

Night II: October 9, 2009
Hermeneutics and Biblical Interpretation
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II. Transmission of Divine Revelation. God desires that all men be saved and come to the knowledge of all things. Christ must be proclaimed to all nations so that the revelation of truth reaches the ends of the earth. God graciously arranged that the things he has once revealed for the salvation of all peoples should remain in their entirety, throughout the ages, and in turn be transmitted to all generations (cf. DV, 7). What Christ entrusted to the Apostles, they in turn handed on by their preaching and writing, under the inspiration of the Holy Spirit, to all generations, until Christ returns to Glory. There are two distinct modes of transmission.

A. *“Sacred tradition and Sacred Scripture make up a single deposit of Faith”* (DV 10), in which, the pilgrim church contemplates God the source of all her riches. This ‘Deposit’ is the treasure and heritage of our faith. Aroused and sustained in the Spirit of Truth, the People of God, guided by the teaching authority of the Church (magisterium) are drawn into the deeper mystery that is the will of the Father. There is an original unity between the Word of God, the sacramental life and the order of the Church and her authority. The age of the Church and her Deposit of faith is the constant echo of the people of God coming into encounter with the Word of God.

1. Sacred Scripture: “The speech of God put down in writing by the breath of the Holy Spirit” (DV, 9) (cf. CCC, 81).

a. Consult Word of the Week on *Inspired by God*

2. Sacred Tradition: Divine truths orally transmitted to the apostolic successors under the guidance of the spirit (cf. DV, 7) (cf. CCC, 75-82).

a. Tradition lives in conversation with the past making it visible to the present; the continuation through time of the mission of Christ which shares his passionate love for all cultures. Tradition is a divine intervention where God makes present Christ the same to us today as he was 2000 years ago; that every generation shall have intimate contact with him—Eucharist. *“Tradition is the principle that links one generation with another; it enables them to remain with their parents”--Congar*

b. Tradition comes before Scripture. Scriptures did not start the Church, but comes from the spirit of the Church in the guidance of the spirit. The Scriptures do not prelude the Church but rather proceeds from the Church. It is like Americans before the constitution not the Scriptures before the church. Anything else would be a pseudo understanding of the Church.

3. Magisterium: “Serving and interpreting the written and oral word of God under the guidance of the Pope and bishops” (DV, 10) (cf. CCC, 185). (Pope as head-when bishops reject the Pope it is like the apostles rejecting Jesus). *“The magisterium is both the anchor and compass, depending on the turbulence of the sea.”—Neuhaus.* The Magisterium has an intimate role with the necessity to understand Divine Revelation: God revealing Himself through salvation history to His people.

a. The Magisterium is the continual (breath of Tradition) conversation with the past. It assures the *“faith once delivered to the saints”* bringing more treasures to the Deposit of Faith. It transmits all that the Church is and believes.

b. There are different levels of truth revealed in and through tradition that are defined by the Magisterium. The role of the Magisterium defining matters of truth is analogous to the unborn baby that is not yet seen. At first, the truth may not be seen, like the baby. There is a gestation period of truth before it can be fully seen...like the baby. It is the Spirit of Truth over a period of time that defines the timing of the definition of truth.

1. Discipline: a practical dictate by the church, which clearly can be changed i.e., fasting.

2. Doctrine: Teaching pertaining to the faith in which the magisterial has officially taught, and has yet to be dogmatically proclaimed. L.G. #

25 the faithful are bound in their profession of faith to accept it as true.
3. Dogma: Highest revelation of truth. Pius XII: "Perfection of doctrine." A truth immediately revealed by God, which has been proposed by the teaching church as such, the greatest appreciation of truth.

III. Sacred Scripture. All of Sacred Scripture is but one book, a book of God's covenant love for his people. This book is the Word, which is Christ (cf. Jn.1.1) and all Scripture is fulfilled in Christ (CCC 101-102).

A. Inspiration and Truth of Sacred Scripture. Sacred Scriptures contain the Word of God and, because they are inspired, they are truly the Word of God.

1. God is the author of Sacred Scripture because he inspired its human authors, he acts in them and by means of them. He thus gives assurance that their writings teach without error his saving truth (DV, 11). God's word is objective truth, for it created the world and its hosts and breathed inspiration into Scripture (cf. Ps.33.6).

a. So Scripture's authority is an extension of Christ's own authority. *"Just as Christ is fully human and divine so Scripture is fully human and divine."*

--Hahn

B. Interpretation of Sacred Scripture. Interpretation of the inspired Scripture must be attentive above all to what God wants to share through the sacred authors for our salvation. What comes from the Spirit is not fully understood except by the Spirit's action. There is a kind of historical structure of faith. In this manner of speaking, the Church considers both history and spirit, as it's mode of interpreting Sacred Scripture.

