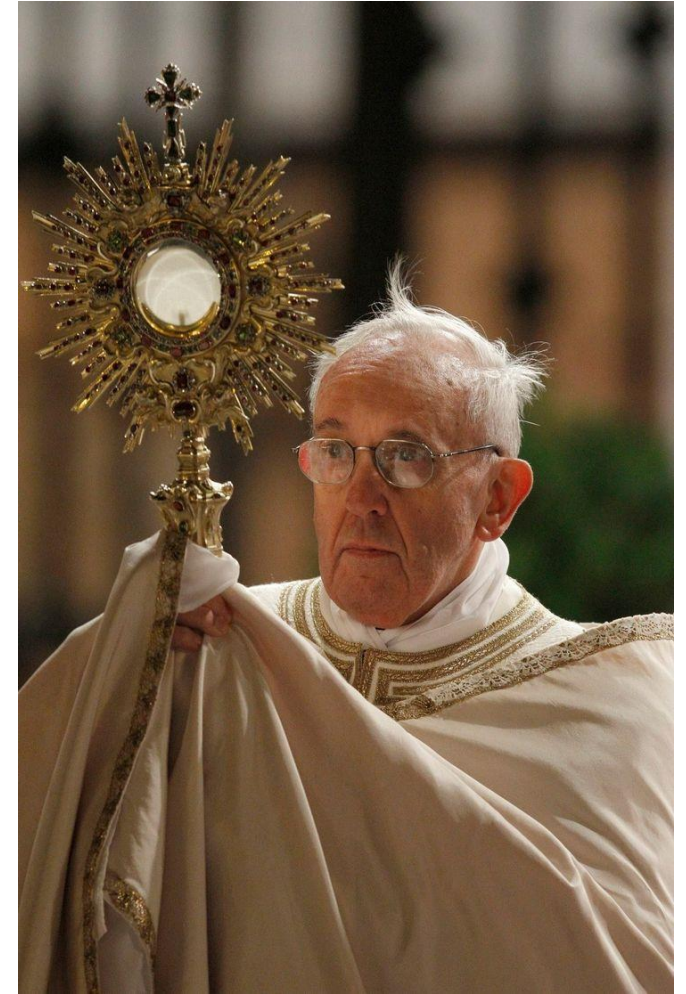




*“The Church venerates
Scriptures
just as much as She
venerates
the Body Of Christ”.*

**The importance
of the BIBLE
today**



At Mass, source and summit of Christian Faith, we have the Liturgy of the Word and the Liturgy of the Eucharist.

We are nourished by both. As a body cannot last without food, so the Christian soul cannot last without the double nourishment of Word and Eucharist.

