

need of being enlightened by God's revelation, not only about those things that exceed his understanding, but also about those religious and moral truths which of themselves are not beyond the grasp of human reason, so that even in the present condition of the human race, they can be known by all with ease, with firm certainty and with no admixture of error.

5. How can we speak about God?

39-43
48-49 By taking as our starting point the perfections of man and of the other creatures which are a reflection, albeit a limited one, of the infinite perfection of God, we are able to speak about God with all people. We must, however, continually purify our language insofar as it is image-bound and imperfect, realizing that we can never fully express the infinite mystery of God.

CHAPTER TWO God Comes to Meet Man

THE REVELATION OF GOD

6. What does God reveal to man?

50-53
68-69 God in his goodness and wisdom reveals himself. With deeds and words, he reveals himself and his plan of loving goodness which he decreed from all eternity in Christ. According to this plan, all people by the grace of the Holy Spirit are to share in the divine life as adopted "sons" in the only begotten Son of God.

7. What are the first stages of God's Revelation?

54-58
70-71 From the very beginning, God manifested himself to our first parents, Adam and Eve, and invited them to intimate communion with himself. After their fall, he did not cease his revelation to them but promised salvation for all their descendants. After the flood, he made a covenant with Noah, a covenant between himself and all living beings.

8. What are the next stages of God's Revelation?

59-64
72 God chose Abram, calling him out of his country, making him "the father of a multitude of nations" (*Genesis 17:5*), and promising to bless in him "all the nations of the earth" (*Genesis 12:3*). The people descended from Abraham would be the trustee of the divine promise made to the patriarchs. God formed Israel as his chosen people, freeing them from slavery in Egypt, establishing with them the covenant of Mount Sinai,

and, through Moses, giving them his law. The prophets proclaimed a radical redemption of the people and a salvation which would include all nations in a new and everlasting covenant. From the people of Israel and from the house of King David, would be born the Messiah, Jesus.

9. What is the full and definitive stage of God's Revelation?

The full and definitive stage of God's revelation is accomplished in his Word made flesh, Jesus Christ, the mediator and fullness of Revelation. He, being the only-begotten Son of God made man, is the perfect and definitive Word of the Father. In the sending of the Son and the gift of the Spirit, Revelation is now fully complete, although the faith of the Church must gradually grasp its full significance over the course of centuries.

65-66
73

"In giving us his Son, his only and definitive Word, God spoke everything to us at once in this sole Word, and he has no more to say" (Saint John of the Cross).

10. What is the value of private revelations?

While not belonging to the deposit of faith, private revelations may help a person to live the faith as long as they lead us to Christ. The Magisterium of the Church, which has the duty of evaluating such private revelations, cannot accept those which claim to surpass or correct that definitive Revelation which is Christ.

67



THE TRANSMISSION OF DIVINE REVELATION

11. Why and in what way is divine revelation transmitted?

God "desires all men to be saved and to come to the knowledge of the truth" (*1 Timothy 2:4*), that is, of Jesus Christ. For this reason, Christ must be proclaimed to all according to his own command, "Go forth and teach all nations" (*Matthew 28:19*). And this is brought about by Apostolic Tradition.

74

12. What is Apostolic Tradition?

Apostolic Tradition is the transmission of the message of Christ, brought about from the very beginnings of Christianity by means of preaching, bearing witness, institutions, worship, and inspired writings. The apostles transmitted all they received from Christ and learned from the

75-79
83
96, 98

Holy Spirit to their successors, the bishops, and through them to all generations until the end of the world.

13. In what ways does Apostolic Tradition occur?

76 Apostolic Tradition occurs in two ways: through the living transmission of the word of God (also simply called Tradition) and through Sacred Scripture which is the same proclamation of salvation in written form.

14. What is the relationship between Tradition and Sacred Scripture?

80-82
97 Tradition and Sacred Scripture are bound closely together and communicate one with the other. Each of them makes present and fruitful in the Church the mystery of Christ. They flow out of the same divine well-spring and together make up one sacred deposit of faith from which the Church derives her certainty about revelation.

15. To whom is the deposit of faith entrusted?

84, 91
94, 99 The Apostles entrusted the deposit of faith to the whole of the Church. Thanks to its supernatural sense of faith the people of God as a whole, assisted by the Holy Spirit and guided by the Magisterium of the Church, never ceases to welcome, to penetrate more deeply and to live more fully from the gift of divine revelation.

