

Catechism Course 2021

Clondalkin

Session #2

As mentioned last week...

We are made for God, he is the fulfilment of all our desires. But how do we come to know him?

1. God reveals himself to us in the natural world....we can know God through reason
But reason is insufficient to know who God is, and his plan for mankind.

2. Therefore, God reveals himself, firstly and imperfectly to the Hebrew prophets, then he reveals himself more fully in Jesus Christ.....we receive this knowledge through faith.

The Revelation of Jesus Christ comes to us from the Church established by Jesus. The Church communicates this Revelation through Sacred Tradition and Sacred Liturgy.

Sacred Scripture

Jesus is the Word of God, which all the words of scripture point to.

‘In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God.’
(John 1)

The Word is not a dead word, but a living and incarnate Word.

In the books of Sacred Scripture, God talks to his people.

God inspired the writers of sacred scripture. God is the author, and those who wrote Scripture were also true authors.

Sacred Scripture teaches without error the truth God wished to reveal: the truth is who God is (although we can never know this fully), and his plan for our salvation.

There is both a literal and spiritual meaning to Scripture verses: sometimes we take both the literal and spiritual together, sometimes only the spiritual. The Church has never promoted a completely literalist reading of the Sacred Scripture.

The Bible is a composite work...It was originally not a single book, but many different writings of different genres brought together.

The canon of Scripture: Guided by the Holy Spirit, the Church decided which writings were included, and which excluded, from Sacred Scripture in the first few centuries of the Church.

The Old Testament is to be read in light of the New Testament. There is much in it that is ‘imperfect’ and difficult for us to accept as Christians, yet we cannot understand who Christ is without understanding the Old Testament.

The Old Testament is traditionally divided into

1. **The Torah/Pentateuch** (the first five books of the Bible: the prehistory of Israel)
2. **Historical Books** (dealing with the history of Israel, egs, Kings, Chronicles)
3. **The Prophets** (such as Isaiah, Jeremiah)
4. **Wisdom Literature** (such as the Psalms, Proverbs, Wisdom)

The New Testament is the ‘ultimate truth of God’s Revelation. Its central object is Jesus Christ.

1. The **four Gospels** are the heart of the New Testament.
2. **The Acts of the Apostles** show the early church after death of Jesus
3. **Pauline Letters** (& Hebrews)
4. **Catholic Letters**
5. **Book of Revelation**

At Mass the Gospel reading is the most important.

The Gospel is preceded by a reading from one of the New Testament Letters, a psalm, and on Sunday an Old Testament reading, which all explain and expand upon the message of the Gospel.

‘All faithful are exhorted to read Scripture:

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

Scripture is not just to be read but prayed with. For introduction to to praying with scripture (lectio divina) see the resources/videos regularly put on the parish facebook page. Also www.loyolapress.com/catholic-resources/prayer/personal-prayer-life/different-ways-to-pray/lectio-divina/. Also see www.sacredspace.ie/

Further resources:

-Catechism Chapter 2, Article 3

-*Dei verbum* (this Vatican II document explains the Church’s understanding on Revelation and Scripture. Not too long and worth reading. Available on Vatican website.

-BibleDex.com: Very short, simple videos about each book in the Bible.

-BibleProject: A youtube channel that has beautifully illustrated explanations of Biblical books.

-Lawrence Boadt, *Reading the Old Testament*. This book gives a detailed overview of the OT.

-Joseph Kelly, *An Introduction to the New Testament for Catholics*.