

**Holy Trinity Catholic Church**  
**RCIA Class Transcript**  
**Divine Revelation**  
**Lecturer: Father Francis Peffley**  
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Tonight's topic is Divine Revelation – how God reveals Himself to us. The ultimate revelation of God to us is with His Son, Jesus Christ, who is really the incarnation of God's revelation. But there is quite a bit of *Pre-Christian* revelation that God gives us in humanity. First of all, we talked last time about how we can come to know God through the light of natural reason, by looking at the beauty of the created universe, and seeing nature, and seeing how there must be an Intelligent Creator. That's through natural reason. But, Divine Revelation is God Himself sort of breaking into this world and revealing Himself to us, so it's when He reveals Himself to us supernaturally. We can come to know God through our conscience, and the light of natural reason; but tonight we'll talk about how God reveals Himself to us supernaturally, because there are many truths of our Faith that could not be known from the light of natural reason. One of them we talked about was the Trinity. So, we never could have figured out on our own that God is actually three Divine Persons, Father, Son, and Holy Spirit, and yet, there's only One God. We could not have come to that knowledge - God had to reveal that to us. Another thing would be the Angels; we would not have figured out that God has created Angels. He had to reveal that to us.

God began revealing truths to the human race all the way back at the time of our first parents, Adam and Eve. There's something that we call *public revelation*. Public revelation is the official revealing of God to us, beginning with Adam and Eve, and ending at the death of the last Apostle, who was St. John the Evangelist, who died about the year 100 AD. All public revelation occurred during that time period from the existence of our first parents, and ended with the death of John the Apostle, John the Evangelist. Public revelation is different from *private revelations*. You might have heard of private revelations where sometimes the Blessed Mother appears to the children of Fatima, or where Jesus appeared to St. Margaret Mary, and manifested the Sacred Heart. Many of the saints have appeared over the years to people. Those are all private revelations. Those are not necessary for our salvation. However, public revelation ended with the death of the last Apostle. The Church is not inventing any new doctrines or any new teachings. It was all revealed by God and ended during the Apostolic Age.

The Pre-Christian revelation can be divided up into three sections, what's called *Primitive*. Primitive revelation is the revelation God made to Adam and Eve. And then there's *Patriarchal*. Patriarchal revelation is how God revealed Himself to the patriarchs, namely Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, and all the great figures of the Old Testament. And then there's *Mosaic* revelation, how God revealed Himself to Moses and the prophets. God began by speaking to Adam and Eve in

the Garden of Paradise. He continued to speak to Abraham, to know him, and then He sent Moses to the Israelites. All of this was what we call Pre-Christian or *Old Testament* revelation.

But then, of course, we come to the fullness of God's revelation, which is *Christian* revelation, which came because God sent His Son into the world, and Jesus is the revelation of God the Father. And then the Lord taught the Apostles, and He said, "Go out and preach the Gospel until the end of time." He said, "Go therefore, and make disciples of all the nations." So Divine Revelation has God as its author, as its origin. And God can neither deceive nor be deceived. We know that what He reveals through the Old Testament, or through Christ, is true.

There are two legs of Divine Revelation, and that is, first of all *Scripture*, and *Sacred Tradition*. Scripture comes from the Latin word which means "the writings." And Tradition comes from the Latin word which means "what is passed down" or "what is handed on." Tradition is something that's handed on. You might have Christmas traditions, and Halloween traditions; something that is handed down. Scripture here is referring to the written Word of God; Sacred Tradition, to the spoken Word of God. Both of these are what's called the two channels of Divine Revelation to this world, the two legs of Divine Revelation. Sacred Tradition is with a capital T. It's not traditions of men that Jesus condemned in the New Testament. Sacred Tradition is the teachings (the verbal, the oral teachings) that have come down to us from the time of the Apostles.

There are some good passages that talk about this in Sacred Scripture. St. Paul tells people, "To hold fast to the teachings that you have learned, whether by word, or by letter." This is in his letter Second Thessalonians, Chapter two, Verse 15. Now this is a very important teaching, because it is something that would show the difference between Catholic teaching and Protestant teaching; because one of the basis for the Protestant Reformation was their Doctrine called *Sola Scriptura*. Have all of you heard of that? *Sola*, meaning alone, and *Scriptura* – Scripture alone. This is one of the cries of Martin Luther, saying that we don't need the Church anymore; all we have is the Bible, all we need is the Bible. That's why this is a very important teaching tonight, to show why we believe in both Sacred Scripture and Sacred Tradition. *Sola Scriptura* was Martin Luther's position that you don't need the Church, you don't need anything. All you need is the Bible. And if you have the Bible, then you have everything. We'll show, as we go on tonight, how there is actually more than just the Bible, because remember, Jesus didn't come to give us the Bible. He came to establish His Church. The Church is what gives us the seven sacraments, and the Bible, and the teachings of Christ.