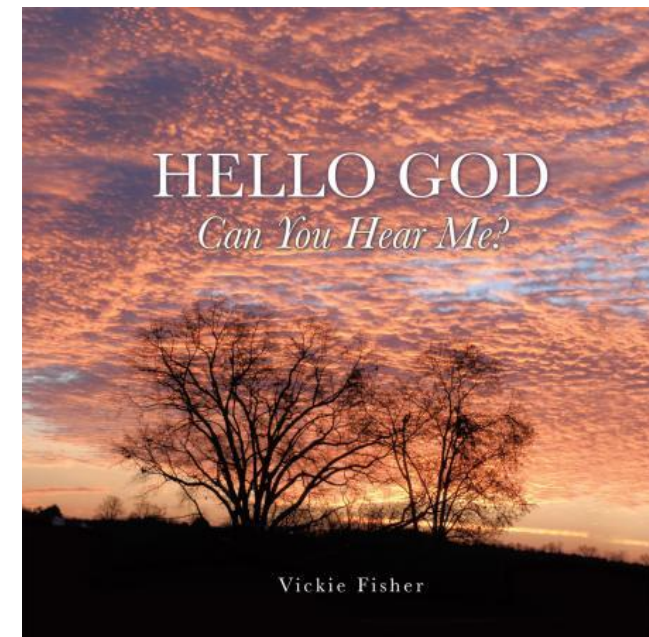


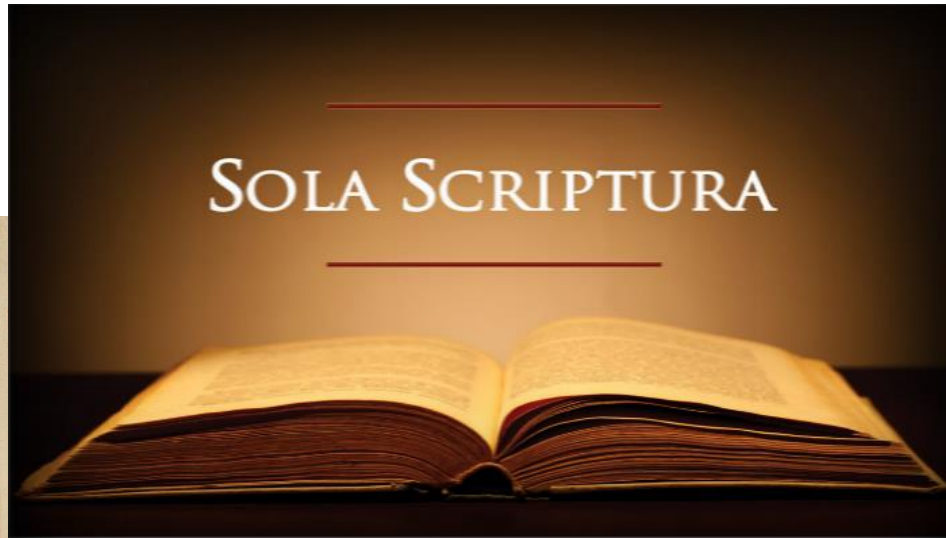
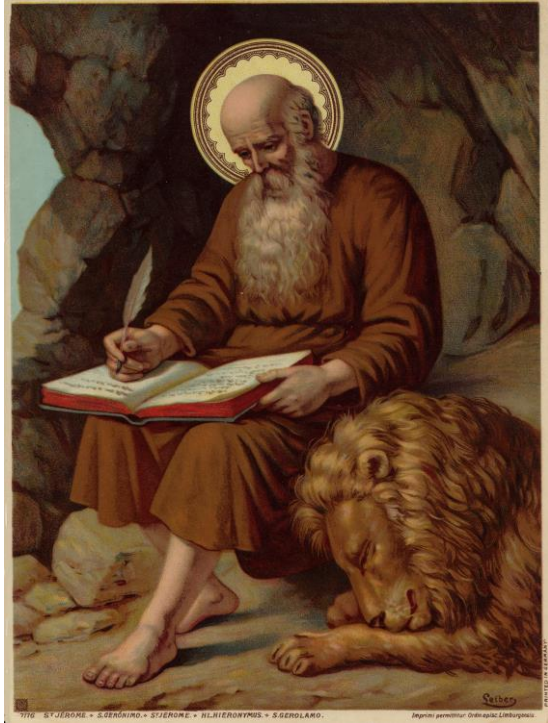
The Bible is God's letter to humanity.

God speaks to us through the great book of nature, then through the Prophets of the Old Testament, then through CHRIST, through the Apostles.

Thus God's revelation has come to an end with CHRIST – no further formal revelations are to be expected.

There may be, however, private revelations, which are not binding.





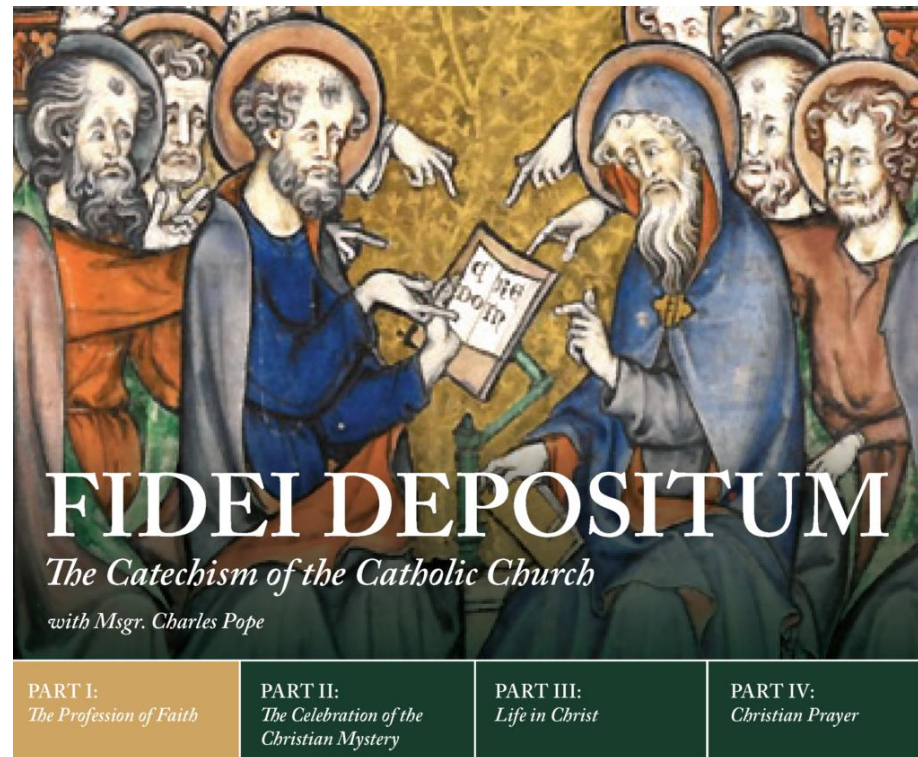
“Ignorance of Scriptures is
ignorance of Christ” (St. Jerome)

Scripture alone – sola
Scriptura – is not enough.

We also need the
SACRAMENTS.

We need Tradition

Scriptures and Tradition
constitute the DEPOSITUM FIDEI
– the solid, steady, unchangeable
rock of Christian Faith.



WHICH BIBLE IS THE TRUE BIBLE?

