, the whole waiting world begging the Virgin to speak. Answer quickly, O Virgin, he pleads: speak the word that earth and heaven await.

LIVE IT THIS WEEK

- Pray the Angelus once a day, ideally at noon. The text is below.
- Look up CCC 494 and read the St. Irenaeus quotation slowly, once, out loud.
- Guard your sealed guess above. Resist the concordance.

THE ANGELUS

V. The angel of the Lord declared unto Mary. *R. And she conceived of the Holy Spirit.* Hail Mary...

V. Behold the handmaid of the Lord. *R. Be it done unto me according to thy word.* Hail Mary...

V. And the Word was made flesh. *R. And dwelt among us.* Hail Mary...

V. Pray for us, O holy Mother of God. *R. That we may be made worthy of the promises of Christ.*

Let us pray: *Pour forth, we beseech thee, O Lord, thy grace into our hearts, that we, to whom the Incarnation of Christ thy Son was made known by the message of an angel, may by his Passion and Cross be brought to the glory of his Resurrection, through the same Christ our Lord. Amen.*

SCRIPTURE MEMORY

Luke 1:38 *Behold, I am the handmaid of the Lord; let it be to me according to your word.* (RSV2CE)

Before next session: read Luke 1:39–2:52, the Visitation, the Magnificat, the Nativity, and two trips to the Temple.

Catechism this week: CCC 484–486, 490–494, 2676.

WHAT WE FOUND

With 2 Samuel 6 open beside Luke 1, we watched the Visitation replay the Ark of the Covenant's journey beat by beat: the hill country of Judah, a leaping figure before the Lord's presence, the awed question (how is it that the mother of my Lord should come to me), and a three-month stay that blessed the house. Mary carries what the Ark carried, the presence of God, and this is the biblical grammar of the Church's love for her: in this Ark typology, the honor shown to Mary points above all to the One she carried.

We heard the Magnificat as a daughter's variation on Hannah's song, the anthem of the lowly that the Church still sings at Vespers every evening. We learned that first-born (prōtotokos) is a legal title of consecration under Exodus 13:2, not a count of later children. And we stood in the Temple twice: for Simeon's light to the Gentiles and his sword through your own soul also, and for the twelve-year-old's first words about his Father's house, while Mary kept all these things, pondering them in her heart.

VOICES OF THE CHURCH

VOICES OF THE CHURCH

St. Ambrose of Milan (*Exposition of Luke, Book II*)

Let Mary's soul be in each of you to magnify the Lord, let her spirit be in each of you to rejoice in God: Christ has one Mother in the flesh, but by faith Christ is the fruit of all of us.

VOICES OF THE CHURCH

St. Bede the Venerable (*Homilies on the Gospels, Book I*)

Elizabeth blesses Mary above all for her faith: the blessedness of bearing Christ was hers alone, but the blessedness of believing and keeping his word is offered to every disciple.

VOICES OF THE CHURCH

St. John Paul II (*Redemptoris Mater, 12–19*)

Blessed is she who believed is the key to Mary's whole life: a pilgrimage of faith, her yes renewed in the dark at the manger, at Simeon's sword, at the losing and finding, and finally at the cross.

LIVE IT THIS WEEK

- Pray the Magnificat aloud once this week, ideally in the evening; you will be joining the canticle the Church sings at Vespers every evening.
- Read CCC 2676 and notice how much of the Hail Mary is simply Luke 1.

- Keep guarding your sealed guess from Take-Home 1. Still no looking it up.

SCRIPTURE MEMORY

Luke 1:45 *And blessed is she who believed that there would be a fulfilment of what was spoken to her from the Lord.* (RSV2CE)

Before next session: read Luke 3:1–4:44, the Baptist, the baptism, the genealogy, the desert, and a sermon in Jesus' hometown.

Catechism this week: CCC 495, 499–501, 529, 534, 2619, 2676.

WHAT WE FOUND

At the Jordan we saw the Trinity in one frame: the Son praying in the water, the Spirit descending as a dove, the Father's voice fusing the coronation psalm (Ps 2:7) with the suffering servant (Isa 42:1). We saw why Luke parks his genealogy between baptism and desert: it climbs past David and Abraham to Adam, the son of God, and then sends this Son of God out to face what Adam faced.

