

Adult Faith Formation #3- The Bible - God's Love Letter to Humanity





Tonight's Session:

- *The Bible as inspired by the Holy Spirit*
 - *The canonicity of Sacred Scripture*
 - *The Catholic approach to interpreting Scripture correctly*
 - *How we can know with confidence that the Bible contains God's revelation for our lives.*
 - *How to start studying the Bible and praying the God's Word*
- 



*“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” (CCC 101)*



What is meant by “the Bible and Sacred Scripture?”

- *Greek word, **Biblia** = book;
Bible in English*
 - *Latin word, **Scripturae** =
writings, came to be reserved
for the inspired writings,
Scriptures (in English)*
- 



The Bible is not just one book but a collection of many and diverse books, written by different authors over centuries for different audiences.



Bible = 73 books

➤ *46 Old Testament books*

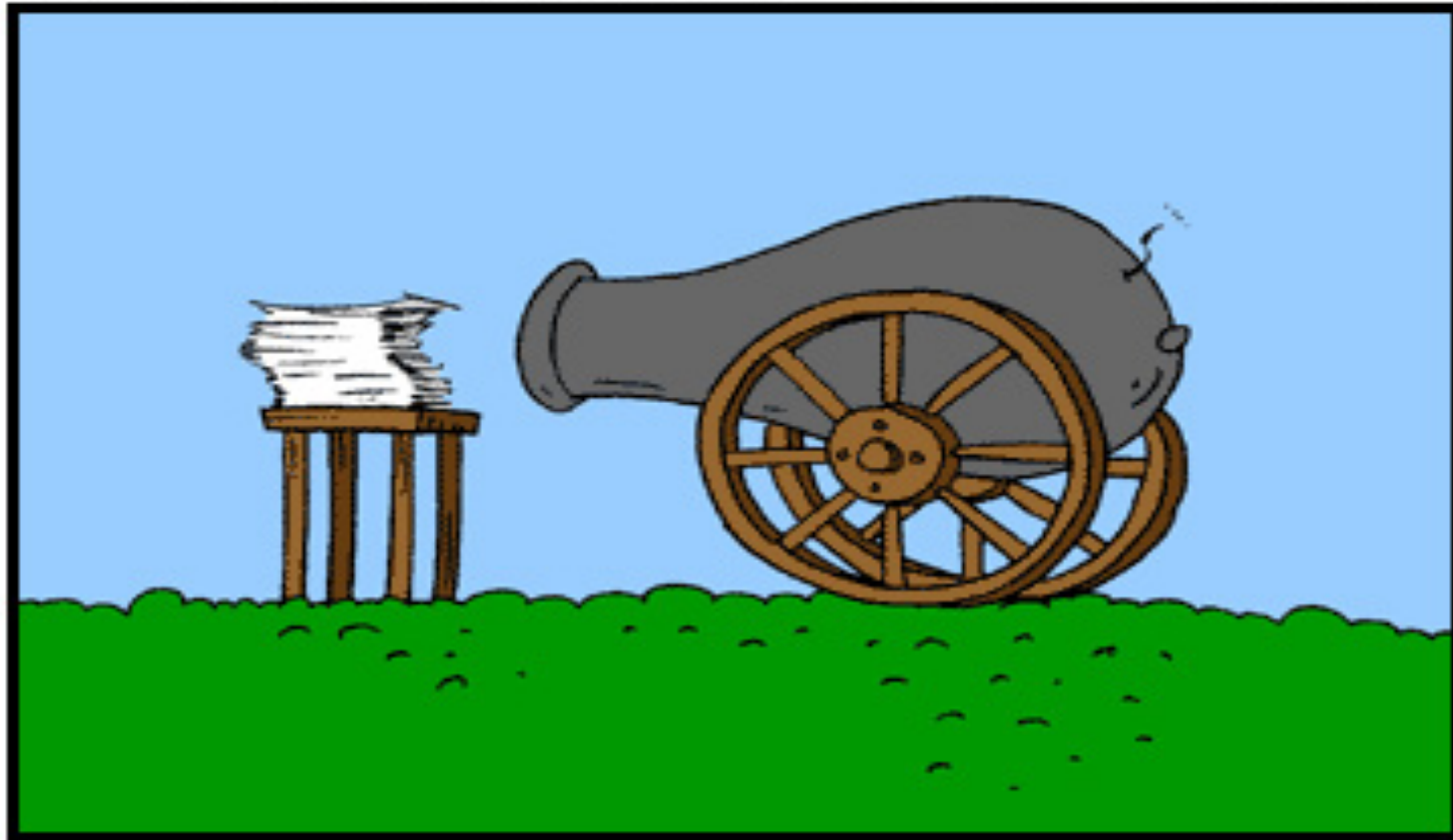
➤ *27 New Testament books*





*Although composed of
many books, the Bible,
is at the same time,
one Book, because it
contains one
Revelation and has one
divine Author.*

