



## What's What

*A weekly communication that provides an opportunity for our faith community to grow together in faith.*

### Sacred Scripture: Part One

Issue 51

Scripture: Part 1

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#### Sacred Scripture

Sacred Scripture is inspired by God and is the Word of God. Therefore, God is the author of Sacred Scripture, which means he inspired the human authors, acting in and through them. Thus, God ensured that the authors taught, without error, those truths necessary for our salvation. *Inspiration* is the word used for the divine assistance given to the human authors of the books of Sacred Scripture. This means that guided by the Holy Spirit, the human authors made full use of their talents and abilities while, at the same time, writing what God intended. There are many in modern society who find incredible the belief that Scripture contains the inspired word of God and so reject the Bible

as a collection of stories and myths. There are others who profess belief in the Triune God and are even "Scripture scholars" who work to "demythologize" the Scriptures, that is, they remove or explain away the miraculous as well as references to God's revealing words and actions. It is important to understand in the face of such challenges to Scripture that it is not simply the work of human authors as some critics allege, but truly the Word and work of God.

#### Interpretation of Scripture

When interpreting Scripture, we should be attentive to what God wanted to reveal through the authors for our salvation. We need to see Scripture as a unified whole with Jesus Christ

at the center. We must also read Scripture within the living Tradition of the whole Church, so that we may come to grasp a true interpretation of the Scriptures. The task of giving an authoritative interpretation of the Word of God has been entrusted to the Magisterium. Last, we need to remember and recognize that there is a coherence of the truths of faith within Scripture (cf. CCC 112-114).

The Church recognizes two senses of Scripture, the literal and the spiritual. In probing the literal meaning of the texts, it is necessary to determine their literary form, such as history, hymns, wisdom sayings, poetry, parable, or other forms of figurative language. "The *literal sense* is the meaning conveyed

by the words of Scripture and discovered by exegesis [the process scholars use to determine the meaning of the text], following the rules of sound interpretation: 'All other senses of Sacred Scripture are based on the literal'" (CCC 116, citing St Thomas Aquinas, *Summa Theologiae*).

The spiritual senses of Sacred Scripture derive from the unity of God's plan of salvation. The text of Scripture discloses God's plan. The re-

alities and events of which it speaks can also be signs of the divine plan. There are three spiritual senses of Scripture:

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 over sin and also of Christian Baptism.

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" (1 Cor 10:11)

3. The *anagogical sense*. 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 (CCC 117).

The Church's Scripture scholars are expected to work according to these principles to develop a better understanding of Scripture for God's people. Interpretations of Scripture is ultimately subject to the judgment of the Magisterium, which exercises the divine commission to hold fast to and to interpret authoritatively God's Word.

*From "US Catholic Catechism for Adults", USCCB, pg 26-28*

#### Go Gladly to the Sacred Text Itself: From the Second Vatican Council on the Bible

[We] forcefully and specifically exhort all the Christian faithful... to learn the "surpassing knowledge of Jesus Christ" (Phil 3:8) by frequent reading of the divine scriptures. "Ignorance of the Scriptures is ignorance of Christ" (St. Jerome). Therefore, let them go gladly to the sacred text itself, whether in the sacred liturgy, which is full of the divine words, or in devout reading, or in such suitable exercises and various other helps which, with the approval and guidance of the pastors of the Church, are happily spreading everywhere in our day. Let them remember, however, that prayer should accompany the reading of sacred Scripture, so that a dialogue takes place between God and man...

Just as from constant attendance at the Eucharistic mystery the life of the Church draws increase, so a new impulse of spiritual life may be expected from increased veneration of the Word of God.  
—DV, 25-26

**Blessing of Bibles at Masses the weekend of November 29 & 30. Make sure to bring your Bible with you!**



## Saint of the Day: St. Elizabeth of Hungary (1207-1231)

On Monday, November 17, the Church will remember St Elizabeth of Hungary.