In the desert we discovered that all three of Jesus' answers to the devil come from Deuteronomy 6–8, Israel's wilderness exam: bread, worship, and testing God. Where Israel failed forty years, the true Israel stood forty days. And in Nazareth we heard the study's title word on Jesus' own lips for the first time: reading Isaiah 61's Jubilee manifesto, Jesus sat down and said, today (*sēmeron*) this scripture has been fulfilled in your hearing. The hometown crowd turned murderous when he reminded them that Elijah was sent to a Gentile widow, and that in Elisha's day only Naaman the Syrian was cleansed. Watch the outsiders from here on.

VOICES OF THE CHURCH

VOICES OF THE CHURCH

St. Gregory Nazianzen (*Oration 39, On the Holy Lights*)

Christ is baptized not to be cleansed, for he sanctifies the waters: he buries the old Adam in the stream, goes down into the Jordan carrying the world, and comes up drawing the world after him.

VOICES OF THE CHURCH

St. Irenaeus of Lyons (*Against Heresies V, 21*)

The enemy who conquered a man at the beginning is conquered by a man in the end: fasting and hungry, Christ answers every assault from the Law, and the disobedience worked through a tree is undone by obedience.

VOICES OF THE CHURCH

St. Cyril of Alexandria (*Commentary on Luke, on Nazareth*)

The words were fulfilled that day because the Reader was himself the text's subject: the anointed one stood among them, reading his own commission of release, sight, and the acceptable time.

LIVE IT THIS WEEK

- Memorize this week's verse until you can say it under pressure; it is one of the Lord's own desert answers.
- Circle the word today every time you meet it in Luke from here on. Keep a tally in your margin.

- Pray for one person whose inclusion in God's mercy you quietly resent. By name.

SCRIPTURE MEMORY

Luke 4:8 *You shall worship the Lord your God, and him only shall you serve.* (RSV2CE)

Before next session: read Luke 5:1–6:49, four calls, a paralytic through a roof, and a sermon on a plain.

Catechism this week: CCC 535–540, 695, 714, 1286.

WHAT WE FOUND

We mapped Simon Peter's collapse in the boat onto Isaiah 6 and found the same four beats: glory revealed, sinfulness confessed (depart from me, for I am a sinful man), fear relieved, mission given. Simon's knees worked out who was in his boat before his mouth could. We granted the scribes their theology at the paralytic's healing, only God can forgive sins, and watched Jesus prove the conclusion, that you may know that the Son of man has authority on earth to forgive sins, by telling the paralytic to rise, take up his bed, and go home (Luke 5:24). Every confessional stands on that rooftop (CCC 1441-1445).

We ate at Levi's banquet, the first of Luke's great tables, and heard the mission statement: those who are well have no need of a physician. We saw the Twelve chosen after a night of prayer, a rebuilt Israel. And on the plain we let Luke's beatitudes and woes stand at full strength: blessed are you poor, woe to you that are rich, the Magnificat's reversal preached in the second person, closing with two houses and one difference between the builders: both hear, one does.

VOICES OF THE CHURCH

VOICES OF THE CHURCH

St. Ambrose of Milan (*Exposition of Luke, Book IV*)

Christ teaches from Peter's barque and fills its nets past breaking: other boats are called to help, yet it is Peter's boat the Lord chooses, and Peter's nets, torn but not lost, that hold the multitude.

VOICES OF THE CHURCH

St. Cyril of Alexandria (*Commentary on Luke, on the paralytic*)

They said truly that none can forgive sins except God alone, and the Lord accepted the premise: by healing the body at a word he demonstrated that the one they took for mere man wields the authority they reserved to God.

DIGGING TO THE ROCK

A reflection on Luke 6:47-49

Hearing the word is the beginning and not the building: to dig deep is to let the word cut past feelings and opinions until it reaches Christ the rock, for the storm is not a possibility but a schedule.

LIVE IT THIS WEEK

- Go to Confession this week if you can; kneel where the paralytic lay.

- Pray by name, once a day, for the one person you would least like to bless.
- Try again, at his word, in one place you have already failed. Put out into the deep.

SCRIPTURE MEMORY

Luke 6:36 *Be merciful, even as your Father is merciful.* (RSV2CE)

Before next session: read Luke 7:1–8:56, a centurion, a widow's son, a weeping woman, and a storm.

Catechism this week: CCC 1441–1445, 858–860, 2611, 2544–2547.

