

# Lesson Two – Divine Revelation

## Purpose of Today's Lesson Is:

*To learn the different ways God has revealed Himself to Mankind (Sacred Tradition and Sacred Scripture)*

**Why is this important?** So we can better understand the history and ways of God's salvation plan – Revelation!

### 1. Brief History of Divine Revelation

- **Note:** Divine revelation is different than Natural Revelation which is when God makes himself known through the external world.
- God did not reveal himself all at once, but slowly.
  - Why slowly? This is a big mystery, but because of our fallen nature (original sin) man was not spiritually ready to know God in his fullness and glory.
  - For Example: We can't learn Trigonometry first we need to first learn basic math before moving up.
- God revealed himself Adam & Eve, Abraham, Noah, Moses, the prophets, St. John, and etc.
- God has also used Angels and other ways (the burning bush) to reveal Himself to men.
- God has also chosen to reveal Himself privately to Individuals. → PRIVATE REVELATION
- **An Example of Private Revelation:** *Our Lady of Lourdes in France. In 1858, in the grotto of Massabielle, Our Lady appeared 18 times to Bernadette Soubirous, a young peasant girl. She revealed herself as the Immaculate Conception, asked that a chapel be built on the site of the vision, and told the girl to drink from a fountain in the grotto. No fountain was to be seen, but when Bernadette dug at a spot designated by the apparition, a spring began to flow. The water from this*

*still flowing spring has shown remarkable healing power, though it contains no curative property that science can identify. Lourdes has become the most famous modern shrine of Our Lady. Others examples would be Fatima and Our Lady of Guadeloupe.*

- Private revelation contains no new Revelation by God. We are not held to believe the private revelations of other people, but the Church can and does approve of some of them after careful examination.
- God eventually formed a **covenant** with His chosen people (the Israelites) to be the special keepers of his Revelation → OLD COVENANT which was fulfilled (not revoked) by the sacrifice of Jesus on the Cross.
- The Israelites eventually wrote down this revelation → OLD TESTAMENT
- God eventually revealed Himself to man in the Person of His Son – Jesus
- Some of what Jesus revealed was written down → NEW TESTAMENT → **Sacred Scripture**
- The rest of this revelation is what we refer to **Sacred Tradition** – or the unwritten word of God. This has been revealed through the one Church which Jesus Founded in Matt 16:18-19.
- Divine Revelation reached its greatest point with the life of Christ and the preaching of his 12 apostles.
- The Apostles Creed sums up the last revelation by God. *I believe in God, the Father almighty, creator of heaven and earth. I believe in Jesus Christ, his only Son, our Lord. He was conceived by the power of the Holy Spirit and born of the Virgin Mary. He suffered under Pontius Pilate, was crucified, died, and was buried. He descended to the dead. On the third day he rose again. He ascended into heaven, and is seated at the right hand of the Father. He will come again to judge the living and the dead. I believe in the Holy Spirit, the holy Catholic Church, the communion of saints, the forgiveness of sins, the resurrection of the body, and the life everlasting. Amen.*

- Catholic Church has Three Approved Creeds: Apostles, Nicene, and the Athanasian.

## **2. The Last Revelation is contained in Sacred Tradition and Sacred Scripture**

### **What is Sacred Tradition?**

- The teachings of Jesus Christ handed down to us through the Apostles and their successors guided infallibly by the Holy Spirit.
- Infallibility → promise of Christ that the Holy Spirit will keep his Church from teaching error.
- Sacred Traditions can be found in:
  - the writings of the early church fathers
  - the writings of doctor's of the Church
  - the decrees of the early church councils
  - early Christian archeological findings
- The Creeds come from Sacred Tradition.
  - Some protestant churches use our creeds although they change the wording in them.
- The Bible is a tradition of the Church!
- The order of the Holy Mass is a sacred Tradition of the Church.
- Most Protestant churches do not recognize the Traditions of the Early Church. If they do recognize tradition they reject the Catholic Doctrines/Dogmas not found in scripture.
- They do this in ignorance of History → the Bible is one of these Traditions. No Tradition = No BIBLE!
- Protestants do not accept Sacred Tradition as being equal to the Bible in authority. They go by the Bible Alone! Most Protestants are unaware of the History of the Bible.... Some willfully ignore it. Ignorance is bliss!