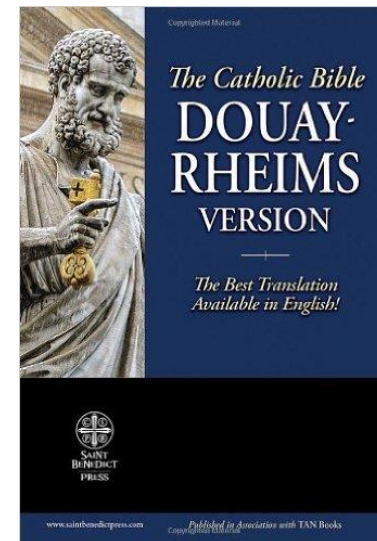
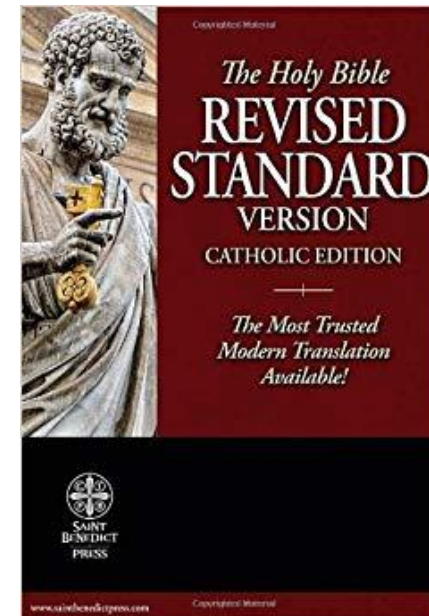
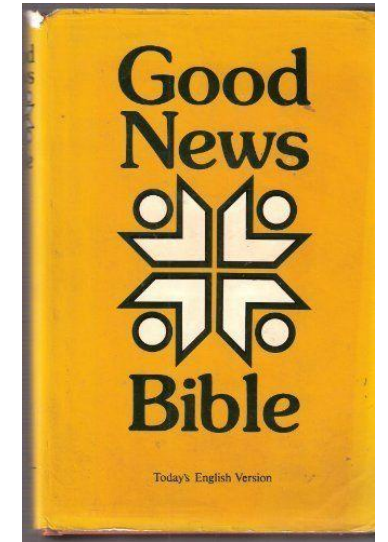
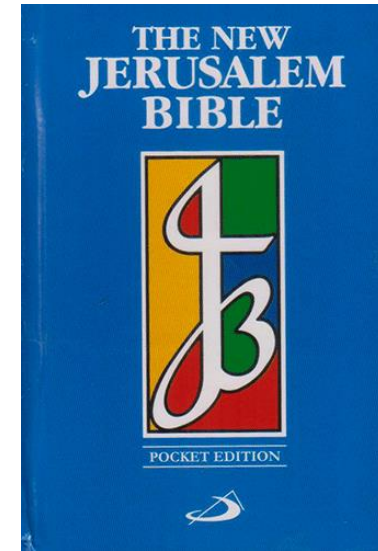
Are all Bibles the same? Is there a difference between Protestant and Catholic Bibles?

And if there is a difference, why the difference?

Martin Luther opened the problem in modern times. He kept the New Testament intact with its 27 books.

However, he changed the Old Testament list of inspired books by saying that we must follow the Hebrew Bible of the Old Testament which, according to him, acknowledged as inspired only the Books which had been written in the Hebrew language. As a consequence, Protestant Bibles have only 39 Books – whereas Catholic Bibles have 46 Books. Missing from Protestant Bibles are: Judith, Tobit, Wisdom, Ecclesiasticus, Baruch, 1-2 Maccabees.

All Bibles therefore are not the same. They all are God's Word, but there is less of it in Protestant Bibles regarding the Old Testament only.



*The question we need to ask is this:
Which Bible did JESUS and the
Apostles use? Surely, if they used it, it
must be the true Bible.*

The answer to this question is that JESUS and the Apostles and the early Church used the **SEPTUAGINT**. This is a strange word, but it refers to the Greek translation of the Old Testament made authoritatively by the Jewish Scholars in the Third Century BC.

The Septuagint carried great weight, to the point that St. Jerome translated it into LATIN at the instigation of the Pope and it became known as the **VULGATE**, the Bible of Christendom until the Protestant separation.

The **LEGEND**

“King Ptolemy once gathered 72 Elders. He placed them in 72 chambers, each of them in a separate one, without revealing to them why they were summoned. He entered each one's room and said: "Write for me the Hebrew Bible in Greek". God put it in the heart of each one to translate identically as all the others did”.

It is likely that the many Jewish people scattered throughout the Greek-speaking world asked from the Leaders in Jerusalem to have the Bible translated into Greek. This was done by Jewish Scholars, in Alexandria.



The Septuagint (LXX)

- The Septuagint was the Greek translation of the Old Testament.
- It was begun by the third century BC and completed by 132 BC, and was definitely a process over time.
- It was the Bible of the NT era.
- While it is not the greatest translation and differs substantially from the MT in places, it is particularly valuable for understanding words that show up in our Greek NT. It also served as the basis for subsequent versions.

Catholic Bibles contain all the Books of the VULGATE that is, 46 Old Testament Books and 27 New Testament Books.