WHAT WE FOUND

We discovered that the words we pray before every Communion are adapted from a Roman centurion's: Lord, I am not worthy to have you come under my roof; but say the word (Lk 7:6-7; cf. CCC 1386, which gives the liturgical form: "Lord, I am not worthy that you should enter under my roof, but only say the word and my soul shall be healed"). At Nain we found Luke quoting 1 Kings 17 word for word, he gave him to his mother, staging Jesus as the greater Elijah, except that Elijah petitioned and Jesus commanded: young man, I say to you, arise. The crowd's verdict, a great prophet, was true and too small.

At Simon's table we watched a weeping woman out-love a correct Pharisee, and held faith and love together the way the Church does: saving faith is living faith working through charity (Gal 5:6): love is not optional evidence tacked onto faith but the very form of faith alive in a body. We met the named women who financed the mission (Lk 8:1–3). And we ended in a boat with a question deliberately left ringing: who then is this, that he commands even wind and water? Psalm 107 knows the answer. Next session, so will we. Bring this sheet's older sibling: Take-Home 1, sealed guess intact.

VOICES OF THE CHURCH

VOICES OF THE CHURCH

St. Augustine of Hippo (*Sermon 98, on the widow of Nain*)

The three raisings are three depths of the soul's death: within the heart, gone out into deed, grown into habit. The Lord raised all three; let no one despair, for the voice that stopped the bier can stop any procession.

VOICES OF THE CHURCH

St. Gregory the Great (*Forty Gospel Homilies, Homily 33*)

For every instrument of vanity the penitent woman found a corresponding offering: eyes that allured now weep, hair that adorned now wipes. Whatever has served sin must be enlisted in love's service.

VOICES OF THE CHURCH

St. Cyril of Alexandria (*Commentary on Luke, on the centurion*)

Accustomed to command, the centurion grasped that Christ's authority needed no journey, only a word; confessing himself unworthy of the visit, he proved worthier than those who presumed upon it.

LIVE IT THIS WEEK

- At Mass this week, pray Lord, I am not worthy as the centurion: slowly, meaning the second half.
- Read Psalm 107 aloud once, and mark verses 28–30.
- Bring Take-Home 1 next session, sealed guess untouched. No peeking. No concordance.

SCRIPTURE MEMORY

Luke 7:50 *Your faith has saved you; go in peace.* (RSV2CE)

Before next session: read Luke 9:1–62, and bring your sealed guess from Take-Home 1. Next session we open them.

Catechism this week: CCC 1386, 2712, 1987–1995, 2616.

WHAT WE FOUND

The waiting ended. Peter answered the storm's question, you are the Christ of God, and the Father answered over Peter's head: this is my Son, my Chosen; listen to him. We memorized the four verbs of the feeding, took, blessed, broke, gave, and were told only that Luke will trace this four-action pattern again. Twice. On the mountain, Moses and Elijah spoke of his exodus (exodos) to be accomplished at Jerusalem.

And the sealed guesses opened. The chain we assembled: the cloud overshadowed the tabernacle and the glory filled it (Ex 40:34–35); the power of the Most High will overshadow you (Lk 1:35); the cloud overshadowed them (Lk 9:34). One verb, episkiazō. What the tabernacle foreshadowed, the Fathers and the Church's tradition see fulfilled in Mary; the same verb, episkiazō, seals the pattern our hill-country discovery unveiled: she is the new Ark, the dwelling the glory filled. Then the Gospel turned on its hinge: he set his face to go to Jerusalem (9:51), the suffering servant's flint-set face, and the discipleship word Jesus had already spoken (9:23) now had a road to walk: take up his cross daily.

VOICES OF THE CHURCH

VOICES OF THE CHURCH

St. Leo the Great (*Sermon 51, on the Transfiguration*)

The brightness was shown so that when the Lord hung disfigured on Calvary, the disciples might remember what his humiliation concealed. The glory was not new that day; only the unveiling was.

VOICES OF THE CHURCH

St. Ambrose of Milan (*Exposition of Luke, Book VII*)

Not a cloud of storm like Sinai's, but a luminous overshadowing of the Spirit, the same presence that came upon Mary at the Annunciation. When the voice has spoken, Jesus is found alone: heralds withdraw, the Fulfillment remains.

VOICES OF THE CHURCH

St. Thomas Aquinas (*Summa Theologiae III, q. 45*)

It was fitting that Christ be transfigured before his Passion: no one bears a hard journey well without a foretaste of its destination, and the clarity shown on the mountain is the very glory promised to the bodies of the blessed.