One of the passages that actually refutes *Sola Scriptura* in the Bible (and nowhere in the Bible does the Bible itself teach that Scripture alone has all that is truly necessary for salvation) is this quote, in Second Thessalonians, St. Paul told the Thessalonians, "Hold to the teachings you have learned, whether by

word” (which is Sacred Tradition), “or by letter” (which is Scripture). Also, I’d recommend reading the Gospel of John, Chapter 21, Verse 25. St. John says, “There are, however, many other things that Jesus did. If every one of these should be written down, not even the world itself, I think, could hold the books that would have to be written.” In other words, John is saying that Jesus said and did a whole lot more than what’s written in the Bible. St. John says that he doesn’t think the world could contain all the books it would take to write down everything that Jesus did and said. So not everything Jesus did and said is written down in Scripture. In fact, before even the Scriptures were written, there was the Sacred Tradition – the passing on of the truths that Jesus taught the Apostles. Jesus died roughly about the year 33, and then rose, and then ascended to Heaven; but the first books of the New Testament weren’t written until the 40’s, 50’s, 60’s, and some as late as the 90’s. You have this whole period between the life of Christ and the times that the Bible was written down, and during this time we refer to the Sacred Tradition, the passing on of the faith through the spoken word.

Now what we should do first, I think, is really focus upon and start talking about Sacred Scripture, and the number of books that we have in the Bible. Then we’ll talk about Sacred Tradition. We will actually spend some time talking too about the difference between the Catholic Bible and the Protestant Bible, because there are some differences. The New Testament is identical. Both the Catholic and the Protestant New Testament have 27 books. The difference, though, is that in the Old Testament, we have the 46 books of the Old Testament, whereas, the Protestants have, I believe, it’s 38, if I’m not mistaken. There are seven books that we have in the Old Testament that the Protestant Bibles will not have. And again, we’ll go into that in a little bit to show why there’s a difference in that.

With Sacred Scripture, the important thing to remember about the Bible itself is that it is the Word of God. We have great reverence and respect as Catholics for the Sacred Scriptures. We know that it is inspired by God, and so the primary author of Scripture is God Himself - even though He used human beings to write it down. If you were asked the question, “Who is the primary author of Sacred Scripture?” the answer is God - that God inspired the Old Testament and the New Testament writers to write down these works. The Holy Spirit inspired Sacred Scripture. And all together, we have the books of the Old Testament and the books of the New Testament that combine into one book, which we call the Bible. This comes from the Latin word *biblia*, which means a collection of books, or a library. So, when you have the Bible, actually you have the whole library of all those books put together.

These books were written over the course of 1300 years, which is really the time of Moses, which was about 1200 BC, to the time of St. John the Evangelist. The Bible was written in mostly three different languages: Hebrew, Aramaic, and Greek (and again, covering the period of 1300 years.) The writers were inspired by God, under the influence of the Holy Spirit. Their mind was enlightened, and

their will was moved to write what He wished. It is sort of mysterious how the writers of Scripture remained as free instruments. Their will was not forced in any way. They still had their free will. The writers still used their own styles. And yet, they were God's instruments, and God directed them, and preserved them from writing error.

Always remember that God is the primary author of Sacred Scripture. Because the Bible is the Word of God, we owe it the greatest reverence and respect. Even in courtrooms today, often times they ask you to place your hand upon the Bible (upon the Word of God). Solemn oaths are taken by placing your hand on the Bible. At Mass, when the Gospel is read, we all stand out of respect for the Word of God. And the Bible has been read in every Catholic Mass for the last 2000 years (passages of Sacred Scripture). Often times, during processions at Mass, the deacon (if you have a deacon) will carry in the Gospel or the Bible. And again, it shows our reverence. Often times, we incense it with the beautiful incense to show our respect and reverence for the Holy Word of God. We've had many Catholics over the years that were martyred, because they were safeguarding Sacred Scripture. Especially, this happened in the early Church where the Roman government was trying to burn and destroy copies of Sacred Scripture, and many Christians gave their lives to preserve the Word of God.

What's also interesting, when we look at the Bible, is that we see that it does give us reliable historical records; that over the years, science has come, in their excavations, to reaffirm things that are present in Scripture. One event would be the fall of Jericho. They've done excavations in that part of the world (archeological digs), and they've found ruins of the walls of Jericho, which confirms what the Bible talked about. There's also the destruction of Sodom and Gomorrah, which can be shown through archeology. And also the Great Flood. What's interesting is that even in some other ancient writings, some ancient Babylonian writings; it also talks about a flood. So, these things like the flood are even mentioned in other Assyrian and Babylonian writings, and not just found in Scripture. These things are very interesting when you read the history of the Bible, and can show even historically that these things did happen.

Now one of the greatest events in the history of the Bible was about St. Jerome. St. Jerome was commissioned by Pope Damasus. St. Jerome was the one who translated the Scriptures into the Latin, to get it into the language of the people. At the time, the Old Testament was in Hebrew, and the New Testament was in Greek. It's important to remember that the Old Testament was largely written in Hebrew, and the New Testament was largely written in Greek. But then, about the year 400, the pope wanted the Bible to be brought into the language of the people. And so he commissioned St. Jerome, and it took about 35 years to translate the entire Bible into Latin. This translation is called the *Vulgate*. You might have heard of this translation, the Vulgate. It comes from the Latin word meaning the language of the people, or the common language. We get the word "vulgar" from this word. It doesn't mean bad, it just means common language.

Unfortunately, it has different connotations today, if somebody speaks in a vulgar way. But originally it meant the common tongue, the language of the people. So this was the great work of St. Jerome. He actually moved from Rome to the Holy Land, and he went to Bethlehem. He lived in a cave, and spent this time in prayer, and penance, and fasting. He moved to Bethlehem so he could work with the rabbis (the ancient rabbis) that knew the original languages. There he made his translation of the Vulgate, which is the official translation of the Church.

(A question). Yes, we'll get into the Septuagint. That is a translation made by the 70 Scholars. We will talk about that coming up in a few minutes. That's great.