16. To whom is given the task of authentically interpreting the deposit of faith?

85-90
100 The task of giving an authentic interpretation of the deposit of faith has been entrusted to the living teaching office of the Church alone, that is, to the successor of Peter, the Bishop of Rome, and to the bishops in communion with him. To this Magisterium, which in the service of the Word of God enjoys the certain charism of truth, belongs also the task of defining dogmas which are formulations of the truths contained in divine Revelation. This authority of the Magisterium also extends to those truths necessarily connected with Revelation.

17. What is the relationship between Scripture, Tradition and the Magisterium?

95 Scripture, Tradition, and the Magisterium are so closely united with each other that one of them cannot stand without the others. Working together, each in its own way, under the action of the one Holy Spirit, they all contribute effectively to the salvation of souls.

SACRED SCRIPTURE

18. Why does Sacred Scripture teach the truth?

Because God himself is the author of Sacred Scripture. For this reason it is said to be inspired and to teach without error those truths which are necessary for our salvation. The Holy Spirit inspired the human authors who wrote what he wanted to teach us. The Christian faith, however, is not a "religion of the Book", but of the Word of God – "not a written and mute word, but incarnate and living" (Saint Bernard of Clairvaux). 105-108
135-136

19. How is Sacred Scripture to be read?

Sacred Scripture must be read and interpreted with the help of the Holy Spirit and under the guidance of the Magisterium of the Church according to three criteria: 1) it must be read with attention to the content and unity of the whole of Scripture; 2) it must be read within the living Tradition of the Church; 3) it must be read with attention to the analogy of faith, that is, the inner harmony which exists among the truths of the faith themselves. 109-119
137

20. What is the Canon of Scripture?

The *Canon* of Scripture is the complete list of the sacred writings which the Church has come to recognize through Apostolic Tradition. The *Canon* consists of 46 books of the Old Testament and 27 of the New. 120
138

21. What is the importance of the Old Testament for Christians?

Christians venerate the Old Testament as the true word of God. All of the books of the Old Testament are divinely inspired and retain a permanent value. They bear witness to the divine pedagogy of God's saving love. They are written, above all, to prepare for the coming of Christ the Savior of the universe. 121-123

22. What importance does the New Testament have for Christians?

The New Testament, whose central object is Jesus Christ, conveys to us the ultimate truth of divine Revelation. Within the New Testament the four Gospels of Mathew, Mark, Luke and John are the heart of all the Scriptures because they are the principle witness to the life and teaching of Jesus. As such, they hold a unique place in the Church. 124-127
139

23. What is the unity that exists between the Old and the New Testaments?

Scripture is one insofar as the Word of God is one. God's plan of salvation is one, and the divine inspiration of both Testaments is one. The Old 128-130
140

Testament prepares for the New and the New Testament fulfills the Old; the two shed light on each other.

24. What role does Sacred Scripture play in the life of the Church?

131-133 Sacred Scripture gives support and vigor to the life of the Church. For
141-142 the children of the Church, it is a confirmation of the faith, food for the soul and the fount of the spiritual life. Sacred Scripture is the soul of theology and of pastoral preaching. The Psalmist says that it is "a lamp to my feet and a light to my path" (*Psalms* 119:105). The Church, therefore, exhorts all to read Sacred Scripture frequently because "ignorance of the Scriptures is ignorance of Christ" (Saint Jerome).

CHAPTER THREE Man's Response to God

I BELIEVE

25. How does man respond to God who reveals himself?

142-143 Sustained by divine grace, we respond to God with the obedience of faith, which means the full surrender of ourselves to God and the acceptance of his truth insofar as it is guaranteed by the One who is Truth itself.

26. Who are the principal witnesses of the obedience of faith in the Sacred Scriptures?

144-149 There are many such witnesses, two in particular: One is *Abraham* who when put to the test "believed in God" (*Romans* 4:3) and always obeyed his call. For this reason he is called "the Father of all who believe" (*Romans* 4:11-18). The other is the *Virgin Mary* who, throughout her entire life, embodied in a perfect way the obedience of faith: "Let it be done to me according to your word" (*Luke* 1:38).