LIVE IT THIS WEEK

- Each morning this week, before your feet hit the floor, name the day's cross and say the memory verse. Daily means daily.
- Read Exodus 40:34–38 once more on your own, then pray one Hail Mary slowly with the tabernacle in mind.
- Tell one person, this week, what your sealed guess was and what the answer turned out to be.

SCRIPTURE MEMORY

Luke 9:23 *If any man would come after me, let him deny himself and take up his cross daily and follow me.* (RSV2CE)

Before next session: read Luke 10:1–11:54, seventy sent out, a Samaritan on the Jericho road, two sisters, and the Our Father.

Catechism this week: CCC 554–556, 697, 1335, 2600.

WHAT WE FOUND

We found the Good Samaritan's ancestor in a text almost nobody reads: 2 Chronicles 28:8–15, where men of Samaria clothe Judah's captives, anoint them, carry the feeble on donkeys, and bring them to Jericho, the very city of Jesus' parable. The parable draws deeply on, and may deliberately echo, Israel's own memory. And we caught the parable's inversion: the lawyer asked who is my neighbor, seeking a boundary; Jesus asked which of these three proved neighbor, assigning a vocation. Go and do likewise.

We defended Martha from caricature (the correction was anxiety, not work) and heard the one thing needful at Mary of Bethany's feet. We prayed Luke's Our Father petition by petition, and found his punchline: the Father gives the Holy Spirit to those who ask. And at 11:27–28 we heard Jesus crown rather than demote his mother: blessed rather (menoun, a particle best read here as "yes, and even more" rather than as a denial) are those who hear the word of God and keep it, which is precisely what Luke has shown Mary doing since chapter 1: hearing (1:38), believing (1:45), keeping and pondering (2:19, 2:51).

VOICES OF THE CHURCH

VOICES OF THE CHURCH

St. Ambrose of Milan (*Exposition of Luke, Book VII*)

Adam went down from the city of peace and fell among powers that left him half dead; Law and priesthood could diagnose but not heal. Then Mercy came down the road as the despised outsider: the Samaritan is the Lord, and the inn is the Church.

VOICES OF THE CHURCH

St. Augustine of Hippo (*Sermon 103, on Martha and Mary*)

Martha's work is good and passes with the world's need; Mary chose what will never be taken, for in the kingdom no one serves the hungry where no one hungers. We do the first well only by wanting the second more.

VOICES OF THE CHURCH

St. Cyprian of Carthage (*On the Lord's Prayer*)

The prayer Christ taught is prayed in Christ's own voice, so the Father recognizes his Son's words on his children's lips. And because it says our Father, no one comes to the Father alone.

LIVE IT THIS WEEK

- Pray Luke's Our Father slowly once a day, one petition per breath, and ask explicitly for the Holy Spirit.
- Do one hidden Samaritan act this week: planned, costly enough to feel, told to no one.
- Sit down first: ten minutes of listening prayer before your busiest day this week.

SCRIPTURE MEMORY

Luke 11:28 *Blessed rather are those who hear the word of God and keep it!* (RSV2CE)

Before next session: read Luke 12:1–13:35, a rich fool, ravens and lilies, a narrow door, and a hen gathering her brood.

Catechism this week: CCC 2761, 1465, 2601, 2708–2712.

WHAT WE FOUND

We read the rich fool by his pronouns, my crops, my barns, my grain, my soul, a soliloquy with no thou in it, and heard St. Basil's verdict: the storehouses he needed were standing ready all along, the mouths of the hungry. We let ravens and lilies reorder our anxiety, and received the study's tenderest sentence: fear not, little flock, for it is your Father's good pleasure to give you the kingdom, followed immediately by sell, give alms, because the heart follows the treasure.

We discovered that let your loins be girded and your lamps burning is Exodus 12:11, Passover posture: Israel dressed for departure. Jesus is dressing his disciples for an exodus. We found in 12:47-48 the Lord's own proportioning of guilt to knowledge, one of the scriptural roots of the Church's account of culpability, which informs her distinction between grave and lesser sin (CCC 1854-1864). And asked whether the saved will be few, Jesus answered with an imperative instead of a number: strive (agōnizesthe) to enter by the narrow door, then showed us his heart: a hen gathering her brood under her wings.

VOICES OF THE CHURCH

VOICES OF THE CHURCH

St. Basil the Great (*Homily on Luke 12:18*)

The bread you hold back belongs to the hungry, the cloak in your chest to the naked, the silver in the ground to the needy: we are stewards arraigned for hoarding what was issued for distribution.

