

The Deposit of Faith

“the household of God, which is the church of the living God,
the pillar and bulwark of the truth” 1 Tim 3:15

“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.” (Compendium of the Catechism of the Catholic Church para 14)

Sacred Scripture

“All scripture is inspired by God and profitable for teaching, for reproof, for correction, and for training in righteousness, that the man of God may be complete, equipped for every good work.” (2 Tim 3:16)

The Catholic Church is founded upon Scripture maintaining the 73 Canonical Books as truly inspired by God and “profitable for teaching” (2 Tim 3:16). These scriptures though written by the hand of man, were inspired by the Holy Spirit and “must be acknowledged as teaching solidly, faithfully and without error that truth which God wanted put into sacred writings for the sake of salvation.” (DV 11). Through Sacred Scripture we come into knowledge of God and His plan for our salvation. The entire collection of books that make up the Holy Bible paint an incredible story of God’s love for us and our salvation history. The Church recognizes the immense value of scripture and bases its theology on what God has revealed in Scripture (DV 24). However, God’s word is also contained in the Tradition of the Church and in the living magisterium which is animated by the Holy Spirit. Scripture alone, or “Sola Scriptura” contradicts what the Lord Himself established, and God has revealed His word and maintained it through the ministry of the Bishops who are the successors of the Apostles (cf. DV Chap II).

“For the word of God is living and active, sharper than any two-edged sword, piercing to the division of soul and spirit, of joints and marrow, and discerning the thoughts and intentions of the heart.” Heb 4:12

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 the spiritual interpretation of the Scripture (CCC 113)

“These things I have spoken to you, while I am still with you. But the Counselor, the Holy Spirit, whom the Father will send in my name, he will teach you all things, and bring to your remembrance all that I have said to you.” John 14:25-26



Sacred Tradition

“So then, brethren, stand firm and hold to the traditions which you were taught by us, either by word of mouth or by letter.” (2 Thess 2:15)

The Catholic Church is also founded on Tradition. While the Bible is the inerrant Word of God, it is not a systematic presentation of all that is in the Deposit of faith. Concepts like the Trinity, and other mysteries receive clarification and illumination through the tradition and the living Magisterium (teaching office of the Church). This tradition is referred to in Scripture and is what maintained the early Church before the Gospels were written some years later. The Holy Spirit guided the Apostles and their successors and we can look to the Early Church fathers and the saints for what God has found good to reveal to man. This tradition is not in opposition to Scripture, but unified to it (cf CCC 78). “Therefore the Apostles, handing on what they themselves had received, warn the faithful to hold fast to the traditions which they have learned either by word of mouth or by letter (see 2 Thess. 2:15), and to fight in defense of the faith handed on once and for all (see Jude 1:3) (4) Now what was handed on by the Apostles includes everything which contributes toward the holiness of life and increase in faith of the peoples of God; and so the Church, in her teaching, life and worship, perpetuates and hands on to all generations all that she herself is, all that she believes.” (DV 8)

“Sacred Tradition and Sacred Scripture make up a single sacred deposit of the Word of God” (DV 10) in which, as in a mirror, the pilgrim Church contemplates God, the source of all her riches.” (CCC 97)

“I commend you because you remember me in everything and maintain the traditions even as I have delivered them to you.” 1 Cor 11:2

“And they devoted themselves to the apostles’ teaching and fellowship, to the breaking of bread and the prayers.” Acts 2:42

Magisterium

“Whoever listens to you listens to me.” (Luke 10:16)

Christ promised that He would not leave us orphans (John 14:18) and during His earthly ministry He prepared the apostles to carry on and safeguard His teachings. He gave them special insights into the scriptures, and the powers to “bind and loose” (cf. Matt 11:1, John 20:22). In short Christ entrusted all the power they would need to teach, sanctify and govern in His name. This authority is maintained by the Bishops, the successors of the apostles and guided by the Holy Spirit as Paul tells Timothy “I know him in whom I have believed and am confident that he is able to guard what has been entrusted to me until that day Take as your norm the sound words that you heard from me, in the faith and love that are in Christ Jesus. Guard this rich trust with the help of the holy Spirit that dwells within us. ” (2 Tim 1:13). The Magisterium, that is the living, teaching office of the Church, entrusted with the “Task of giving authentic interpretation of the Word of God, whether in its written form or in the form of Tradition” (CCC 85).

“Yet this Magisterium is not superior to the Word of God, but is its servant. It teaches only what has been handed on to it. At the divine command and with the help of the Holy Spirit, it listens to this devotedly, guards it with dedication and expounds it faithfully. All that it proposes for belief as being divinely revealed is drawn from this single deposit of faith.” (CCC 86)