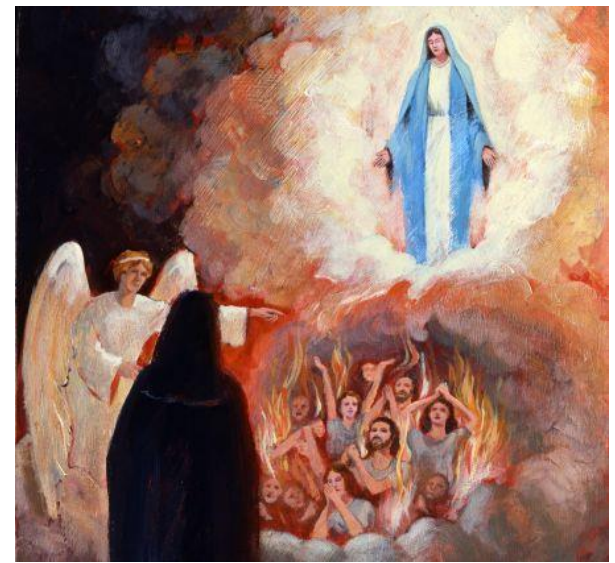
Protestant Bibles have 39 Old Testament Books and 27 New Testament Books.

The books which are not included in Protestant Bibles are called **APOCRIPHA** (=Hidden): Martin Luther said they are good to read but they are not inspired by God. Some Catholic Bibles call them DEUTEROCANONICAL to indicate that there were doubts initially about their place in the Canon.

1-2 Maccabees, however, contain a clear reference to the doctrine of PURGATORY and to the practice of the prayer for the dead – which Martin Luther had condemned.

The book of Tobit has teachings very close to the Gospel: the Golden Rule, the works of corporal mercy, the holiness of marriage, the presence of Angels in our life, etc.

The book of **Wisdom** speaks of Wisdom as the Word of God, as a Person. It has clear prophecies about the “son of God” being put to the death after rejection of His teaching.



In Chapter 12 of Second Maccabees we read Scriptural proof for Purgatory and evidence that the Jews had sacrifices offered for those of their brothers who had lost their lives in battle.

That the Jews prayed for the dead shows that they believed in a place where they could be helped (which we now call *purgatory*) and that the prayers of their living brothers and sisters could help them in that place. This is closely related to the Catholic doctrine of the communion of saints.

During the Reformation in the 15th century, when Martin Luther was deciding to remove books from the Bible, these words in the book of Maccabees had so clearly favoured Catholic teaching, that the whole book was removed from the Protestant Bible. Unfortunately for Protestants, even if they feel that the book was not inspired, it still tells us of the practice of God's chosen people.

“After this he took a collection from them individually, amounting to nearly two thousand drachmas, and sent it to Jerusalem to have a sacrifice for sin offered, an action altogether fine and noble, prompted by his belief in the resurrection.

⁴⁴ For had he not expected the fallen to rise again, it would have been superfluous and foolish to pray for the dead,

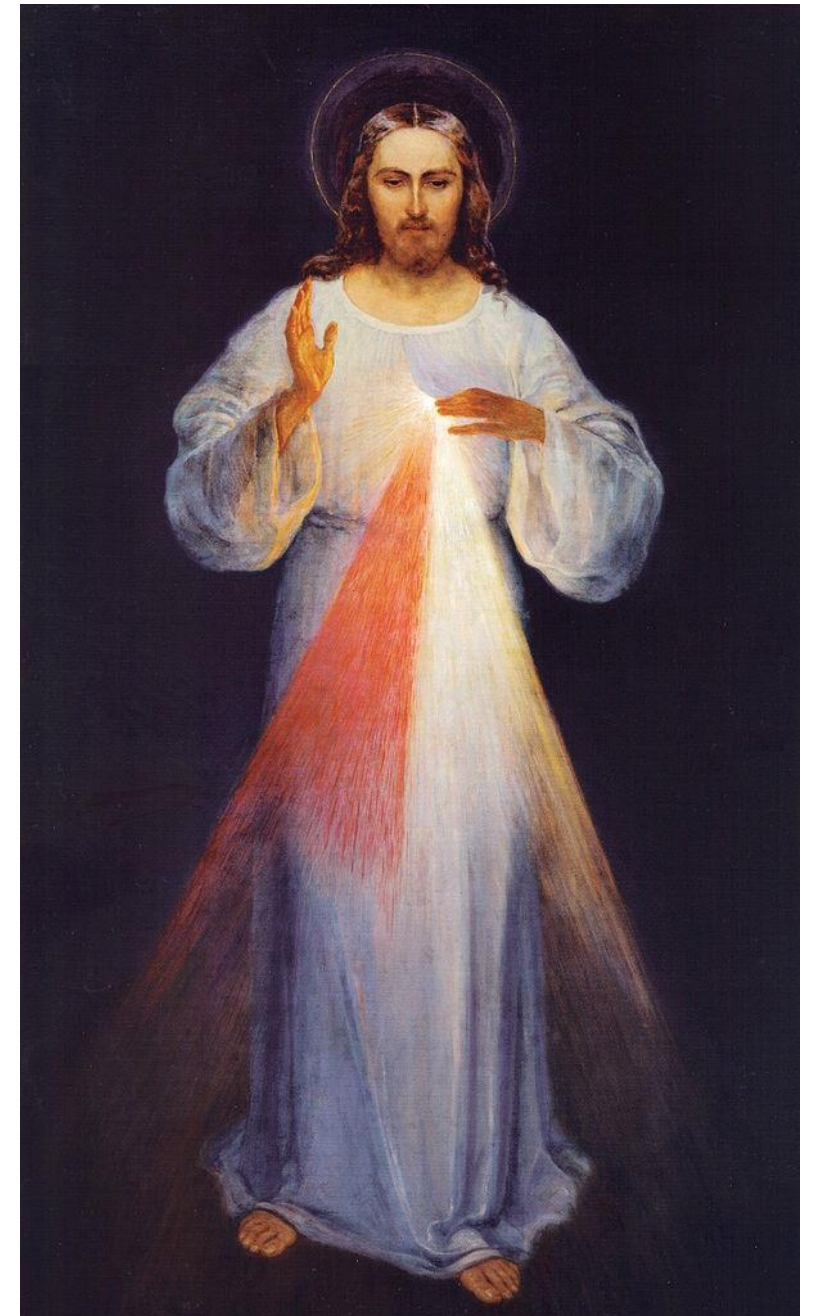
⁴⁵ whereas if he had in view the splendid recompense reserved for those who make a pious end, the thought was holy and devout. Hence, he had this expiatory sacrifice offered for the dead, so that they might be released from their sin”.