VOICES OF THE CHURCH

St. Gregory the Great (Forty Gospel Homilies, Homily 31, summarized)

The three years are the long patience of God across the ages, and the gardener's plea is intercession still holding back the axe. What shames us, offered in penance, becomes the fertilizer of fruit. Pressed to a point for our week: the reprieve is a year, not an amnesty.

VOICES OF THE CHURCH

St. Cyril of Alexandria (*Commentary on Luke, on the narrow door*)

Asked for statistics, the Lord answered with a summons. The door is narrow not because God grudges entrance but because our self-importance does not fit; the door admits whoever will stoop, and the striving is the stooping.

LIVE IT THIS WEEK

- Give one thing away this week that costs you something to release. Let your heart follow the treasure.

- Make a concrete plan for Confession if it has been a while; the fig tree's extra year is for fruit.
- Reread Luke 12:35–37 the night before our Session 13. That is all we will say.

SCRIPTURE MEMORY

Luke 12:32 *Fear not, little flock, for it is your Father's good pleasure to give you the kingdom.*

(RSV2CE)

Before next session: read Luke 14:1–15:32, banquets, the cost of discipleship, and three parables about lost things.

Catechism this week: CCC 1854–1864, 305, 2544–2547, 1036, 1431–1439.

WHAT WE FOUND

We found the horizon of the banquet parables of these chapters in Isaiah 25:6–8: the feast on the mountain for all peoples where God swallows up death forever, which is why the guest list Jesus commands runs to the poor, the maimed, the lame, and the blind, those who cannot repay, and why the parable's excuses are tragedies. We decoded hate father and mother as Semitic comparative idiom (Gen 29:30–31; Mal 1:2–3; Mt 10:37: loves more than me) without domesticating the demand: Christ claims first place in every love, costed in advance.

Then the fifteenth chapter. The shepherd who leaves the ninety-nine; the woman who ransacks the house for a coin stamped with an image; and the father who saw him while he was still a long way off, ran (an elder's indignity, gladly paid), and smothered the rehearsed speech in an embrace: robe, ring, shoes, feast, for this my son was dead, and is alive again. The Catechism reads that arc as the very shape of conversion and repentance (CCC 1439), the movement the sacrament of Confession takes up and completes. And we gave the elder brother his full evening: the slave's verb, the ledger, this son of yours, and a father who came out to entreat him too. The door is still open; the story ends with us.

VOICES OF THE CHURCH

VOICES OF THE CHURCH

St. Peter Chrysologus (*Sermons on the Prodigal Son*)

It is not the manner of age to run, yet love outstrips dignity: the father falls on his son's neck so that the rehearsed speech is smothered in the embrace, and the kiss restores what the confession had not finished asking.

VOICES OF THE CHURCH

St. Gregory the Great (*Forty Gospel Homilies, Homily 34*)

The shepherd carrying the sheep on his shoulders is Christ carrying our nature home; the coin is man himself, stamped with the image of his King, sought by lamplight because what is lost still bears the likeness of its owner.

VOICES OF THE CHURCH

St. Ambrose of Milan (*Exposition of Luke, Book VII*)

The father sees him afar off because God sees the penitent before the penitent sees God, and runs because grace moves faster than repentance. The robe is Adam's garment restored, the ring the Spirit's seal, and the calf is rich with the mystery of the Eucharist.

LIVE IT THIS WEEK

- Go to Confession this week with CCC 1439 as your frame: far country, coming to yourself, the walk home, the words, the robe.
- Invite someone who cannot repay you: a meal, a coffee, a seat at your table.
- If you have an estranged relationship, watch the road this week: one text, one call, one door left open.

SCRIPTURE MEMORY

Luke 15:10 *Just so, I tell you, there is joy before the angels of God over one sinner who repents.*
(RSV2CE)

Before next session: read Luke 16:1–17:37, a shrewd steward, a rich man and a beggar, ten lepers, and a question about the nine.

Catechism this week: CCC 1439, 545, 1443, 2839.

WHAT WE FOUND

We rescued the shrewd steward from scandal: Jesus commends the foresight, never the fraud, and instructs the conversion. St. Ambrose preached from Luke 16:9: let the mammon that fails you purchase friends who will last forever; the poor befriended by our mammon become our receivers at heaven's door. We met Lazarus at the gate, the only figure in any parable to be given a personal name of his own (Abraham appears in the same scene, but as the well-known patriarch, not an invented character), and learned the particular judgment from the Catechism's own text (CCC 1021), while handling the chasm with precision: the scene is Hades before the resurrection, and purgatory, the purification of the already-saved, was never on the far side of it.

