

DIPPING INTO THE CATECHISM

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From the Compendium to the Catechism paragraphs: 18- 24

SACRED SCRIPTURE

WHY DOES SACRED SCRIPTURE TEACH THE TRUTH ?

Because God Himself is the author of Sacred Scripture. For this reason it is said to be inspired and to teach without error those truths which are necessary for our salvation. The Holy Spirit inspired the human authors who wrote what He wanted to teach us. The Christian faith, however, is not a “religion of the Book,” but of the Word of God – “not a written and mute word, but incarnate and living” (Saint Bernard of Clairvaux).



HOW IS SACRED SCRIPTURE TO BE READ ?

Sacred Scripture must be read and interpreted with the help of the Holy Spirit and under the guidance of the Magisterium of the Church according to three criteria:

1. It must be read with attention to the content and unity of the whole of Scripture;
2. It must be read within the living Tradition of the Church;
3. It must be read with attention to the analogy of faith, that is, the inner harmony which exists among the truths of the faith themselves.

WHAT IS THE *CANON* OF SCRIPTURE ?

The Canon of Scripture is the complete list of the sacred writings which the Church has come to recognise through Apostolic Tradition. The Canon consists of 46 books of the Old Testament and 27 of the New.

WHAT IS THE IMPORTANCE OF THE OLD TESTAMENT FOR CHRISTIANS ?

Christians venerate the Old Testament as the true Word of God. All of the books of the Old Testament are divinely inspired and retain a permanent value. They bear witness to the Divine Pedagogy (teaching) of God's saving love. They are written, above all, to prepare for the coming of Christ the Saviour of the universe.

WHAT IMPORTANCE DOES THE NEW TESTAMENT HAVE FOR CHRISTIANS ?

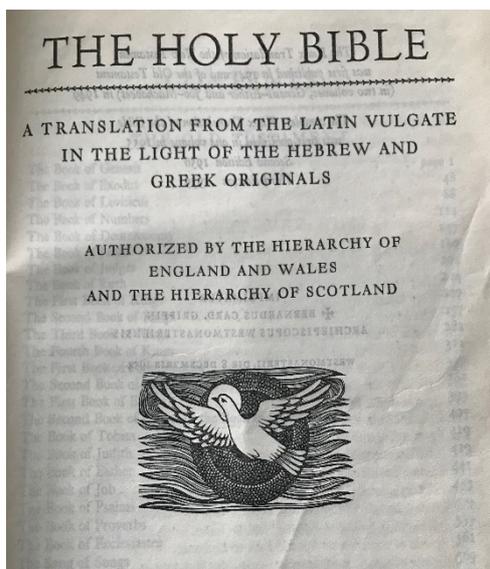
The New Testament, whose central object is Jesus Christ, conveys to us the ultimate truth of Divine Revelation. Within the New Testament the four Gospels of Mathew, Mark, Luke and John are the heart of all the Scriptures because they are the principle witness to the life and teaching of Jesus. As such, they hold a unique place in the Church.

WHAT IS THE UNITY THAT EXISTS BETWEEN THE OLD AND THE NEW TESTAMENTS ?

Scripture is ONE insofar as the Word of God is ONE. God's plan of salvation is ONE, and the divine inspiration of both Testaments is ONE. The Old Testament prepares for the New and the New Testament fulfils the Old; the two shed light on each other.

WHAT ROLE DOES SACRED SCRIPTURE PLAY IN THE LIFE OF THE CHURCH ?

Sacred Scripture gives support and vigour to the life of the Church. For the children of the Church, it is a confirmation of the faith, food for the soul and the fount of the spiritual life. Sacred Scripture is the soul of theology and of pastoral preaching. The Psalmist says that it is "a lamp to my feet and a light to my path" (Psalm 119:105). The Church, therefore, exhorts all to read Sacred Scripture frequently because "ignorance of the Scriptures is ignorance of Christ" (Saint Jerome).



It is essential that every Catholic has access to good Catechesis to be able to deepen their faith. The Diocese of Plymouth recommends the many Catechetical Workshops from 'Franciscan at Home,' for more information on access to these and online or real group sessions contact deborah.vankroonenburg@predtr.org.uk