(A question). This would be accepted in the Protestant Church as well, because they realize that when they study Scripture, that they got the gift of the Bible from the Catholic Church, because we were around from the beginning. What they will say is that it was obviously St. Jerome who translated it into Latin. And then, at the time of the Reformation, then they translated it into other languages, like German, or other languages.

But it's an interesting point, if you look at one of your handouts. This might be actually a good time to talk about this. Take a look at this one called "The Making of the New Testament – The Catholic Church, Mother of the Bible." See here, we have the life of Christ, from basically one AD to 33 AD, even though Jesus was actually born between four and six BC, most likely, according to most modern scholarship. So, when the Lord died and rose from the dead, He ascended into Heaven, but he left on earth a Church. Remember, Jesus came to establish His Church. Then the Church is what wrote the New Testament, and then approved the books of the Old Testament. Let's say Jesus died around the year 33, rose, and ascended into Heaven. The first books of the New Testament weren't written until between the year 42 and 97. You have several decades that the Church was preaching the Gospel and teaching, before even a word of the New Testament was written down. The Epistles and the Gospels were written, again between the years 42 to about the year 100. And then, between the year 100 and 393, there were several Gospels that were out there sort of floating around.

In fact, there were about 50 Gospels that people could have been reading at the time. The unfortunate thing was that only four of them were authentically the inspired Word of God (Matthew, Mark, Luke, and John). So the Church had to examine all these writings, like the Didache, or the Shepherd of Hermas, or the letters of St. Ignatius of Antioch, or St. Clement of Alexandria. The Church had to determine which of these were truly the inspired Word of God. The Church, in the year 393, at the Council of Hippo, which is in northern Africa, came up with the Canon, which means a measuring rod. It's a Hebrew word meaning a measuring rod, or a list of inspired books. The Church is the one who determined that these were the four Gospels (Matthew, Mark, Luke, and John) were the only four inspired by the Holy Spirit. The New Testament books were determined at that time, and then added to the Old Testament Canon that the Church had as

well. In the year 397 at the Council of Carthage, the Church again solemnly declared at the Council of Carthage, again in northern Africa, these lists of books. Even the Protestant scholars would accept this as historical data, that in the early Church there were many writings. Some of them were authentic, some of them were fraudulent, and some of them were obviously not true, authentic writings. It was the Church that had to determine this, and it did this at Councils, when all the bishops of the Church would gather together, and then they would make their decision (yes, this is a list of truly inspired books).

The next major event was in 1450, the invention of the printing press. The very first book ever printed on the printing press was the Catholic version of the Bible, by Gutenberg, who himself was a Catholic. As it says here, in the right-hand column, 626 Catholic editions were printed in all languages. Realize the Church was not trying to keep the Bible away from the people; the Church was trying to get the Bible into the language of the people. That's why the pope commissioned St. Jerome to translate it into Latin. Then, as time went by, the Church said translate it into German, into Italian, into the other languages. It says 17 editions were made in Germany before Luther's translation. See, this can hopefully clear up some misunderstandings. About a year ago that movie "Luther" came out. I don't know if any of you got to see the movie called "Luther." It didn't have much showings in this area, but I went to see it. One of the things it was saying was that it was Martin Luther who made the very first translation of the Bible into German. And once the people in Germany read this, they rejected the Catholic Church and said *Sola Scriptura* (all we need is the Bible). Well, the only problem is that there were already translations in German even before Luther was born. Martin Luther was not the first one to translate it into German. It says here there were nine editions even before Luther was born. Then we have the *Douay-Rheims* translation, and then the *King James Version* in 1611. So the official Catholic version is the *Douay-Rheims*. There are many other versions, and the revised Catholic version as well.

The other handout that I think will be helpful is the one called "Where We Got the Bible." This is a very good article that we came across. It's put out by St. Joseph's Radio out in California. And it will sort of review what we covered a little bit tonight, that the word Bible means a library of books; it was written over 1,300 years. It talks about how the Bible was compiled. It talks here in the first paragraph of St. Jerome, who brought about the Vulgate. And then, it was really the monks in the monasteries that hand-copied the Scriptures over the centuries. So we owe a great debt of gratitude to the Benedictine monks, and to the Augustinians, and other orders that were around. They were the ones, up until the printing press in the 1450's that made copies of the Scriptures. And sometimes it would take a monk a lifetime of 10, 20, 30 years just to make one hand copy of Scripture. These books were incredibly valuable. Sometimes you'll hear anti-Catholics say, "Well, the Church tried to keep the Bible away from the people, and they had them chained in the monasteries." Now, that's a true statement. They were chained, but when you spent 30 years of your life making a

hand copy of Scripture, you didn't want anybody to steal it, because these were incredibly valuable. If they were chained in the monastery, it was for the purpose of having them available for the people, and not that they were trying to keep them away from the people. A good analogy would be when you go to a phone booth, the reason why they have that phone book chained inside that phone booth is not to keep it away from you, but to make sure nobody runs off with it, so it's available to you. That little pen at the bank? Same reason – how they have that chain on the pen at the bank, it's that idea. So that's something to keep in mind. Sometimes you will hear people say that. Well, the monks were the ones who translated and hand-copied these writings up until the invention of the printing press. Some of these were so beautiful. They had calligraphy and just great works of art. It says here that there were over 600 Catholic Bible editions, 200 in the vernacular (the word *vernacular* means the common language of the people) before the first Protestant version appeared. The first book ever printed was a Catholic Gutenberg Bible, in 1456.