We discovered why Jesus sent ten lepers to the priests: Leviticus 14 makes the priest the ordained verifier and restorer of the cleansed, a pattern that walks straight into the confessional (Jn 20:23; CCC 1461), and the healing happened as they went, inside the obedience. Then one turned back, fell at Jesus' feet eucharistōn, giving thanks, the Eucharist's own verb, and he was a Samaritan. Ten were cleansed; one was told your faith has made you well, and the Greek verb there, sesoken, is the very word for saved. The difference was thanksgiving.

VOICES OF THE CHURCH

VOICES OF THE CHURCH

St. John Chrysostom (*Sermons on Lazarus (De Lazaro)*)

The rich man's sin is never named as fraud, only as a gate passed daily without seeing. Not to share our surplus with the poor is itself a theft from them, for our goods were entrusted for distribution.

VOICES OF THE CHURCH

St. Cyril of Alexandria (*Commentary on Luke, on the ten lepers*)

They were cleansed not where they stood but as they went, faith walking before sight. Nine carried away their health as a possession; one brought it back as a thanksgiving, and gratitude is the health of the healed.

VOICES OF THE CHURCH

St. Ambrose of Milan (*Exposition of Luke, on the steward*)

The Lord commends foresight, not fraud: do with justice what the steward did with cunning. Only what is given to the poor travels ahead of us, and the friends mammon makes among them will testify for us at the everlasting doors.

LIVE IT THIS WEEK

- Stay two extra minutes after Communion this week, on your knees, and name the mercies. Be the tenth.
- Convert some mammon: give where repayment is impossible, in honor of the man at the gate.
- Name your gate, the need you pass daily without seeing, and stop once this week.

SCRIPTURE MEMORY

Luke 16:10 *He who is faithful in a very little is faithful also in much; and he who is dishonest in a very little is dishonest also in much. (RSV2CE)*

Before next session: read Luke 18:1–19:27, a persistent widow, two men at prayer, and a small man in a tree.

Catechism this week: CCC 1021–1022, 633, 2007, 1461, 1360.

WHAT WE FOUND

We stood in the back of the temple with the tax collector, whose entire liturgy was distance, downcast eyes, a fist on the breast (the Confiteor's own gesture), and seven words: God, be merciful to me a sinner. He went home justified, and we learned to say gladly that his empty hands are common ground: the Church herself teaches that nothing before justification earns it. We set the children who can only receive beside the ruler whose one lack was lack itself, and heard the Gospel's whole hope: what is impossible with men is possible with God.

Then Jericho proved it. A blind beggar taught us the Jesus Prayer (Son of David, have mercy on me), and a chief tax collector climbed a tree like a boy, was called by name, and answered mercy with receipts: half to the poor, and, if he had defrauded anyone, fourfold restitution, the measure Exodus 22:1 sets for a stolen sheep, the justice the Church still asks of penitents (CCC 2412). Over his house fell the study's word, twice: I must stay at your house today; today salvation has come to this house. The tally stands at four: 2:11, 4:21, 19:5, 19:9. One remains.

VOICES OF THE CHURCH

VOICES OF THE CHURCH

St. Augustine of Hippo (*Sermon 115*)

The Pharisee went up to pray and preferred to praise himself; asking nothing, he received nothing. The tax collector dared not lift his eyes, and the one who made eyes looked upon him: the physician comes to the one who shows the wound.

VOICES OF THE CHURCH

St. Thérèse of Lisieux (*Story of a Soul*)

To remain little is to expect everything from the good God as a child expects everything from its father, glorying in one's poverty because it is precisely the empty hands that the Father delights to fill.

VOICES OF THE CHURCH

St. Cyril of Alexandria (*Commentary on Luke, on Zacchaeus*)

The man too small to see over the crowd was not too proud to climb like a boy. Christ summoned him by name and lodged with him before any amends were spoken, and grace so received became munificence.

LIVE IT THIS WEEK

- Pray the Jesus Prayer, Lord Jesus Christ, Son of God, have mercy on me, a sinner, until the beggar's cry becomes your breath.
- Make one act of restitution this week: a debt repaid, an apology owed, something returned.
- Pray the tax collector's seven words for two full minutes, asking nothing else. Notice what it costs.