27. What does it mean in practice for a person to believe in God?

150-152 It means to adhere to God himself, entrusting oneself to him and giving
176-178 assent to all the truths which God has revealed because God is Truth. It means to believe in one God in three Persons, Father, Son, and Holy Spirit.

28. What are the characteristics of faith?

153-165 Faith is the supernatural virtue which is *necessary* for salvation. It is a
179-180 *free gift* of God and is accessible to all who humbly seek it. The act of
183-184 faith is a *human act*, that is, an act of the intellect of a person - prompted by the will moved by God - who freely assents to divine truth. Faith is

also *certain* because it is founded on the Word of God; it *works* "through charity" (*Galatians* 5:6); and it *continually grows* through listening to the Word of God and through prayer. It is, even now, a *foretaste* of the joys of heaven.

29. Why is there no contradiction between faith and science?

159 Though faith is above reason, there can never be a contradiction between faith and science because both originate in God. It is God himself who gives to us the light both of reason and of faith.

"I believe, in order to understand; and I understand, the better to believe" (Saint Augustine).

WE BELIEVE

30. Why is faith a personal act, and at the same time ecclesial?

166-169 Faith is a personal act insofar as it is the free response of the human
181 person to God who reveals himself. But at the same time it is an ecclesial act which expresses itself in the proclamation, "We believe". It is in fact the Church that believes: and thus by the grace of the Holy Spirit precedes, engenders and nourishes the faith of each Christian. For this reason the Church is Mother and Teacher.

"No one can have God as Father who does not have the Church as Mother" (Saint Cyprian).

31. Why are the formulas of faith important?

170-171 The formulas of faith are important because they permit one to express, assimilate, celebrate, and share together with others the truths of the faith through a common language.

32. In what way is the faith of the Church one faith alone?

172-175 The Church, although made up of persons who have diverse languages,
182 cultures, and rites, nonetheless professes with a united voice the one faith that was received from the one Lord and that was passed on by the one Apostolic Tradition. She confesses one God alone, Father, Son, and Holy Spirit, and points to one way of salvation. Therefore we believe with one heart and one soul all that is contained in the Word of God, handed down or written, and which is proposed by the Church as divinely revealed.

- 99 Thanks to its supernatural sense of faith, the People of God as a whole never ceases to welcome, to penetrate more deeply, and to live more fully from the gift of divine Revelation.
- 100 The task of interpreting the Word of God authentically has been entrusted solely to the Magisterium of the Church, that is, to the Pope and to the bishops in communion with him.

ARTICLE 3 SACRED SCRIPTURE

I. CHRIST – THE UNIQUE WORD OF SACRED SCRIPTURE

- 101 In order to reveal himself to men, in the condescension of his goodness God speaks to them in human words: "Indeed the words of God, expressed in the words of men, are in every way like human language, just as the Word of the eternal Father, when he took on himself the flesh of human weakness, became like men."⁶³
- 65, 2763 102 Through all the words of Sacred Scripture, God speaks only one single Word, his one Utterance in whom he expresses himself completely.⁶⁴
- 426-429 You recall that one and the same Word of God extends throughout Scripture, that it is one and the same Utterance that resounds in the mouths of all the sacred writers, since he who was in the beginning God with God has no need of separate syllables; for he is not subject to time.⁶⁵
- 1100, 1184 103 For this reason, the Church has always venerated the Scriptures as she venerates the Lord's Body. She never ceases to present to the faithful the bread of life, taken from the one table of 1378 God's Word and Christ's Body.⁶⁶
- 104 In Sacred Scripture, the Church constantly finds her nourishment and her strength, for she welcomes it not as a human word, "but as what it really is, the word of God."⁶⁷ "In the sacred books,

63 DV 13.

64 Cf. Heb 1:1-3.

65 St. Augustine, *En. in Ps.* 103, 4, 1: PL 37, 1378; cf. *Ps* 104; *Jn* 1:1.

66 Cf. DV 21.

67 1 *Thess* 2:13; cf. DV 24.

the Father who is in heaven comes lovingly to meet his children, and talks with them."⁶⁸

II. INSPIRATION AND TRUTH OF SACRED SCRIPTURE

105 *God is the author of Sacred Scripture.* "The divinely revealed realities, which are contained and presented in the text of Sacred Scripture, have been written down under the inspiration of the Holy Spirit."⁶⁹

