

SEGMENT FIVE

THEME: SACRED SCRIPTURE – GOD’S WORD AMONG US

OPENING PRAYER / SCRIPTURE READING:

Psalm 119: 97 – 108

“Thy word is a lamp to my feet and a light to my path” Psalm 119: 105

“All scripture is inspired by God and profitable for teaching, for reproof, for correction, and for training in righteousness, that the faithful of God may be complete, equipped for every good work.” 2 Timothy 3: 14-17

“When you received the word of God which you heard from us, you accepted it not as the word of men but as what it really is, the word of God, which is at work in believers” 1 Thessalonians 2: 13

INSTRUCTORS’ SUMMARY:

Christianity is a religion of the “Word of God,” a living and incarnate word. In the books of Sacred Scripture God speaks to humanity in human words that is the “speech of God as it is put down in writing under the breath of the Holy Spirit” (CCC, 81). Just as the Word of the eternal Father, Christ Jesus became like us, so are the words of God expressed in human words in the Sacred Scriptures.

The Church honors the scriptures as she honors the Lord’s body. The Church presents to us the *one* bread of life, taken from the *one* table of God’s Word and Christ’s body at the Eucharistic altar. In Sacred Scripture the Church constantly finds nourishment and strength, wisdom and hope, for believers welcome it not as a human word, “but as what it really is, the word of God.” (1 Thessalonians 2: 13)

The Bible, meaning “the book” is the most significant sacred text in the history of the world. Translated into more languages than any other book it is a storehouse of sublime teaching, sound wisdom for human life, and a treasury of prayers containing the mystery of our salvation. It is the written record of God’s faithful love in the face of human sinfulness. We approach the Bible with an attitude of faith and prayer.

- ❖ God is the author of Sacred Scripture “written under the inspiration of the Holy Spirit and handed down as such to the Church.” (CCC, 105)
- ❖ God inspired the human authors of the sacred books to teach humanity the truths of divine revelation. God chose sacred authors who “made full use of their own faculties and powers so that, though he acted in them and by them, it was as true authors that they consigned to writing whatever he wanted written, and no more” (CCC, 107)
- ❖ Under the guidance of the Holy Spirit, the biblical authors record true accounts of salvation history, the messages of the prophets, the Wisdom sayings, the teachings and ministry of Jesus and the experiences of the first Christians.
- ❖ The books of the Bible “firmly, faithfully, and without error teach that truth which God, for the sake of our salvation, wished to see confided to the Sacred Scriptures” (CCC, 107)
- ❖ To interpret the Scriptures correctly the reader must attend to what God wanted to reveal to us and to what the human authors wanted to affirm. Sacred Scripture must be read and interpreted in the light of the same Spirit by whom it was written. (CCC, 109 – 110). The Church watches over and interprets the Word of God.
- ❖ The Church offers *three* criteria for interpreting Scripture: “the content and unity of the whole of Scripture,” reading Scripture within the “living Tradition of the whole Church,” and the “analogy of faith,” or the coherence of truths of faith among themselves (CCC 112 – 114)
- ❖ The Church distinguishes between two senses of Scripture: the literal and the spiritual sense. The spiritual sense of Scripture is further divided into the *allegorical*, the *moral*, and the *anagogical* (CCC 115 – 119)
- ❖ The list of sacred books is called the “canon” of Scripture. It includes **46** books for the Old Testament and **27** books for the New. (CCC 120)
- ❖ The four Gospels – Matthew, Mark, Luke and John – occupy a central place in the Church’s life because “they are our principal source for the life and teaching of Jesus, the Incarnate Word” (CCC124 – 127)
- ❖ The books of the Old Testament have permanent value in that the “Old Covenant has never been revoked.” The unity of the two Testaments flows from the unity of God’s plan for our salvation. The Old Testament prepares for the New Testament and the New fulfills the Old (CCC 128 – 130)

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS:

The following questions may be used by the RCIA team to guide large or small group discussions during weekly RCIA meetings. They may also be given to the participants as a basis for personal reflection during the week.

1. Why is it important for Christians to read and reflect on the words of the Bible?
2. How can you make the Bible part of your daily prayer and reflection?
3. What are the various meanings or “senses” of Scripture?

SCRIPTURE REFERENCES/QUOTATIONS:

John 1: 14

Romans 1: 16-17

1 Corinthians 10:11

Hebrews 1:1-3; 4:12

1 Thessalonians 2:13

“Ignorance of Scripture is ignorance of Christ” St. Jerome (CCC, 133)

“All Sacred Scripture is but one book, and that one book is Christ, because all divine Scripture speaks of Christ, and all divine Scripture is fulfilled in Christ” (CCC 134)

“The word of God is living and active, sharper than any two edged sword”
Hebrews 4: 12

“The treasures of the Bible are to be opened up more lavishly so that a richer fare may be provided for the faithful at the table of God’s word.” Dogmatic Constitution on the Sacred Liturgy, *Sacrosanctum Concilium*, 51

SUGGESTIONS FOR FURTHER READING:

Universal Catechism, “*Sacred Scripture*,” 101 - 141

Second Vatican Council, Dogmatic Constitution on Divine Revelation, *Dei Verbum*, Chapters II to VI

CLOSING PRAYER

Psalm 119: 89 - 105