SCRIPTURE MEMORY

Luke 18:13 *God, be merciful to me a sinner!* (RSV2CE)

Before next session: read Luke 19:28–21:38, the entry into Jerusalem. Watch what the crowd shouts at the gates, and remember Session 8's closing verse.

Catechism this week: CCC 2559, 2613, 1987–1992, 2010, 2412, 2667.

WHAT WE FOUND

At the gates we heard the crowd shout the verse Session 8 planted: blessed is the King who comes in the name of the Lord (Luke 19:38, Luke's royal rendering of Ps 118:26), and heard Jesus answer the silencers: if these were silent, the very stones would cry out. Then Luke alone showed us the King in tears over the city: because you did not know the time of your visitation, the Benedictus's own word (1:68) in tragic reverse. Inside the temple we discovered his one-sentence sermon splices Isaiah 56:7 (a house of prayer for all peoples) with Jeremiah 7:11, whose den of robbers carries Jeremiah's whole warning of the house's destruction.

We heard the God of the living argued from the burning bush's present tense, and watched heaven re-price the treasury: the widow's two coins out-gave everyone, because heaven audits by what remains after. And we faced the skeptic's sharpest attack at full strength: this generation (21:32) stands after the cosmic signs, so the challenge is that the whole discourse, even the coming of the Son of Man, sounds bound to the first century. We saw Luke's own answer: the temple prophecy was kept, datably, in AD 70; Jerusalem is trodden down until the times of the Gentiles are fulfilled (21:24); and the final day is left undated, with one standing order: watch at all times, and pray.

VOICES OF THE CHURCH

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St. Ambrose of Milan (*Exposition of Luke, Book IX*)

The Lord weeps over Jerusalem because Jerusalem would not weep for herself, and he weeps still wherever the day of visitation passes a barred gate: what he foresaw in her he forewarns in us.

VOICES OF THE CHURCH

St. Bede the Venerable (*Commentary on Luke, on the widow's coins*)

God measures the hand by the heart and the offering by what it leaves behind. In her two coins are the two loves, of God and of neighbor: whoever offers God his entire living has out-given the wealthy.

VOICES OF THE CHURCH

St. Cyril of Alexandria (*Commentary on Luke, on the discourse*)

The doom of the temple was spoken plainly and history performed it; but of the final day the Master gave watchfulness instead of a calendar, for he would have his servants found working, not calculating.

LIVE IT THIS WEEK

- Make one widow's-mite gift this week: sized by what remains after, not by what goes in.
- Pray Psalm 118 once through, stopping at verses 22 and 26.
- Before next session, reread Exodus 12:1–14 and Luke 12:35–37, and come hungry. Session 13 is the upper room.

SCRIPTURE MEMORY

Luke 21:33 *Heaven and earth will pass away, but my words will not pass away.* (RSV2CE)

Before next session: read Luke 22:1–38, and reread Exodus 12:1–14 and Luke 12:35–37 on the way in.

Catechism this week: CCC 557–560, 583–586, 671–675, 992–996, 2612.

WHAT WE FOUND

The threads came due. Satan entered Judas at the opportune time the desert promised (4:13); the girded loins of Session 8 turned out to be dress rehearsal for the true Passover; and the fourfold action of the feeding returned over the bread: having taken, having given thanks (eucharistēsas, the tenth leper's verb, where the feeding had said blessed), he broke and gave, and said what no Passover host had ever said: this is my body which is given for you. Do this in remembrance of me. We had just discovered what remembrance means at a Passover table: Exodus 12:14's zikkarōn, the memorial that makes the saving event present to every generation that keeps it, so that, as the Passover Haggadah's own rule puts it (Mishnah Pesachim 10:5), in every generation a man must regard himself as if he came forth out of Egypt. That is the remembrance he chose: Luke's Greek word, anamnēsis, carries the Passover's zikkarōn into the upper room. This is where the Mass comes from (CCC 1362–1367), and do this, spoken to the apostles, ordained them (CCC 611, 1337).

Then the master who serves: I am among you as one who serves (22:27), Session 8's impossible promise (12:37) kept in person. And the sentence every Catholic should know: Simon, Simon... I have prayed for you that your faith may not fail; and when you have turned again, strengthen your brethren, an office founded, with the denial already foreseen, not on Peter's strength but on Christ's prayer.