Now these original manuscripts, the ones written by hand of course, were just incredibly valuable. And then it talks about a very interesting point here. If you look at section number five, or page five on the handout, sometimes people will say, "Well, did the Catholic Church ever ban certain Bibles or burn certain Bibles?" And of course the answer is yes, because some of them contained errors (and some of them grave errors) and mistakes. You'll see a list of some of them. For example, one of them was called the Wicked Bible, because instead of saying, "Thou *shalt not* commit adultery," it said, "Thou *shalt* commit adultery." Obviously, you wouldn't want that Bible out there for people to follow that. The next one talks about instead of, "Let the children first be filled," like filled with bread, or filled with food; it said, "Let the children first be killed." You can understand why some of these Bibles had to be done away with. They didn't have recycling plants, like we do today. They couldn't get these things recycled, so they would want them destroyed or burned. So, again, sometimes you'll hear sort of anti-Catholic attacks, like the Church was trying to keep the Bible away from the people. Obviously, was not the case. It was trying to protect. Remember, the Church is a good mother, and any good mother does not want her children reading immoral things or bad things. You want your child reading good, wholesome things that will help you get to Heaven. That's why the Church had to do that on some occasions. You can just read the rest of that on your own. There are a lot of good points.

I think the main thing to remember about Sacred Scripture is that we revere it, we love it – it's the inspired Word of God. Realize where the Bible came from. The Bible was not written by Christ. In fact, Jesus only wrote one thing in His life, according to the Bible (and that was in the sand, which is not a very permanent place). Sometimes people say, "Well, why didn't Jesus write anything?" And I think one author put it very well. He said, "Jesus didn't really want people to focus on His writings, like we do with Shakespeare, where we really don't study the man Shakespeare, we study his writings. Because Jesus didn't write

anything, we focus on the person of Christ, as our Lord and Savior, as the Son of God." We don't focus on His writings, because He didn't leave us anything. He left us the Church. He left us the seven sacraments. He left us Himself. So, we as Christians focus on the person of Christ.

Another way to look at it is, with the Scripture, we could ask ourselves, "What came first, the Bible or the Church?" That'd be like asking the question, "What came first, the Founding Fathers of our country, or the Constitution?" And of course, the Founding Fathers have to be there first before the Constitution was written. It's the same thing with the New Testament. Realize that the Church is the author and the mother of the New Testament. Sometimes people will say, "Well, I have my Bible, that's all I need." Well, again, where did the Bible come from? It didn't fall down out of the sky from Heaven, in the year 1611, in the King James translation. It actually came from other translations, all the way back to what was approved by the Church, back in the 300's. Nowhere does the Bible tell us what books are in the Bible. It had to be the Church that determined the *Canon*, or the list of inspired books. If somebody were to reject the authority of the Catholic Church, they would have to reject the authority of the Bible. Because, where does the Bible come from? How do we know that the Bible is the inspired Word of God? The answer is that the Church tells us that these books are the inspired Word of God. By rejecting the Church, really a person would have to reject Sacred Scripture as well. The index of what books are in the Bible is not listed in the Bible. Nowhere in the Bible does it say that these are all the books that are the inspired Word of God. And so, that's another way to prove that *Sola Scriptura* is incorrect, because how do we know? The Bible never says that these are the inspired Word of God. You need an outside source, to tell you which books are the inspired Word of God, and which ones aren't.

As I mentioned, in the early days of Christianity, there were 50 Gospels. There was the Gospel of Thomas, the Gospel of Peter, the Acts of Pontius Pilate, and there were many other writings. The Church had to determine that certain ones were the inspired Word of God, and which ones weren't. Everything does hinge back upon the fact that Jesus Christ founded His Church, and gave the Holy Spirit to guide and protect the Church, though the Church determined which books were in the Bible (since the Bible itself doesn't tell us which books are part of the inspired Word of God).

We'll finish up tonight by covering the rest of the topics under Divine Revelation. Before I do that, I want to draw your attention to some of the handouts. This one here is, I guess, what we would call almost like a cheat sheet, which has this topic that you might be interested in trying to find in the Bible. It has all the Scripture quotes that relate to that topic, which I think would be very helpful to you if you wanted to look up the Eucharist, the Pope, the Divinity of Christ, the Second Coming of Christ, Mary, the Saints, Heaven, Hell, Purgatory, the teachings on Matrimony, and other teachings. I think this would be a very helpful handout. I'd also recommend you reading this one (it's very short) called "Is the

Bible a Catholic Book” which again goes through some of those historical documents we had talked about.

The other handout I hope you all got is called “The Bible Timeline.” This was developed by a couple of converts from Protestantism to Catholicism. They wanted to try to help Catholics read the Bible more, because as you know, the Protestants really do a phenomenal job in preaching the Word of God and in encouraging their people to read the Bible (and that’s something we can definitely learn from). Obviously, nowadays the Church has Bible studies, and we have a lot of promotion of the Word of God, but the Protestants have been very good about doing that all these years. In most of the Protestant Churches, they have better Bible studies than we have in our Churches, and this was devised by some converts that were Protestant who became Catholic, trying to get the Catholics to read the Bible more.