Divine Mercy

As preparation for the feast day, we pray the Novena to The Divine Mercy. The eighth day of the Novena is dedicated to praying for the souls detained in purgatory. As Jesus tells us in the prayer for the day:

“Today bring to Me THE SOULS WHO ARE DETAINED IN PURGATORY, and immerse them in the abyss of My mercy. Let the torrents of My Blood cool down their scorching flames. All these souls are greatly loved by Me. They are making retribution to My justice. It is in your power to bring them relief. Draw all the indulgences from the treasury of My Church and offer them on their behalf. Oh, if you only knew the torments they suffer, you would continually offer for them the alms of the spirit and pay off their debt to My justice”
(*Diary of St. Faustina*, 1226).

In the Diary, the word "purgatory" appears 24 times. Later in the Diary, Jesus says to St. Faustina, "Enter into purgatory often, because [the souls] need you there“.



The BOOK of TOBIT is quoted by JESUS. Yet, it is not included in Protestant Bibles.

“I gave my bread to the hungry and clothes to those who lacked them; and I buried, when I saw them, the bodies of those killed and left unburied”

“You are just, O Lord, and just are all your works. All your ways are grace and truth, and you are the Judge of the world”.

“Set aside part of your goods for almsgiving. Never turn your face from the poor and God will never turn his from you. So doing, you will lay up for yourself a great treasure for the day of necessity.

“For almsgiving delivers from death and saves people from passing down to darkness. Almsgiving is a most effective offering for all those who do it in the presence of the Most High.”

“Do to no one what you would not want done to you.”

“Give your bread to those who are hungry, and your clothes to those who lack clothing. Prayer with fasting and alms with uprightness are better than riches”

“The Angel said, 'Do not be afraid; peace be with you. Bless God for ever.”

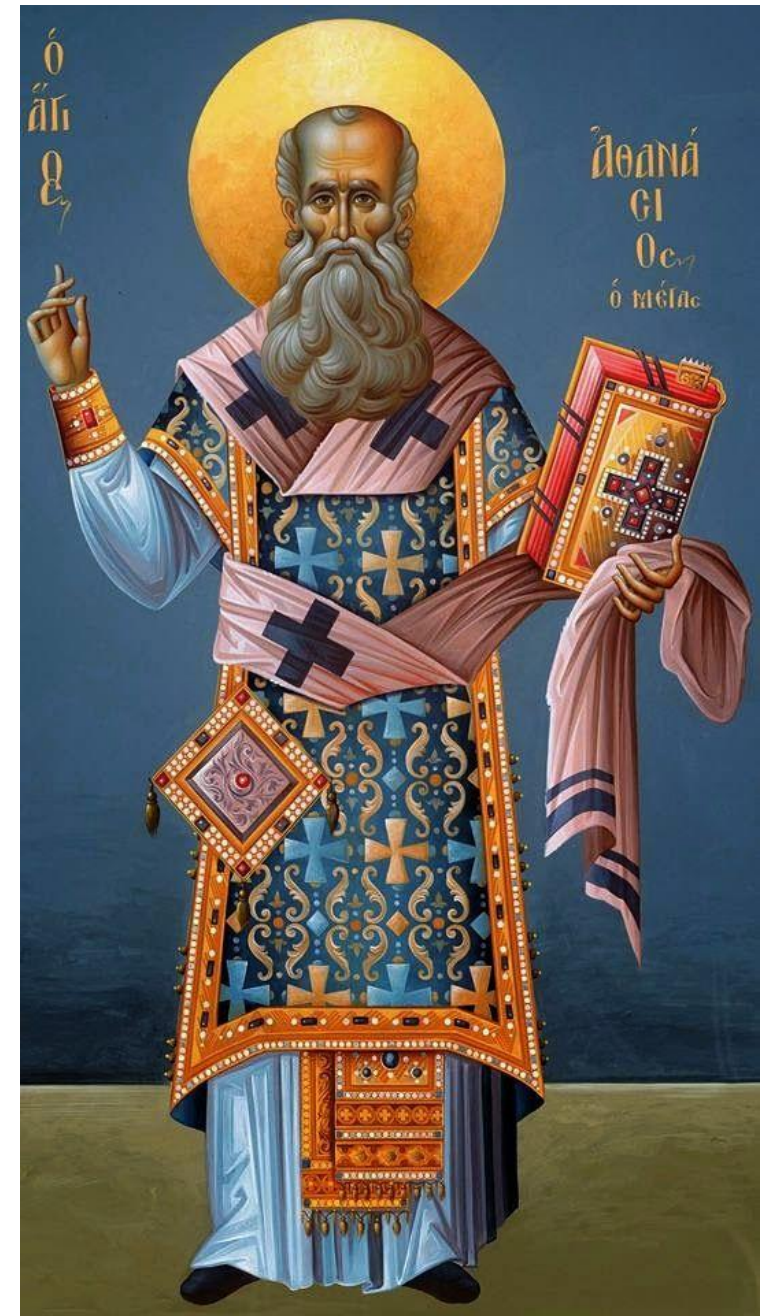
“A bright light will shine over all the regions of the earth; many nations will come from far away, from all the ends of the earth, to dwell close to the holy name of the Lord God, with gifts in their hands for the King of heaven.”