"For Holy Mother Church, relying on the faith of the apostolic age, accepts as sacred and canonical the books of the Old and the New Testaments, whole and entire, with all their parts, on the grounds that, written under the inspiration of the Holy Spirit, they have God as their author and have been handed on as such to the Church herself."⁷⁰

106 God inspired the human authors of the sacred books. "To compose the sacred books, God chose certain men who, all the while he employed them in this task, 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."⁷¹

107 The inspired books teach the truth. "Since therefore all that the inspired authors or sacred writers affirm should be regarded as affirmed by the Holy Spirit, we must acknowledge that the books of Scripture firmly, faithfully, and without error teach that truth which God, for the sake of our salvation, wished to see confided to the Sacred Scriptures."⁷² 702

108 Still, the Christian faith is not a "religion of the book." Christianity is the religion of the "Word" of God, "not a written and mute word, but incarnate and living."⁷³ If the Scriptures are not to remain a dead letter, Christ, the eternal Word of the living God, must, through the Holy Spirit, "open [our] minds to understand the Scriptures."⁷⁴

68 DV 21.

69 DV 11.

70 DV 11; cf. *Jn* 20:31; 2 *Tim* 3:16; 2 *Pet* 1:19-21; 3:15-16.

71 DV 11.

72 DV 11.

73 St. Bernard, *S. missus est hom.* 4, 11: PL 183, 86.

74 Cf. *Lk* 24:45.

III. THE HOLY SPIRIT, INTERPRETER OF SCRIPTURE

109 In Sacred Scripture, God speaks to man in a human way. To interpret Scripture correctly, the reader must be attentive to what the human authors truly wanted to affirm and to what God wanted to reveal to us by their words.⁷⁵

110 In order to discover *the sacred authors' intention*, the reader must take into account the conditions of their time and culture, the literary genres in use at that time, and the modes of feeling, speaking, and narrating then current. "For the fact is that truth is differently presented and expressed in the various types of historical writing, in prophetic and poetical texts, and in other forms of literary expression."⁷⁶

111 But since Sacred Scripture is inspired, there is another and no less important principle of correct interpretation, without which Scripture would remain a dead letter. "Sacred Scripture must be read and interpreted in the light of the same Spirit by whom it was written."⁷⁷

The Second Vatican Council indicates three criteria for interpreting Scripture in accordance with the Spirit who inspired it.⁷⁸

112 1. *Be especially attentive "to the content and unity of the whole Scripture."* Different as the books which comprise it may be, Scripture is a unity by reason of the unity of God's plan, of which Christ Jesus is the center and heart, open since his Passover.⁷⁹

The phrase "heart of Christ" can refer to Sacred Scripture, which makes known his heart, closed before the Passion, as the Scripture was obscure. But the Scripture has been opened since the Passion; since those who from then on have understood it, consider and discern in what way the prophecies must be interpreted.⁸⁰

113 2. *Read the Scripture within "the living Tradition of the whole Church."* According to a saying of the Fathers, Sacred Scripture is written principally in the Church's heart rather than in documents and records, for the Church carries in her Tradition the living memorial of God's Word, and it is the Holy Spirit who gives her

75 Cf. DV 12 § 1.

76 DV 12 § 2.

77 DV 12 § 3.

78 Cf. DV 12 § 4.

79 Cf. Lk 24:25-27, 44-46.

80 St. Thomas Aquinas, *Expos. in Ps 21,11*; cf. *Ps 22:15*.

the spiritual interpretation of the Scripture ("according to the spiritual meaning which the Spirit grants to the Church"⁸¹).

114 3. *Be attentive to the analogy of faith.*⁸² By "analogy of faith" we mean the coherence of the truths of faith among themselves and within the whole plan of Revelation. 90

The senses of Scripture

115 According to an ancient tradition, one can distinguish between two *senses* of Scripture: the literal and the spiritual, the latter being subdivided into the allegorical, moral, and anagogical senses. The profound concordance of the four senses guarantees all its richness to the living reading of Scripture in the Church.