They divided up the Bible up into 12 periods: The Early World, The Patriarchs, Israel and Egypt, Conquest of Canaan, The Judges, United Kingdom, Divided Kingdom, The Exiles, The Return, The Maccabean Revolt, Jesus the Messiah, and The Church. What they’re recommending is that you can actually read the Bible through in a narrative, chronologically, and reading the Bible history. There are many books in the Bible that are just giving advice and wisdom. But if you just want to read the storyline, they recommend using this. You can read the Bible in a full year just by reading four chapters a day. If you do that, you can actually read the narrative, from the book of Genesis to the Acts of the Apostles. This is a great way to do it. I really recommend it. And you see how they divided it up, the outline of the Bible periods.

This is really a summary of the entire Old Testament, beginning with the history of the early world, approximately 2000 BC, when it’s referring to the fall of Adam and Eve, and then Cain killing Abel, the Flood, the Tower of Babel. Then there’s the period of the Patriarchs: of Abraham, and Isaac, and Jacob, and Joseph, from about 2000 to 1600 BC. Then the time that the Israelites spent in Egypt in slavery, then Moses and the Passover, and the covenant on Mt. Sinai. Then, the Conquest of Canaan, from 1280 to 1220 BC. Then, the death of Moses, Joshua, the time of the Judges, Debra, Gideon, Samson, all those stories, from about 1220 to 1050 BC. Then, the United Kingdom, the story of King Saul, David and Goliath, that was about 1000 BC. The Divided Kingdom, between the Northern Kingdom and the Southern Kingdom, 930 to 722 BC. The Dark Days, and then The Exile, when the Israelites were exiled from their native land, 722 to 538, and then they returned to Jerusalem. And Queen Esther and those stories, up until 530 BC. Then, the Maccabean Revolt, from 175 to 63 BC, and then the Time of Christ, zero to 33 AD, and then the Church, from 33 to 63. That’s what the Bible covers, from approximately 2000 BC to 63 AD. So, it’s really an amazing gift that these former Protestant ministers have given to the Church, so that we can now read the chronological books of Bible history. If you just want to get the story line, over here on the very last page, if you hold it sideways, you’ll see that if you just

read these 14 books, you can get the whole story line of the Bible: Genesis, Exodus, Numbers, Joshua, Judges, Samuel 1 and 2, Kings 1 and 2, Ezra, Nehemiah, Maccabees, the Gospel of Luke, and the Acts of the Apostles. And that will give you the full story line from Adam and Eve up until Pentecost. It's a great way to read the Bible. A lot of people start out when they don't have something like this, and they say, "I'm going to read the whole Bible this year." They start out and read Genesis, and Exodus, and then they sort of get bogged down in Deuteronomy and other books, and they never get through the Bible. But, if you stick with these 14 books out of the 73, you can get the whole storyline. It makes it very interesting, with very fascinating accounts.

The other topics that we want to conclude with tonight, I want to share a little bit more with you about, well, just again, in looking over the 46 books of the Old Testament, all of us are familiar with them, like 21 of them are what's called Historical books, relating to the earliest ages of the world, the history of the Jews, and the five books of Moses, and the four books of Kings. Then you have what's called the seven Doctrinal books, which are the words of advice, and the maxims and prayers, such as the Psalms, and the book of Proverbs. And then, the 18 Prophetic books, where we have the four great prophets, and the 12 lesser prophets, such books as Isaiah, Jeremiah, and the book of Daniel.

When we get to the New Testament, there are 27 books, four Gospels (Matthew, Mark, Luke and John), the Acts of the Apostles, 21 Epistles written by St. Paul, St. Peter, St. James, St. John, and St. Jude, and then the book of Revelation, written by St. John.

Let me spend a moment more on Sacred Tradition, because this is something that some people get confused about. As I mentioned, Divine Revelation comes to us in two ways, through Sacred Scripture, but also through Sacred Tradition. And, in the wide sense, Sacred Tradition embraces the whole teaching of the Church, which includes the Bible, since it is only from the Church that we have the Bible. In the stricter sense, Sacred Tradition includes what was handed down orally, or verbally, from the Apostles. The Apostles themselves say that there is much that they have delivered to the faithful by word of mouth. This is found in Second John, Chapter 12, first Corinthians Chapter 11, Verse 2. Among many examples of the truths and Tradition not clearly manifested in Scripture, are the exact number of the sacraments, the time and institution of some of the sacraments, the books themselves that make up the Bible, baptizing babies, observing Sunday as the Lord's Day, the Trinity, the Assumption of the Blessed Mother, and Mary's Immaculate Conception. Those are just some of the things that are clearly talked about in Sacred Tradition that we have from ancient Church documents that are not specifically referred to, or very clearly referred to, in the Bible. And that's maybe some of the things that could separate the Catholic Church from some of the Protestant Churches. But, if you go by Scripture alone, some of these teachings aren't as clear in the Scripture.

But when you look into the ancient Church writings, like the writings of the Church Fathers, you'll see these clearly talked about as practices that existed in the early Church. For example, keeping Sunday as the Lord's Day; now, all Christian Churches do that, but where do we get that Tradition of worshiping God on Sunday, instead of on Saturday? Because, as you know, to the Jews, the Sabbath is Saturday. Why is it that we actually all go to Church on Sundays, even in the Protestant Churches? Well, it's because of the Tradition from the early Church. Another one is the Trinity. Like, you'll nowhere find the word Trinity anywhere in the Bible, yet all Christians believe in the Trinity. Again, it's part of the ancient writings, of the early Church Fathers. Mary's Assumption is very clearly talked about in some of the ancient writings that Mary was taken up into Heaven, body and soul, at the end of her earthly life. Or, her Immaculate Conception, for example, or even the number of books that are in the Bible, and which books make up the Bible. That's part of the Sacred Tradition. All the truths of Divine Tradition now have found their way into books. From the first Christian centuries, the practices and Doctrines of Tradition were preserved by saintly teachers whom we called the *Fathers of the Church*. The most important Fathers of the Church of the first six centuries, are St. Clement of Rome, who died in the year 99 AD, St. Ignatius of Antioch, who died in 107, St. Polycarp, who died in 155, St. Justin Martyr, St. Irenaeus, St. Cyprian; those are some of the major Fathers of the Church.