“Jerusalem will be built of sapphire and of emerald, and all your walls of precious stone, the towers of Jerusalem will be built of gold and their battlements of pure gold. ¹⁷ The streets of Jerusalem will be paved with ruby and with stones from Ophir”.

THE CANON

The word CANON is used to indicate the authoritative list of books to be accepted. The first Christian Canon on record goes back to a Muratorian Canon discovered in Milan and going back to 180AD – An important CANON is the one which goes back to St. Athanasius in about 350AD:

“Continuing, I must without hesitation mention the scriptures of the New Testament; they are the following: the four Gospels according to Matthew, Mark, Luke, and John, after them the Acts of the Apostles and the seven so-called catholic epistles of the apostles -- namely, one of James, two of Peter, then three of John and after these one of Jude. In addition there are fourteen epistles of the apostle Paul written in the following order: the first to the Romans, then two to the Corinthians and then after these the one to the Galatians, following it the one to the Ephesians, thereafter the one to the Philippians and the one to the Colossians and two to the Thessalonians and the epistle to the Hebrews and then immediately two to Timothy, one to Titus and lastly the one to Philemon. Yet further the Revelation of John. These are the springs of salvation, in order that he who is thirsty may fully refresh himself with the words contained in them. In them alone is the doctrine of piety proclaimed. Let no one add anything to them or take anything away from them...”



The Canon was fixed by the Church under inspiration of the Holy Spirit. The Church was given the authority to interpret the Bible – interpretation was not left to the private interpretation of the faithful. The teaching of the Church based on the Bible is called Tradition. This Tradition began even before the New Testament was written. The Apostles started Tradition using JESUS' teachings and the necessities of the Christian communities. This teaching Tradition or MAGISTERIUM continues even today.

“It is not from Sacred Scripture alone that the Church draws her certainty about everything which has been revealed. Therefore, both sacred tradition and Sacred Scripture are to be accepted and venerated with the same sense of loyalty and reverence.

Sacred tradition and Sacred Scripture form one sacred deposit of the word of God, committed to the Church. Holding fast to this deposit the entire holy people united with their shepherds remain always steadfast in the teaching of the Apostles.” (Vatican II – Dei Verbum)



GOD THE TRUE AUTHOR

The Church holds that the books of both the Old and New Testaments in their entirety, with all their parts, are sacred and canonical because written under the inspiration of the Holy Spirit, they have God as their author and have been handed on as such to the Church herself.

THE HUMAN WRITERS ALSO TRUE AUTHORS

In composing the sacred books, God chose men and while employed by Him they made use of their powers and abilities, so that with Him acting in them and through them, they, as true authors, consigned to writing everything and only those things which He wanted.

Therefore, since everything asserted by the inspired authors or sacred writers must be held to be asserted by the Holy Spirit, it follows that the books of Scripture must be acknowledged as teaching solidly, faithfully and without error that truth which God wanted put into sacred writings for the sake of salvation.

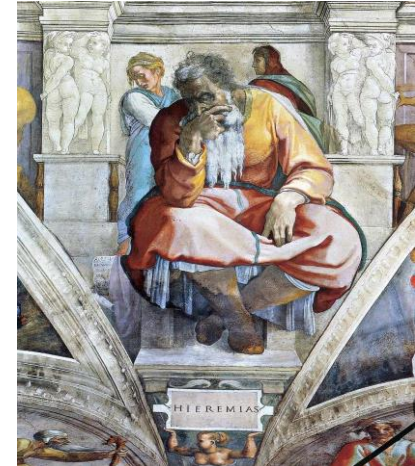
Therefore *"all Scripture is divinely inspired and has its use for teaching the truth and refuting error, for reformation of manners and discipline in right living, so that the man who belongs to God may be efficient and equipped for good work of every kind"* (2 Tim. 3:16-17, Greek text).