1. We call these the Literal sense and Spiritual Sense, the latter being divided into the allegorical, moral, and anagogical. These senses of Scripture communicate the richness of the text. In the words of Pope Benedict XVI: "The internal unity of the Bible as a rule of interpretation, Christ as the meeting point of all the OT pathways". In principle, this is how one goes about to a clear understanding of the NT and its spiritual sense. There are three modes of the spiritual sense.

a. Literal Sense: Intent of the author. Meaning conveyed by the word of Scripture through cultural and historical contexts. All other senses are based on the literal. Not more important but it is a matter of priority by sequence. Form criticism and literary genre (cf. CCC, 116)

b. Spiritual Sense: Unity of God's plan speaking about the realities of the events as being signs. You have to ask the question: "Did God intend to mean this?" The spiritual sense is interpreting Scripture in the context of the Paschal mystery, bringing into view the spiritual depth of the historical event (cf. CCC, 117).

1. **Allegorical (typological)**: Christ significant/paschal mystery. Things of the old law signifying things of the new law in persons, places, things and institutions (cf. 1 Peter 3.14; Rom.5.14). Jesus and the Sacred Scripture of Israel appear as indivisible. The mission of Christ in the New Testament corresponds directly to the prophetic thrust of the Old Testament--Christ's mission links the two The Old and New!

a. Consult Word of the Week on **Type**.

2. **Moral**: instruction to act with justice...wisdom. Types of what we ought to do. Along with the allegorical, there are times when the New Testament text itself is a moral exegesis of the Old Testament.

a. the Example of Christ

b. Relationship in Christ

c. Signify Christ by word and deed

3. **Anagogical**: this word comes from the Gk. **Anagoge**, which literally means "future." Viewing realities with eternal significance. This sense is the sense where we reflect into what we were made for.

- IV. The Unity of Sacred Scripture and Liturgy:** The road to Emmaeus reveals an ancient truth concerning the unveiling of truth, that Scripture is about and for Liturgy as Liturgy is about and for Scripture. Liturgy and scripture possess an intrinsic unity bound by the Spirit.
- A. Scripture is concerned about conveying the stuff of Liturgy. Stages of salvation history that are caught up in the liturgical current. One OT scholar noted the OT is simply about Israel, God's liturgical people (not just kid stories)
1. Adam...Creation establishes the sabbatical pattern (Gen.2:3).
***consult *Word of the Week* on **Covenant** for significance of the number 7
 2. Cain and Abel...ritual offering of the first fruits of their labor (Gen.4:3-5).
 3. Noah...Flood...seven pair of clean animals for holocaust (Gen.8:20)
 4. Abraham...ritual precision of sacrifice (Gen.22)
 5. Jacob...Altar for anointing (Gen.28:18)
 6. Moses...Exodus and the "liturgical procession" into worship.
 7. Joshua...Promised Land and the conquering of Jericho follows suit to the sabbatical pattern of worship (Jos.6)
 8. David...Kingdom of David...establishment of the Passover liturgy (1 Chr.23-25; 2 Chr. 30, 35). Recount his psalms that in their primacy our liturgical hymns sung to the Lord according to the Liturgical celebration.
 9. NT is saturated with the Israelite heritage...among the many rich fulfillments of Christ himself as the "new liturgy", he was obedient to the ritual laws as a faithful Jew...consider his trips to Jerusalem and the synagogues (explicating Scriptures), praying ancient prayers and even going under ritual bathing in the Jordan.
- B. Liturgy brings form to Sacred Scripture. The canon of Sacred Scripture itself was derived out of the earliest liturgical tradition. Simply, the Bible was made for liturgical use.
"Scripture are liturgical documents of the OT and NT"—Carroll Stuhlmueller
1. The scriptural canon was enacted as a "rule for liturgy". Consider that the very word canon, derived from the Greek *kanon*, means "measuring stick". The earliest Christian use of this word described the official lists that determined a documents worth for public worship.
 - a. It was not the Church councils that were the final determining factor of the canon as much as it was the council's obedience to the living and breathing spirit of truth that was being actualized on the altar since the earliest Christian communities. Scripture canonizes liturgy as liturgy canonizes Scripture
 - b. This is an example of how liturgy is the core breath of the living Sacred Tradition.
 2. The Spirit of Sacred Scripture is intended to carry us into the liturgical spirit that quintessentially is defined by the worship of the Jewish and Christian communities.
- V. Liturgy as Catechism:** What the CCC is for Catholics the ancient Liturgy was for ancient Judaism. All the inherent truth of Judaism was contained within their celebration of feast days. In fact, Judaism is one of the few faiths period that is without a catechism.
- A. The great Rabbi Hirsch (1800's) was once asked: "Why don't you have a CCC?" his response was "our calendar is our Catechism". The catechism of the Jew consists in his calendar where God inscribes timeless truths in days/weeks/months/years...they become heralds of covenant truth.
1. In a more than similar way, our own Catholic liturgical calendar is a catechism not written on pages but written in days/weeks/months/years...timeless truths carved in the time signature of our calendar.