116 The *literal sense* is the meaning conveyed by the words of Scripture and discovered by exegesis, following the rules of sound interpretation: "All other senses of Sacred Scripture are based on the literal."⁸³ 110

117 The *spiritual sense*. Thanks to the unity of God's plan, not only the text of Scripture but also the realities and events about which it speaks can be signs. 1101

1. The *allegorical sense*. We can acquire a more profound understanding of events by recognizing their significance in Christ; thus the crossing of the Red Sea is a sign or type of Christ's victory and also of Christian Baptism.⁸⁴

2. The *moral sense*. The events reported in Scripture ought to lead us to act justly. As St. Paul says, they were written "for our instruction."⁸⁵

3. The *anagogical sense* (Greek: *anagoge*, "leading"). We can view realities and events in terms of their eternal significance, leading us toward our true homeland: thus the Church on earth is a sign of the heavenly Jerusalem.⁸⁶

118 A medieval couplet summarizes the significance of the four senses:

The Letter speaks of deeds; Allegory to faith;
The Moral how to act; Anagogy our destiny.⁸⁷

119 "It is the task of exegetes to work, according to these rules, toward a better understanding and explanation of the meaning of Sacred Scripture in order that their research may help the Church 94

81 Origen, *Hom. in Lev. 5, 5*: PG 12, 454D.

82 Cf. *Rom 12:6*.

83 St. Thomas Aquinas, *STh I, 1, 10, ad 1*.

84 Cf. *1 Cor 10:2*.

85 *1 Cor 10:11*; cf. *Heb 3-4:11*.

86 Cf. *Rev 21:1-22:5*.

87 *Lettera gesta docet, quid credas allegoria, moralis quid agas, quo tendas anagogia*.

to form a firmer judgment. For, of course, all that has been said about the manner of interpreting Scripture is ultimately subject to the judgment of the Church which exercises the divinely conferred commission and ministry of watching over and interpreting the Word of God."⁸⁸

113 But I would not believe in the Gospel, had not the authority of the Catholic Church already moved me.⁸⁹

IV. THE CANON OF SCRIPTURE

1117 120 It was by the apostolic Tradition that the Church discerned which writings are to be included in the list of the sacred books.⁹⁰ This complete list is called the canon of Scripture. It includes 46 books for the Old Testament (45 if we count Jeremiah and Lamentations as one) and 27 for the New.⁹¹

The Old Testament: Genesis, Exodus, Leviticus, Numbers, Deuteronomy, Joshua, Judges, Ruth, 1 and 2 Samuel, 1 and 2 Kings, 1 and 2 Chronicles, Ezra and Nehemiah, Tobit, Judith, Esther, 1 and 2 Maccabees, Job, Psalms, Proverbs, Ecclesiastes, the Song of Songs, the Wisdom of Solomon, Sirach (Ecclesiasticus), Isaiah, Jeremiah, Lamentations, Baruch, Ezekiel, Daniel, Hosea, Joel, Amos, Obadiah, Jonah, Micah, Nahum, Habakkuk, Zephaniah, Haggai, Zachariah and Malachi.

The New Testament: the Gospels according to Matthew, Mark, Luke and John, the Acts of the Apostles, the Letters of St. Paul to the Romans, 1 and 2 Corinthians, Galatians, Ephesians, Philippians, Colossians, 1 and 2 Thessalonians, 1 and 2 Timothy, Titus, Philemon, the Letter to the Hebrews, the Letters of James, 1 and 2 Peter, 1, 2, and 3 John, and Jude, and Revelation (the Apocalypse).

The Old Testament

1093 121 The Old Testament is an indispensable part of Sacred Scripture. Its books are divinely inspired and retain a permanent value,⁹² for the Old Covenant has never been revoked.

702, 763 122 Indeed, "the economy of the Old Testament was deliberately so oriented that it should prepare for and declare in prophecy the coming of Christ, redeemer of all men."⁹³ "Even though they contain matters imperfect and provisional,"⁹⁴ the books of the Old
708 Testament bear witness to the whole divine pedagogy of God's

88 DV 12 § 3.

89 St. Augustine, *Contra epistolam Manichaei*, 5, 6: PL 42, 176.

90 Cf. DV 8 § 3.

91 Cf. DS 179; 1334-1336; 1501-1504.

92 Cf. DV 14.

saving love: these writings "are a storehouse of sublime teaching on God and of sound wisdom on human life, as well as a wonderful treasury of prayers; in them, too, the mystery of our salvation is present in a hidden way."⁹⁵ 2568

123 Christians venerate the Old Testament as true Word of God. The Church has always vigorously opposed the idea of rejecting the Old Testament under the pretext that the New has rendered it void (Marcionism).