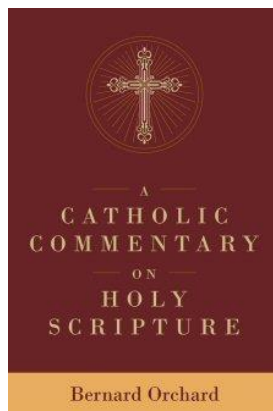
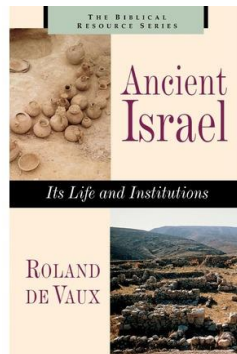
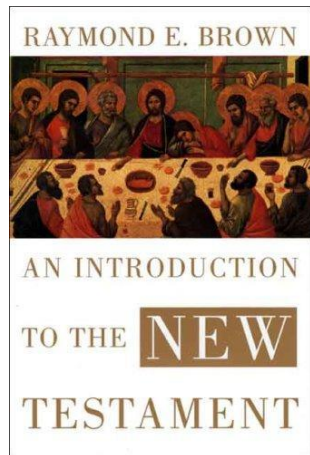
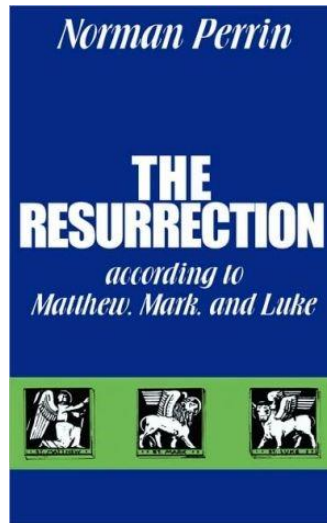
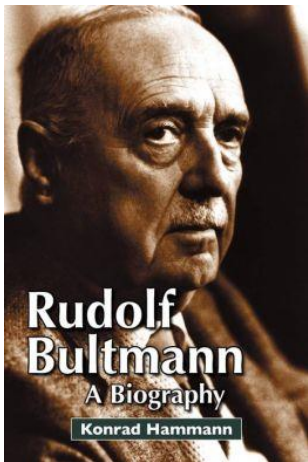
IMPORTANCE OF THE CULTURE, CONTEXT, TRADITIONS, LITERARY FORMS OF HUMAN AUTHORS

However, since God speaks in Sacred Scripture through men in human fashion, the interpreter of Sacred Scripture, in order to see clearly what God wanted to communicate to us, should carefully investigate **what meaning the sacred writers really intended**, and **what God wanted to manifest** by means of their words.

To search out the intention of the sacred writers, attention should be given, among other things, to "literary forms." **For truth is set forth and expressed differently in texts which are variously historical, prophetic, poetic, or of other forms of discourse.** The interpreter must investigate what meaning the sacred writer intended to express and actually expressed in particular circumstances by using contemporary literary forms in accordance with the situation of his own time and culture.

For the correct understanding of what the sacred author wanted to assert, due attention must be paid to the customary and characteristic styles of feeling, speaking and narrating which prevailed at the time of the sacred writer, and to the patterns men normally employed at that period in their everyday dealings with one another.





CONTROVERSIAL QUESTIONS

- ☐ Is the story of Creation history or myth?
- ☐ Are Adam, Eve, Cain, Abel, Noah true historical figures?
- ☐ Did the Exodus occur as it is presented by Moses?
- ☐ Is the book of Job fiction or history?
- ☐ Are the nativity stories in the Gospels only poetical narratives?
- ☐ Are miracles true miracles or exaggerated stories?
- ☐ Are the Gospels a biography of JESUS' life?
- ☐ Were the Virgin birth, the Resurrection, the Ascension true events?
- ☐ Do we have the historical JESUS or simply the JESUS of faith?
- ☐ Were the Passion accounts built around Old Testament's prophecies?
- ☐ Is it possible that an unlearned fisherman could write the Gospel of St. John?
- ☐ Were Mark, Luke, Matthew, John the authors of the Gospels?
- ☐ Who wrote the first Gospel?
- ☐ Is it true that Mark's work was only to stitch together collections which were used by preachers in their missions? (Such collections included parables, saying of Jesus, stories of conflict with Jewish leaders, Passion stories, resurrection stories).