Now besides the writings of the Fathers of the Church, we also have the writings of the *Doctors of the Church*. The word Doctor comes from the Latin word meaning teacher. So, we have ancient Doctors of the Church as well. And, currently in the Church, there are about 33 or 34 Doctors of the Church. These were Church writers who were known for their learning, and their holiness of life. To become a Doctor of the Church, you had to write extensively about theology. You would also have to be a saint to be considered one of the Doctors of the Church. Now, among these would be St. Hilary, St. Athanasius, St. Ephrem, St. Basil the Great, St. Cyril of Jerusalem, St. Gregory Nazianzus, St. Ambrose, St. John Chrysostom, St. Jerome, St. Augustine, and the list goes on and on – St. Cyril of Alexandria, St. Peter Chrysologus, St. Leo the Great, Pope Gregory the Great. These were what we called the ancient Fathers and Doctors of the Church.

So again, some of the reasons why we know that there is a Sacred Tradition, that not everything found its way into the Bible, is first of all, as I mentioned, there are several years, even a decade or two that passed, before any of the Gospels were written down. In the meantime, the Christians were preaching, and baptizing, and having the Mass, having the Eucharist. They were living their Faith; they were practicing the faith even before a word of the Bible was written down. Sacred Tradition is actually older than the New Testament. The Gospel of John and the Book of Revelation were probably written between the years 90 and 100 AD, and yet the Church was existing from 33 AD. Jesus, actually, when he told the Apostles, He didn't say, "Go out and write a book," He said, "Go out and preach

the Gospel to every creature, baptize them in the Name of the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit.”

Every single doctrine that the Church teaches comes directly from the Apostles. The Church is not inventing any new doctrines. Any of the things that we believe as Catholics today, on these issues of Faith and Morals, were found in seed form in the early days of Christianity. Things like the Divinity of Christ, the Resurrection, the Seven Sacraments. Even though we understand a lot more about them now, these teachings began in the early Church. There has been development of doctrine, but there's not a change in doctrine. We can use the example that a young boy becomes a man, but he's still the same person. The seedling, or the acorn, becomes the tree, but still the same in essence. Many of these doctrines that the early Christians only understood in seed form, we know a lot more about. It was revealed to them that yes, God is a Trinity (Father, Son and Holy Spirit). We know a whole lot more about the Trinity now than the early Christians did in the year 100. It's the same doctrine, the same teaching; but it's been unfolded, and we learn more about it. Another analogy is when you come in from the outside sunlight, you come into a dark room, and it takes a while for your eyes to adjust. Then you make out the table, and you make out the chair. Those pieces of furniture are there already, but it's just that we get more and more accustomed to be able to see them in more detail. It's the same thing with the doctrines of the Church. The more time goes by, we can reflect upon these doctrines and understand them a lot more.

Let me now go into the seven books that are found in the Catholic Bible that are not found in the Protestant version of the Bible. That would be found on this handout called “The Canon of the Bible.” Actually, before I mention that, in my notes I have a comment here about scriptural interpretation. How do we interpret the teachings of Scripture? The Bible itself says that there are some passages that are difficult to interpret. For example, St. Paul has many writings in the New Testament. In one of St. Peter's letters, referring to the Epistles of Paul, he says that, “they contain certain things difficult to understand, which the unlearned and the unstable distort, just as they do the rest of Scripture, to their own destruction.” That's found in the Second Letter of Peter, Chapter 3, Verse 16. Not everything in the Bible is easy to interpret or to understand. Now, a proof of that is that currently, in America today there are 30,000 different Christian denominations. Did you know that? 30,000 different denominations have broken off of the Catholic Church. And most of them claim to believe in *Sola Scriptura*, the Bible alone. What happens when you have personal or private interpretation of Scripture is that it leads to the breakdown of the one true faith, and then you have splintered groups that break off, and each one will hold different things. The Mormons believe one way of interpreting; the Jehovah Witnesses another. The Presbyterians, Lutherans, Methodists, Episcopalians, and now in America we have 25,000 to 30,000 different denominations. What happens with personal or private interpretation is that people will take things maybe out of context, and they'll start their own religion. For example, in some of the early days of

Protestantism, some of them said, "Yes, it's okay to baptize babies." Others said, "No, you have to wait until they're old enough to make their own decision." Well, after they argued, they just decided to split, and they each started their own denomination.

Where do we get our interpretation of Scripture? We get it from the Church. Please remember, the Church was founded by Christ. It was here before the New Testament. It interprets the Bible for us. It's the Mother of the Bible. The Church is guided by the Holy Spirit, to interpret the Bible correctly. A good example of that is, let's say you're using a textbook in a classroom, and you're not sure exactly what the author meant. Well, how do you find out? You go to the author and say, "Can you clarify that?" And the author would say, "Yes, this is what I meant when I wrote this particular passage." That's what we do with the Bible. If there are passages that are difficult to interpret, we go to the Church and see how has the Church always interpreted that passage; and that's, we believe, inspired by the Holy Spirit. Since Christ said to St. Peter, "You are Peter; upon this rock I will build My Church, and the gates of Hell will never prevail against the Church." The Church will never fall into error on issues of Faith and Morals. The living voice of the Church interprets Sacred Scripture and guides us to proper interpretation. I guess another analogy would be in the Constitution – where would we go to get an interpretation? You go to the Supreme Court. You go to a living voice that can make an interpretation of the Constitution. When you have the Bible, where do you go to get the proper interpretation? You go to the Church.