The New Testament

124 "The Word of God, which is the power of God for salvation to everyone who has faith, is set forth and displays its power in a most wonderful way in the writings of the New Testament"⁹⁶ which hand on the ultimate truth of God's Revelation. Their central object is Jesus Christ, God's incarnate Son: his acts, teachings, Passion and glorification, and his Church's beginnings under the Spirit's guidance.⁹⁷

125 The *Gospels* are the heart of all the Scriptures "because they are our principal source for the life and teaching of the Incarnate Word, our Savior."⁹⁸ 515

126 We can distinguish three stages in the formation of the Gospels:

1. *The life and teaching of Jesus.* The Church holds firmly that the four Gospels, "whose historicity she unhesitatingly affirms, faithfully hand on what Jesus, the Son of God, while he lived among men, really did and taught for their eternal salvation, until the day when he was taken up."⁹⁹

2. *The oral tradition.* "For, after the ascension of the Lord, the apostles handed on to their hearers what he had said and done, but with that fuller understanding which they, instructed by the glorious events of Christ and enlightened by the Spirit of truth, now enjoyed."¹⁰⁰ 76

3. *The written Gospels.* "The sacred authors, in writing the four Gospels, selected certain of the many elements which had been handed on, either orally or already in written form; others they synthesized or explained with an eye to the situation of the churches, while sustaining the 76

93 DV 15.

94 DV 15.

95 DV 15.

96 DV 17; cf. *Rom* 1:16.

97 Cf. DV 20.

98 DV 18.

99 DV 19; cf. *Acts* 1:1-2.

100 DV 19.

form of preaching, but always in such a fashion that they have told us the honest truth about Jesus."¹⁰¹

- 1154 127 The fourfold Gospel holds a unique place in the Church, as is evident both in the veneration which the liturgy accords it and in the surpassing attraction it has exercised on the saints at all times:

There is no doctrine which could be better, more precious and more splendid than the text of the Gospel. Behold and retain what our Lord and Master, Christ, has taught by his words and accomplished by his deeds.¹⁰²

- 2705 But above all it's the Gospels that occupy my mind when I'm at prayer; my poor soul has so many needs, and yet this is the one thing needful. I'm always finding fresh lights there, hidden and enthralling meanings.¹⁰³

The unity of the Old and New Testaments

- 128 The Church, as early as apostolic times,¹⁰⁴ and then constantly in her Tradition, has illuminated the unity of the divine plan in the two Testaments through typology, which discerns in God's works of the Old Covenant prefigurations of what he accomplished in the fullness of time in the person of his incarnate Son.
- 1094 489

- 129 Christians therefore read the Old Testament in the light of Christ crucified and risen. Such typological reading discloses the inexhaustible content of the Old Testament; but it must not make us forget that the Old Testament retains its own intrinsic value as Revelation reaffirmed by our Lord himself.¹⁰⁵ Besides, the New Testament has to be read in the light of the Old. Early Christian catechesis made constant use of the Old Testament.¹⁰⁶ As an old saying put it, the New Testament lies hidden in the Old and the Old Testament is unveiled in the New.¹⁰⁷
- 681 2055 1968

130 Typology indicates the dynamic movement toward the fulfillment of the divine plan when "God [will] be everything to everyone."¹⁰⁸ Nor do the calling of the patriarchs and the exodus from Egypt, for example, lose their own value in God's plan, from the mere fact that they were intermediate stages.

101 DV 19.

102 St. Caesaria the Younger to St. Richildis and St. Radegunde, *SCh* 345, 480.

103 St. Thérèse of Lisieux, *ms. autob.* A 83v.

104 Cf. *1 Cor* 10:6, 11; *Heb* 10:1; *1 Pet* 3:21.

105 Cf. *Mk* 12:29-31.

106 Cf. *1 Cor* 5:6-8; 10:1-11.

107 Cf. St. Augustine, *Quaest. in Hept.* 2, 73: PL 34, 623; cf. DV 16.

108 *1 Cor* 15:28.