THE CHURCH'S DOCTRINE ON THE HISTORICITY OF THE GOSPELS

THE GOSPELS HAVE APOSTOLIC ORIGIN

The Church has always and everywhere held and continues to hold that **the four Gospels are of apostolic origin**. For what the Apostles preached in fulfilment of the commission of Christ, afterwards they themselves and apostolic men, under the inspiration of the divine Spirit, handed on to us in writing: the foundation of faith, namely, the fourfold Gospel, according to Matthew, Mark, Luke and John.(1)

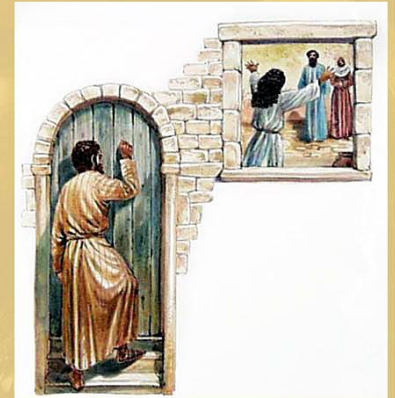
THE GOSPELS ARE TRUE HISTORY

19. Holy Mother Church has firmly and with absolute constancy held, and continues to hold, that **the four Gospels just named, whose historical character the Church unhesitatingly asserts**, faithfully hand on what Jesus Christ, while living among men, really did and taught for their eternal salvation until the day He was taken up into heaven (see Acts 1:1).



Acts 12:14

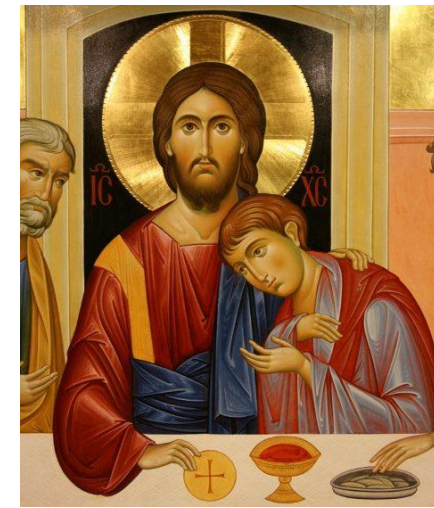
Recognizing Peter's voice, in her joy she did not open the gate but ran in and reported that Peter was standing at the gate.



Indeed, after the Ascension of the Lord **the Apostles handed on to their hearers what He had said and done.** This they did with that clearer understanding which they enjoyed after they had been instructed by the glorious events of Christ's life and taught by the light of the Spirit of truth.

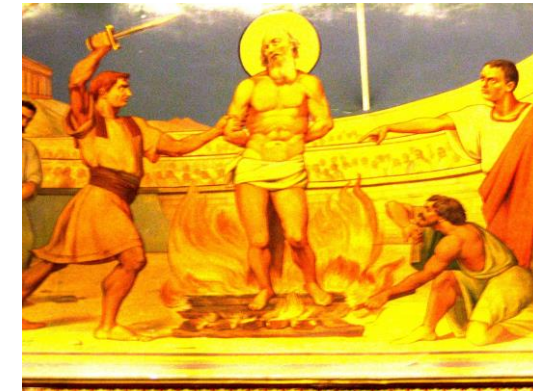
The sacred authors wrote the four Gospels, selecting some things from the many which had been handed on by word of mouth or in writing, reducing some of them to a synthesis, explaining some things in view of the situation of their churches and preserving the form of proclamation but always in such fashion that **they told us the honest truth about Jesus.**

For their intention in writing was that either from their own memory and recollections, or from the witness of those who **"themselves from the beginning were eyewitnesses and ministers of the Word"** we might know "the truth" concerning those matters about which we have been instructed (see Luke 1:2-4).

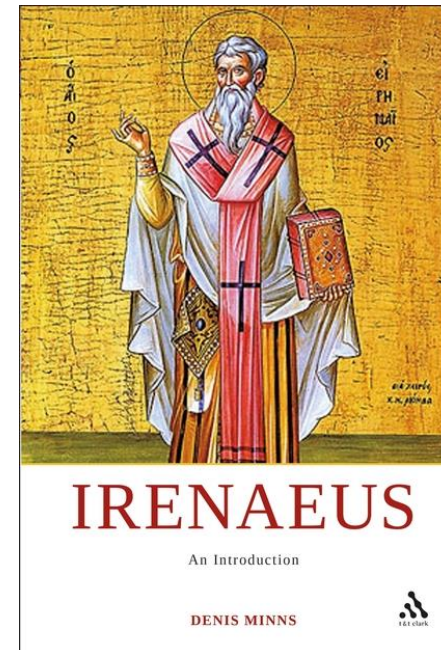


JESUS

St. John the Apostle



St Polycarp



DUTY OF PRIESTS, RELIGIOUS, THE FAITHFUL TO KNOW THE BIBLE

Therefore, all the clergy must hold fast to the Sacred Scriptures through diligent sacred reading and careful study, especially the priests of Christ and others, such as deacons and catechists who are legitimately active in the ministry of the word.

This is to be done so that none of them will become "an empty preacher of the word of God outwardly, who is not a listener to it inwardly" (4) since they must share the abundant wealth of the divine word with the faithful committed to them, especially in the sacred liturgy.

The sacred synod also earnestly and especially urges all the Christian faithful, especially Religious, to learn by frequent reading of the divine Scriptures the "excellent knowledge of Jesus Christ" (Phil. 3:8). "For ignorance of the Scriptures is ignorance of Christ."