## Are Traditions Biblical?

- "I commend you because you remember me in everything and maintain the traditions even as I have delivered them to you" (1 Cor. 11:2).
  - "So then, brethren, stand firm and hold to the traditions which you were taught by us, either by word of mouth or by letter." (2 Thess 2:15)
  - Word of Mouth → Sacred Tradition Letter → Sacred Scripture
  - Traditions not found in the Bible: - *THESE ARE ALL TRADITIONS OF THE CATHOLIC CHURCH!*
    - Sunday as the Lords Day
    - Dates of Christian Holidays – Tradition!! Exact dates are not in the Bible.
    - List of the canonical books of the Old Testament
    - List of the canonical books of the New Testament,
    - The doctrine of the Trinity
    - The name of the "beloved disciple"
    - Author of the Gospel of Matthew, Mark, Luke, or John.
- 
- What is Sacred Scripture?
    - Sacred Scripture is contained in the writings of the Old and New Testaments → The Bible
    - The Bible is a collection of 72 books written down by the Israelites and the early Church.
    - The Bible is the inspired word of God written down by men who were guided by the Holy Spirit.
    - The Bible was compiled or canonized through the inspiration and guidance of the Holy Spirit by the early Church at the councils of Hippo, Rome, and Carthage in around 385AD.
    - It contains no errors or contradictions when properly understood.

- It was not meant to teach us about science other subjects. Reading it in this manner is wrong. It was meant to teach us about God and his salvation plan for man.
- **There are two ways to properly read scripture:**
  - **The literal sense** - the meaning conveyed by the words written down.
  - **The spiritual sense** - The spiritual sense behind the word written down (*allegorical, moral and the anagogical senses*). *Words had different meanings and were used differently.*
  - Keep in mind that when we read the Bible we are reading a translation from the original bible languages (Hebrew, Koine Greek, and Aramaic. We would have to be able to read these languages and understand the cultures in which they were spoke in if we want to fully understand every word written in the Bible. Impossible!

**[VIDEO - What are the parts of the Bible? \(3MC – DVD #1 – Revelation – Part 10\)](#)**

- **The Books of the Bible (73 books):**
  - **Old Testament (46 Books) – Protestants recognize only 39 books.**
    - Divided into:
      - Pentateuch (The First 5 Books) → Torah or the Law of Moses
      - The Wisdom Books – Collection of prayers, wise sayings, and advice written in poetic form.
      - The Prophetic Books – Words and messages spoken by God’s Prophets.

- **New Testament (27 Books)**

- The Gospels - contain accounts of Jesus' life
- Acts of the Apostles - contain history of the early church. First Church Council recorded.
- Letters of Saint Paul – written to various churches addressing their needs.
- Letters to all Christians – written by various apostles to various Christians.
- Book of Revelation – written by the Apostle John before his death.

- **Why are Protestant bibles different than Catholic Bibles?**

- Martin Luther was a disgruntled priest who was excommunicated by the Church in 1517. He objected too many of the teachings of the Catholic Church. He's the founder of the Lutheran Religion and he started the reformation.
  - He denied purgatory existed.
  - He taught that once a person was saved you could not lose your salvation.
  - Created the false doctrine of Sola Scriptura – The Bible Alone which that the Bible is the Sole Rule of Faith
  - Created the false Doctrine of Sola Fide which states that faith apart from works saves us.
  - Martin Luther in 1517 removed these books and reverted back the Hebrew canon during the Reformation. The Catholic Church uses the Greek Cannon.
- They have 7 Old Testament books removed. He tried to remove several New Testament book but was stopped by his followers.
- Tobit, Judith, 1 and 2 Maccabees, Wisdom, Sirach, and Baruch. Catholic Bible's also include sections in the Books of Esther and Daniel which are not found in Protestant

Bible's. These books are called the deuterocanonical books. The Catholic Church considers these books to be inspired by the Holy Spirit.

- Martin Luther in 1517 removed these books and reverted back the Hebrew Cannon during the Reformation. We use the Greek Cannon.
- Protestants accuse the Catholic Church of adding books to the Old Testament after the reformation at the Council of Trent. This is not true the Council only restated which books we considered inspired.
- The printing press was invented in 1454 by a German named Johann Gutenberg. The first book ever printed on the printing press was the Latin Vulgate Bible. This first mass produced Bible is commonly called the Gutenberg Bible and it was a Catholic Bible (the reformation would not occur until 80 years later) which contained all 46 Old Testament books.
- Catholics should not use a protestant Bible when reading scripture. Many contain errors in translations and purposely change the meaning of some verses to make them less Catholic.
- Examples of Protestant Bibles are the NIV, King James, New King James Bible.

### **3. The Protector and Teacher of Divine Revelation is?**

- The Holy Catholic Church as Founded by Jesus lead by the successors of the apostles and guided infallibly by the Holy Spirit.
- Jesus gave his Apostles Authority and this Authority was passed down through their successors.

**Class Questions:**

- 1. What is a Sacred Tradition of the Church?**
- 2. Name one person who God revealed Himself to.**
- 3. What is the Apostles Creed?**
- 4. What is the Old Testament.**
- 5. What is the New Testament.**
- 6. Who guided the Church when it compiles the Bible?**
- 7. Who was Martin Luther?**
- 8. Should Catholic read protestant Bibles for scripture study?**
- 9. What are Catholic Bibles bigger than Protestant Bibles?**

**Next week's lesson will be on Creation – Angles, Humans, Fall of Man....**