The passage now that we'll just touch on for the last five or ten minutes of class is how we wound up with a different Old Testament than the Protestant Church. This is the very best explanation that I've come across, so I just xeroxed it right for you. Take a look, where it says on page 10, the Old Testament - Why Do Catholic and Protestant Bibles Have a Different Number of Books in the Old Testament? As I mentioned, the New Testament is identical: 27 books. And the answer is that the Protestant Old Testament is based upon the Palestinian or the Hebrew Canon used by the Hebrew-speaking Jews in Palestine. The Catholic Old Testament is based on the Alexandrian, or Greek Canon used by the Greek-speaking Jews throughout the Mediterranean, including Palestine.

Then it goes into the explanation how the city of Alexandria in Egypt had the greatest library, and that there were 70 or 72 scholars that translated the Scripture - the entire Old Testament Hebrew Bible they translated into Greek. The Septuagint is the name of the Greek translation of the Hebrew Old Testament. This Greek translation was very popular, because this was the common language of the people in the Mediterranean at the time of Christ. Hebrew was a dying language, so it's not surprising that the Septuagint was the translation used by Jesus and the New Testament writers. I think that's a very important point; that when Jesus quoted the Old Testament, which He did hundreds of times, He quoted from the Septuagint. There are 300 quotations

from the Old Testament found in the New Testament, and they're all from the Septuagint. Of course, it was always already helpful, because the New Testament was written in Greek, and so by using the Greek Old Testament text, it was easier to quote the Old Testament. The Septuagint contained the 46 books (the Greek translation), whereas the Hebrew Canon only contained 39 books.

Then it says, "Why are there seven fewer books in the Hebrew Canon?" The answer is the Hebrew Canon was established by the Jewish rabbis at Jamnia in Palestine about 100 AD, perhaps in reaction to the Christian Church, which was using the Alexandrian Canon. The Jews at Jamnia rejected seven books from the Hebrew Canon found in the Septuagint. These are the names of the seven books that the Protestant Bibles won't have: the Book of Wisdom, the Book of Sirach, Judith, Baruch, Tobit, and First and Second Maccabees, as well as some portions of Daniel and Esther, chiefly on the grounds that they could not find any Hebrew versions of these books, which the Septuagint supposedly translated into Greek. That was their main argument, that they couldn't find Hebrew versions of these seven books. The Christian Church continued to use the Septuagint. When the Church officially decided which books should comprise the Canon of the Bible, at the Councils of Hippo and Carthage, in 393 and 397, it approved the 46 books of the Alexandrian Canon as the Canon for the Old Testament. For sixteen centuries, the Alexandrian Canon was a matter of uncontested faith.

Each of the seven rejected books is quoted by the early Church Fathers as Scripture, or as inspired right along with the undisputed books. That's an interesting point, that the early Fathers like Ignatius of Antioch, and Clement of Rome, when they quoted, they were using some of these seven books in their writings. Along comes Martin Luther in 1529, and what he did, he decided to go with the Palestinian Canon of 39 books, the Hebrew Old Testament. The reason why he did this, as Luther found justification for removing the seven books from the Bible, in the old concerns of St. Jerome, and the Council of Jamnia, that the Greek books had no Hebrew counterparts. However, the Dead Sea Scrolls were found. Remember, in 1949 or so, the Dead Sea Scrolls were found, and they discovered at Kumran ancient Hebrew copies of some of these disputed seven books, making their rejection unsupported on those grounds. You might remember the story, I think it was 1940 or 1949, there was a shepherd boy near the Dead Sea, and some of his sheep had gone into a cave. He threw a rock in to try to get the sheep out, and he heard a crack. He walked in, and he had broken open one of these ancient jars, which had been sealed. He found all these scrolls, called the Dead Sea Scrolls. You can get them on the Internet, you can buy books now. It was actually good for us, as far as the Catholic Church, was that some of these scrolls contained Hebrew versions of some of these seven books. Since then, many of the Protestant scholars have accepted these seven books as the inspired Word of God as well. In almost all the Protestant Bibles, even though they might not put them in the text of inspired works, at least they put them in the back of the book, saying that these may or may not be the Word of God. The discovery of the Dead Sea Scrolls does support the Catholic

Old Testament Canon of 46 books, rather than the Hebrew Old Testament Canon of 39.

What impacts do these seven books missing have on the Faith? Well, one of the reasons why Luther rejected them is because, in a sense, they are very Catholic books. First and Second Maccabees say that, "It is a just and holy thing to pray for the dead, that they may be loosed of their sins." That is basically our teaching on Purgatory; that our prayers can still help people that have died. The sins that we pray they will be loosed from are not mortal sins; they are smaller sins (imperfections, weaknesses), so we pray that our prayers can still help people when they die. One of the reasons why Luther rejected these seven books is because they contained a lot of Catholic theology, and he was trying to reject that. That's one of the things that these books refer to, namely the importance of praying for the dead. Now, if there's only Heaven and Hell, there's no need to pray for the dead, because if somebody's in Heaven, they don't need prayers; if they're in Hell, they can't be helped by our prayers. The fact that these books talk about praying for the dead would support that there is a third place that people could go besides Heaven or Hell – that our prayers could help them. Besides that, and maybe a few other things, it's nothing else too major.

