

Class 3

The Two Sources of Catholic Teaching: Scripture and Tradition

1. Revelation

- a. Divine Revelation is the various means that God uses to reveal Himself and His will to us
- b. Why is it important
 - i. While we can know some truths with reason alone, others must be revealed to us
 1. Our human nature is fallen and we make mistakes and fall into error
 - ii. God has decided to reveal Himself to us
 - iii. Revelation contains an invitation to a relationship with Him.
- c. How does God reveal Himself?
 - i. Overtime
 1. Beginning with Adam and Eve, culminating with Christ and continued through the death of the last apostles
 - ii. Presented in two forms
 1. Sacred Tradition
 2. Sacred Scripture

2. Sacred Tradition

- a. The word tradition comes from the Latin word tradere = to hand on
- b. Sacred Tradition is the handing on of God's Revelation from one generation to the next
 - i. The Catholic Church has an unbroken line of succession that dates back to the apostles.
 1. Mt 16:18-20 (we will discuss more about apostolic succession when we talk about the Church)
- c. Transmitted in 3 ways
 - i. The Early Church Fathers
 - ii. Practice and belief of the Church over the centuries
 - iii. The content of what the Church has taught.

3. Sacred Scripture

- a. Developed from Sacred Tradition
 - i. Most were written down after an oral Tradition
- b. Inspiration
 - i. Inspired by God
 1. God is the primary author but he chose to communicate His message by means of human authors who he used as His instruments
 - ii. God is the primary author of Scripture, but the content of what was written is communicated in the mode of human authors
- c. Structure of the Bible
 - i. 73 Books
 1. Old Testament: 46
 - a. Tells the story of Revelation from the creation of the world to the time preceding Christ's birth
 2. New Testament: 46
 - a. Gospels (the life of Jesus Christ)
 - b. Acts of the Apostles (the life of the early church)
 - c. Epistles (letters circulated in the early Christian communities)
 - d. Revelation (Book of the end times)
- d. Development of the Bible
 - i. Takes place within the Tradition of the Church
 1. Council of Rome in 382 AD

- a. Pope Damasus I called the bishops of the world to Rome to discuss what books should be included in the Scriptures
- ii. Criteria
 - 1. Old Testament
 - a. Looked to the Septuagint (the Greek translation of the Old Testament that took place in the 2nd century BC)
 - 2. New Testament
 - a. 3 criteria
 - i. Orthodoxy = Conforming to Christ's message
 - ii. Apostolicity = Traceable to the apostles and their companions
 - iii. Catholicity = Having been used by many local churches for liturgical worship in the entirety of the Christian world
- e. Protestant View
 - i. Sola Scriptura = Scripture is the sole authority for doctrines and practices
 - ii. Problems
 - 1. Denies that the Scripture developed out of the Tradition
 - 2. Removes any safeguard of interpretation
 - a. We have a Magisterium protected by the Holy Spirit, (Mt 16: 13 – 20) but Protestants leave the interpretation of Scripture to each individual
 - 3. Causes splintering, fracturing and dissent
 - 4. The Bible specifically contradicts Sola Scriptura
 - a. "Therefore, brothers, stand firm and hold fast to the traditions that you were taught, either by oral statement or by a letter of yours." (2 Thes 2:15)
 - b. "I praise you because you remember me in everything and hold fast to the traditions, just as I handed them on to you. (1 Cor 11:2)
 - iii. Different Books
 - 1. Removed the Deutero-Canonical Books
 - a. They only have 66 books
 - i. 1 & 2 Maccabees, parts of Esther, parts of Daniel, Sirach, Wisdom, Baruch, Tobit and Judith were omitted
 - b. 90 AD Jewish rabbis met at the council of Javneh to address the "problem" of Christians
 - c. Christians at the time did not accept the council because it was done to destroy the Church
 - i. Not accepted by Christians until Martin Luther (1483 – 1549) declared it should be used by Protestants
- f. Interpreting Scripture
 - i. How to find Passages
 - 1. Book Chapter number: Verse Number
 - a. Ex: Gen 2:24 refers to the second chapter of Genesis verse 24
 - ii. Different Senses
 - 1. Literal = What the original author intended to convey. Usually the historical facts.
 - 2. Spiritual
 - a. Allegorical = the events or persons have their own meanings but also typify other persons or events often referring to Christ, the Church or Sacraments
 - b. Moral = Instruction on how to act justly and according to God's will
 - c. Anagogical (topological) = Referring to the end times and heaven
 - iii. Example using Noah's Flood
 - 1. Literal = a big flood destroyed the known earth