V. SACRED SCRIPTURE IN THE LIFE OF THE CHURCH

131 "And such is the force and power of the Word of God that it can serve the Church as her support and vigor and the children of the Church as strength for their faith, food for the soul, and a pure and lasting font of spiritual life."¹⁰⁹ Hence "access to Sacred Scripture ought to be open wide to the Christian faithful."¹¹⁰

132 "Therefore, the 'study of the sacred page' should be the very soul of sacred theology. The ministry of the Word, too — pastoral preaching, catechetics, and all forms of Christian instruction, among which the liturgical homily should hold pride of place — is healthily nourished and thrives in holiness through the Word of Scripture."¹¹¹ 94

133 The Church "forcefully and specifically exhorts all the Christian faithful . . . to learn 'the surpassing knowledge of Jesus Christ,' by frequent reading of the divine Scriptures. 'Ignorance of the Scriptures is ignorance of Christ.'"¹¹² 2653 1792

IN BRIEF

134 "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" (Hugh of St. Victor, *De arca Noe* 2, 8: PL 176, 642).

135 "The Sacred Scriptures contain the Word of God and, because they are inspired they are truly the Word of God" (DV 24).

136 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 (cf. DV 11).

137 Interpretation of the inspired Scripture must be attentive above all to what God wants to reveal through the sacred authors for our salvation. What comes from the

109 DV 21.

110 DV 22.

111 DV 24.

112 DV 25; cf. *Phil* 3:8 and St. Jerome, *Commentariorum in Isaiam libri xviii* prol.: PL 24, 17b.

- Spirit is not fully "understood except by the Spirit's action" (cf. Origen, *Hom. in Ex.* 4, 5: PG 12, 320).
- 138 The Church accepts and venerates as inspired the 46 books of the Old Testament and the 27 books of the New.
- 139 The four Gospels occupy a central place because Christ Jesus is their center.
- 140 The unity of the two Testaments proceeds from the unity of God's plan and his Revelation. The Old Testament prepares for the New and the New Testament fulfills the Old; the two shed light on each other; both are true Word of God.
- 141 "The Church has always venerated the divine Scriptures as she venerated the Body of the Lord" (DV 21): both nourish and govern the whole Christian life. "Your word is a lamp to my feet and a light to my path" (Ps 119:105; cf. Isa 50:4).

CHAPTER THREE MAN'S RESPONSE TO GOD

142 *By his Revelation*, "the invisible God, from the fullness of his love, addresses men as his friends, and moves among them, in order to invite and receive them into his own company."¹ The adequate response to this invitation is faith. 1102

143 *By faith*, man completely submits his intellect and his will to God.² With his whole being man gives his assent to God the revealer. Sacred Scripture calls this human response to God, the author of revelation, "the obedience of faith."³ 2087

ARTICLE 1 I BELIEVE

I. THE OBEDIENCE OF FAITH

144 To obey (from the Latin *ob-audire*, to "hear or listen to") in faith is to submit freely to the word that has been heard, because its truth is guaranteed by God, who is Truth itself. Abraham is the model of such obedience offered us by Sacred Scripture. The Virgin Mary is its most perfect embodiment.

Abraham – "father of all who believe"

145 *The Letter to the Hebrews*, in its great eulogy of the faith of Israel's ancestors, lays special emphasis on Abraham's faith: "By faith, Abraham obeyed when he was called to go out to a place which he was to receive as an inheritance; and he went out, not knowing where he was to go."⁴ By faith, he lived as a stranger and pilgrim in the promised land.⁵ By faith, Sarah was given to conceive the son of the promise. And by faith Abraham offered his only son in sacrifice.⁶ 59, 2570 489

146 Abraham thus fulfills the definition of faith in *Hebrews* 11:1: "Faith is the assurance of things hoped for, the conviction of things not seen."⁷ "Abraham believed God, and it was reckoned to

1 DV 2; cf. Col 1:15; 1 Tim 1:17; Ex 33:11; Jn 15:14-15; Bar 3:38 (Vulg.).

2 Cf. DV 5.

3 Cf. Rom 1:5; 16:26.

4 Heb 11:8; cf. Gen 12:1-4.

5 Cf. Gen 23:4.

6 Cf. Heb 11:17.