In her short life Elizabeth manifested such great love for the poor and suffering that she has become the patroness of Catholic charities and of the Secular Franciscan Order. The daughter of the King of Hungary, Elizabeth chose a life of penance and asceticism when a life of leisure and luxury could easily have been hers. This choice endeared her in the hearts of the common people throughout Europe.

At the age of 14 Elizabeth was married to Louis of Thuringia (a German principality), whom she deeply loved; she bore three children. Under the spiritual direction of a Franciscan friar, she led a life of prayer, sacrifice and service to the poor and sick. Seeking to become one with the poor, she wore simple clothing. Daily she would take bread to hundreds of the poorest in the land, who came to her gate.

After six years of marriage, her husband died in the Crusades, and she was grief-stricken. Her husband's family looked upon her as squandering the royal purse, and mistreated her, finally throwing her out of the palace. The return of her husband's allies from the Crusades resulted in her being reinstated, since her son was legal heir to the throne.

In 1228 Elizabeth joined the Secular Franciscan Order, spending the remaining few years of her life caring for the poor in a hospital which she founded in honor of St. Francis. Elizabeth's health declined, and she died

before her 24th birthday in 1231. Her great popularity resulted in her canonization four years later.

### Comment:

Elizabeth understood well the lesson Jesus taught when he washed his disciples' feet at the Last Supper: The Christian must be one who serves the humblest needs of others, even if one serves from an exalted position. Of royal blood, Elizabeth could have lorded it over her subjects. Yet she served them with such a loving heart that her brief life won for her a special place in the hearts of many. Elizabeth is also an example to us in her following the guidance of a spiritual director. Growth in the spiritual life is a difficult process. We can play games very easily if we don't have someone to challenge us or to share experiences so as to help us avoid pitfalls.

### Quote:

"Today, there is an inescapable duty to make ourselves the neighbor of every individual, without exception, and to take positive steps to help a neighbor whom we encounter, whether that neighbor be an elderly person, abandoned by everyone, a foreign worker who suffers the injustice of being despised, a refugee, an illegitimate child wrongly suffering for a sin of which the child is innocent, or a starving human being who awakens our conscience by calling to mind the words of Christ: 'As long as you did it for one of these, the least of my brethren, you did it for me' (Matthew 25:40)" (*Pastoral Constitution on the Church in the Modern World, 27*, Austin Flannery translation).  
[www.americancatholic.org/Features/SaintOfDay](http://www.americancatholic.org/Features/SaintOfDay)

### Doctrinal Statements on Sacred Scripture

- Jesus Christ, the fullness of Revelation, entrusted his mission to the Apostles. They transmitted Christ's Gospel through their witness, preaching, and writing—under the guidance of the Holy Spirit—meant for all peoples until Christ comes in glory.
- Divine Revelation is transmitted through Apostolic Tradition and Sacred Scripture, which flow from the same divine wellspring and work together in unity toward the same goal.
- Sacred Scripture is inspired by God and truly contains the Word of God. This action of God is referred to as *Inspiration*.
- God is the author of Sacred Scripture, inspiring the human authors, acting in and through them. Thus God ensured that the authors taught divine and saving truth without error
- Our response to God's Revelation is faith, by which we surrender our whole selves to him.

"What's What" is a publication of the Youth Ministry Department of St Mary, Canandaigua, and St Bridget, Bloomfield.

Our Youth Ministry Mission Statement:

Building on the mission of our parishes to follow the way of Christ in our thoughts, words, and deeds, and to make Christ more fully present in all who live within our community, the Youth Ministry mission is to empower young people to live as disciples of Jesus Christ in the world today; to affirm the gifts of our youth and provide opportunities for young people to share their gifts with the larger community; and to meet the religious, spiritual and social needs of all youth with the committed leadership, guidance and support of our parish family, providing an opportunity for our entire faith community to grow together in Christian faith.