It's interesting that even Martin Luther admitted that they owed a debt of gratitude to the Catholic Church. If you look on page 12, it says, "Historically, the Catholic Church used her authority to determine which books belonged to the Bible, and to assure us that everything in the Bible is inspired. Apart from the Church, we simply had no way of knowing either truth." Martin Luther himself admits, "We are obliged to yield many things to the Papists," (to the Catholics), "that they possess the Word of God, which we receive from them," (namely, we the Protestants who were protesting); "otherwise we should have known nothing at all about it." So Luther is admitting that Christians owe their Bible to the efforts of the Catholic Church. Now Luther's statements support our argument that without the decisions of the Church, we would not know which books of the Bible are inspired. St. Augustine says, "I would put no faith in the Gospels, unless the authority of the Catholic Church directed me to do so." Augustine recognizes the only way to determine which books are inspired is to accept the teaching authority of the Church.

(A question). Many of these ancient writings are still available. I've read some of them – the Gospel of Thomas, the Gospel of Peter, and the Acts of Pontius Pilate. These early writings, you can still go get copies of them in libraries, or at New Age Bookstores; usually they're the ones that have them. You're right, they'll be things like from The DaVinci Code, that will take some ancient ideas. Some of these ancient writings, they're very interesting to read; but when the Church, when all the Bishops gathered together, in the year 393 and 397 at the Councils of Hippo and Carthage, they looked over all these ancient writings, and by praying to the Holy Spirit, and under the guidance of the Holy Spirit, came up with which books are the inspired Word of God, and which ones were written just

by men, by human beings. Now, you can read, obviously, these other books, but when you read them, you'll notice that they're a lot different than Sacred Scripture. There are passages in the Gospel of Thomas where Jesus turns pigeons into clay, and where He does all sorts of weird things, that obviously are not true. Whereas, when you read the Gospels, these miracles are very believable and authentic. So, it's only by the Holy Spirit that the Church was able to determine that these books were correct or not. Hollywood loves to create things based upon all the Church-rejected books, but that the Vatican has them in their secret archives, which obviously is not the case; because you can go on any web site and you can read what the Gospel of Thomas says. I have copies of these books as well, and they're interesting reading; but you can certainly tell they're not the inspired Word of God.

(A question). Were there any close calls? Yes, there were some books in the early days, like the Didicae, which is the teaching of the Twelve Apostles. That is very interesting, because many early Christians believe that that was part of the authentic Word of God. Now what's interesting is the Didicae condemns things like abortion, infanticide, and suicide, and a lot of our moral teachings today are found in the Didicae, the teaching of the Apostles. That was one of them. Another one was the Shepherd of Hermas; this was one that was sort of a close call. They said, "Is that really the inspired Word of God?" Those are probably the two that come to mind, or the most sort of on the fence.

(A question). Well, there's just a different translation. It's still the same number of books, but just a different translation from the thee's and thou's into more easily understood language. Instead of saying, "Peter, thou art the rock, and vouchsafed to sayeth O Lord," it's just a lot easier to say, "You are Peter, and upon this rock I will build My Church." It's just to put it into the English language instead of the Olde English, put it into more easily understood phraseology for the modern tongue. But the books are still the same (Old Testament books and New Testament books), just different translations. There are many different Catholic translations out there. You can read the *New American Bible*, which is what we have at Mass. There's the *Jerusalem Bible*, the *New English Bible*, the *New International Version*, and really, they say the best Bible is the one that you read – the best translation is the one that you'll pick up and read. And if somebody prefers the old thee's and thou's, that's beautiful for them, but if you prefer a more easily understood translation, then read that one. The main thing is to read your Bible every day. You know, a priest reads the Bible between 30 to 45 minutes every day, because he prays the Liturgy of the Hours. Every priest and every nun reads Scripture that much every day. We should all read the Bible and make use of it.

I know one person, when he gives a wedding gift, he sticks a 100 dollar bill in the back of the Bible, and wraps it up, and the inside cover says "Dear So and So, congratulations on your wedding. It pays to read the Bible." And he'll wait five years, ten years, 20 years for them to say "Oh, I found the 100 dollar bill you put in the Bible."

Because many times people have Bibles, but they're just covering dust; they're just covered in dust. And I remember one priest I know, he said that his mother always hid her extra money in the Bible, knowing that her husband would never find it there. And isn't that the case? That we have this great treasure, this love letter written by God to us; and we have this Bible, and yet so many times it's just covered in dust. What you need to do is wipe the dust off it, and start reading it; and I would recommend start with the Gospels. Start with Matthew, Mark, Luke, or John, and then read the Acts of the Apostles, and after that, then finish the New Testament, and then go back to Genesis, and then read through the Old Testament. That, I think, is the best way to read the Bible, because by the time you get to the Old Testament, you'll already be in the habit of reading the New Testament. Start with the Gospels, they're the easiest. It's the life of Christ, then go to the Letters of St. Paul, and then go back to the Old Testament. Pick whatever translation that you like, the *Jerusalem Bible* is very good, or the *New American, New International Version*, there's so many good versions out there, but the best one is the one that you'll read.