VOICES OF THE CHURCH

VOICES OF THE CHURCH

St. Ignatius of Antioch (*Letter to the Smyrnaeans*, 7.1 (c. AD 107))

They abstain from the Eucharist because they do not confess that the Eucharist is the flesh of our Savior Jesus Christ, which suffered for our sins and which the Father raised up. Within one lifetime of the upper room, this was the boundary of the faith.

VOICES OF THE CHURCH

St. Cyril of Jerusalem (*Mystagogical Catecheses*, 4)

Since Christ himself has declared of the bread, this is my body, who shall dare to doubt any longer? Do not judge by taste, but by faith be fully assured that you have been counted worthy of the Body and Blood of Christ.

VOICES OF THE CHURCH

St. Thomas Aquinas (*Summa Theologiae* III, q. 75)

Christ's true body and blood are in this sacrament in a way sense cannot detect and faith alone grasps, resting on the authority of God who said this is my body. The other sacraments contain grace; this contains Christ himself.

LIVE IT THIS WEEK

- Go to Mass with Exodus 12 and Luke 22 fresh: at the consecration, hear the four verbs and the word remembrance as the upper room hears them.
- If unconfessed grave sin has kept you from Communion, let Reconciliation restore you to the table properly; that is what both sacraments are for.
- Read Luke 22:39–24:53 in one sitting before our final session, and bring your today tally, complete.

SCRIPTURE MEMORY

Luke 22:19b *This is my body which is given for you. Do this in remembrance of me.* (RSV2CE)

Before next session: read Luke 22:39–24:53, the whole Passion and Resurrection, in one sitting if you can.

Catechism this week: CCC 1337–1344, 1362–1367, 611, 1323.

WHAT WE FOUND

The study's word found its final landing. From the cross, to a thief with a criminal record and no time left, the fifth today: truly, I say to you, today you will be with me in Paradise, the blessed-outside thread crowned, and the image the Church has long loved for her teaching on baptism of desire (CCC 1257-1260): God has bound salvation to the sacrament of Baptism, but he himself is not bound by his sacraments. We watched the Lord die praying the psalm verse Jewish tradition took to bed at night, into thy hands I commit my spirit, and watched the look that met Peter's third denial carry the intercession of 22:32 across a courtyard.

On the Emmaus road we found the Mass written into the resurrection: the Scriptures opened until hearts burned, then the four verbs at table, and their eyes were opened, the very words of Genesis 3:7, an echo many have heard as Eden's meal answered, and he vanished as the Church learned his new address: the breaking of the bread (CCC 1347). And the Gospel closed where it opened: the true Priest, as the Church has long seen him here, hands raised in the blessing mute Zechariah could not give (1:21-22), ascending mid-benediction, and the Church continually in the temple blessing God (24:50-53; compare 1:9). The bookends met. What was visible in our Redeemer has passed into the sacraments, and you have his address.

VOICES OF THE CHURCH

VOICES OF THE CHURCH

St. John Chrysostom (*On the Cross and the Thief*)

A robber broke into Paradise before apostle or martyr, stealing heaven with a single sentence of faith. No merit preceded him and no time remained to him; mercy asked only that he ask. Let no sinner despair.

VOICES OF THE CHURCH

St. Augustine of Hippo (*Sermon 235, on Emmaus*)

They knew the scriptures and did not know their companion, until he broke the bread. If you would recognize the Lord now, you know where to seek him: they walked with him unseeing; we, unseeing, hold him.

VOICES OF THE CHURCH

St. Leo the Great (*Sermon 74, on the Ascension*)

What was visible in our Redeemer has passed over into the sacraments. He withdrew his bodily presence not to be absent but to be present in a new mode, so that faith, nobler than sight, might find him where he promised to remain.

LIVE IT THIS WEEK

- This Sunday, live Emmaus consciously: heart set on fire at the Word, eyes opened at the breaking of the bread. Then go tell someone.
- Pray Psalm 31:5 at bedtime this week: Into thy hands I commit my spirit, the prayer a dying God chose.
- Keep reading: Luke wrote a sequel. Open the Acts of the Apostles this month and watch everything this Gospel planted grow into the Church you stand in.

SCRIPTURE MEMORY

Luke 24:32 *Did not our hearts burn within us while he talked to us on the road, while he opened to us the scriptures?* (RSV2CE)

The road from here: *Fourteen weeks, one Gospel, five todays. Thank you for walking the road. He is known in the breaking of the bread; you know where to find him. Stay in the city; power from on high is the next chapter, and it is called Acts.*

Catechism this week: CCC 1347, 1257–1260, 2605, 641–643, 659–660.