2. Allegorical = The ark is a type of the Church which houses all of humanity. The flood is a type of baptism insofar as sin, like the evil people is completely wiped away.
3. Moral = Those who live just and upright lives will not perish
4. Anagogical = The destruction of the wicked prefigures the eternal damnation of those who live wicked lives. Noah's salvation prefigures our salvation

4. Scripture and Tradition

- a. Scripture and Tradition are not opposed because they come from the same source, Jesus
- b. Need both
 - i. Scripture is a product of Tradition
 - ii. Tradition is confirmed by Scripture
- c. Not everything Jesus said or did is contained in the Scriptures (Jn 20:30)

5. Magisterium

- a. The official teaching office of the Church
- b. Helps ensure that what is being received and taught is true
- c. Jesus gave the apostles the mandate and authority to teach in His name
 - i. Mt 28:19 - 20 & Lk 10:16
- d. The Pope and Bishops are the guardians of Revelation
 - i. They guard and teach everything that has been given to us in Sacred Tradition and Sacred Scripture
 - ii. Jesus is the ultimate Master and through the Holy Spirit guarantees the Church will never teach erroneous doctrine
 1. Mt 16:18 - 20

6. Faith: Our Response

- a. God's Revelation contains an invitation to enter more fully into a relationship with Him
 - i. God reveals Himself so that we may better know, love and serve Him
 1. Requires us to submit our intellect and will to Him
- b. Doesn't remove reason but elevates it to truths that we otherwise would not know
 - i. Faith and reason are complementary
 1. We explore faith using reason and faith sheds light upon the use of our reason
 - ii. Theology and Natural Reason reveal different things
 1. Theology reveals the Who and Why of human existence
 2. Natural Sciences explain the How and What of human existence
- c. Faith is a lived response

7. Review

- a. Revelation
 - i. Jesus reveals Himself to us overtime through Sacred Scripture and Sacred Tradition
 - ii. 3 main ways of transmission
 1. The Church Fathers
 2. Practice and belief of the Early Church
 3. The content of what the Church has taught
- b. Sacred Scripture
 - i. Developed from Sacred Tradition
 - ii. Inspired by God who uses human authors as His instruments
 - iii. Contains 73 Books: 46 Old Testament and 27 New Testament
 - iv. The Bible develops within the tradition of the Church
 - v. Sola Scriptura
 1. Protestant view of scripture alone
 2. Denies that Scripture developed out of Tradition and was determined by Tradition
 3. Removes any safeguards of interpretation

- vi. Scripture and Tradition
 - 1. Are not opposed to each other
 - 2. We need both
- vii. Magisterium
 - 1. The teaching office of the Church
 - 2. Jesus gave the apostles the mandate and authority to teach in His name
 - 3. The Pope and bishops are the guardians of Revelation
- viii. Faith
 - 1. Our response to God's invitation
 - 2. Faith and reason are complementary

8. Reflection

- a. Faith and reason are like two wings on which the human spirit rises to the contemplation of truth; and God has placed in the human heart a desire to know the truth—in a word, to know himself—so that, by knowing and loving God, men and women may also come to the fullness of truth about themselves. – Pope John Paul II, Encyclical on Faith and Reason *Fides et Ratio* accessible at http://w2.vatican.va/content/john-paul-ii/en/encyclicals/documents/hf_jp-ii_enc_14091998_fides-et-ratio.html

9. Additional resources

- a. My Podcast on Scripture and Tradition
 - i. <https://soundcloud.com/user-631584158/scripture-and-tradition>
- b. Pope John Paul II Encyclical on Faith and Reason *Fides et Ratio*
 - i. http://w2.vatican.va/content/john-paul-ii/en/encyclicals/documents/hf_jp-ii_enc_14091998_fides-et-ratio.html
- c. Fr. Oscar Lukefahr CM, *A Catholic Guide to the Bible, Revised*. 1998: Liguori. **ISBN-13:** 978-0764802010
- d. Anthony Rizzi, *The Science Before Science: A Guide to Thinking in the 21st Century*. 2004: Author House. **ISBN-13:** 978-1418465049