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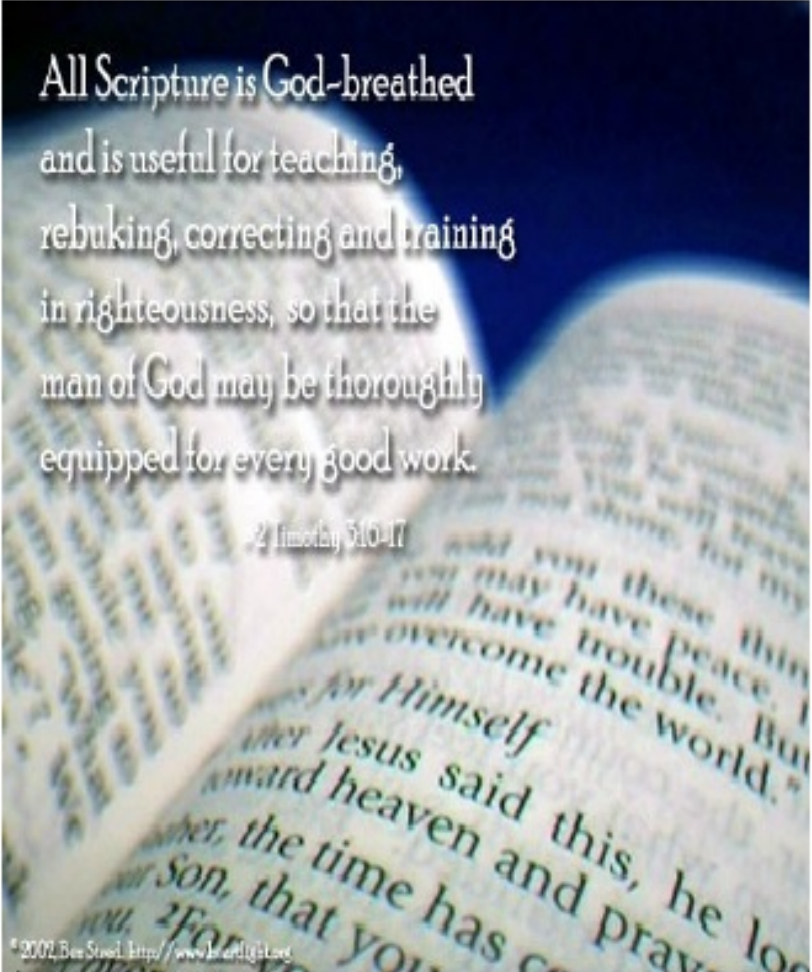


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PROPHET JOE WAS SURE EXCITED WHEN HE
FOUND OUT THAT HIS WRITINGS WERE GOING
TO BE 'CANONIZED'

What is the Canon of the Scriptures?

- For Christians the books found in the Old and New Testament comprise the **Canon** of the Scriptures.
- The word Canon comes from the Greek "**kanon**" or Hebrew "**qaneh**" meaning a reed, rule, list or measuring stick. This word (s) was employed by ancient writers to denote a rule or standard.
- Therefore, the Canon of the Scriptures is the **authoritative list** of books that are acknowledged as "**divinely inspired**" by the Church, and are set as the standard for Christian teaching, preaching and edification.



All Scripture is God-breathed
and is useful for teaching,
rebuking, correcting and training
in righteousness, so that the
man of God may be thoroughly
equipped for every good work.

2 Timothy 3:16-17



Biblical Canon – How to Decide?

- ▣ Church followed certain criteria if a writing was worthy to be included in Scripture:
 - ▣ 1. **Apostolic Origins**
 - Eyewitness or person close to eye witness
 - ▣ 2. **Universal Acceptance**
 - Accepted by the various Christian communities
 - ▣ 3. **Liturgical Use**
 - used in early Christian liturgy
 - used for teaching the faith



Criteria for New Testament Canon:

- *Orthodox = taught true Christian doctrine*
 - *Universal – used throughout the Christian world*
 - *Liturgical – read out loud in the liturgy of the churches*
 - *Apostolic – had to be written by an apostle, or one of the apostle's immediate disciples*
- 



The Old Testament

The Pentateuch

The Historical Books

The Wisdom Books

The Prophetic Books



The Old Testament = 4 major parts

- *Pentateuch (e.g., first 5 books of Bible)*
- *Historical Books (e.g., conquest from promise land to Maccabean revolt in 2nd century)*
- *Wisdom Literature*
- *Prophets*



The Old Testament

- *Indispensable part of Sacred Scripture – books are divinely inspired*
 - *“The economy of the OT was deliberately SO orientated that it should prepare for and declare in prophecy the coming of Christ.”*
 - *Christians venerate the OT as true Word of God*
- 

BOOKS OF THE NEW TESTAMENT



SACRED SCRIPTURE: A CATHOLIC STUDY OF GOD'S WORD
PART 2A THE GOSPELS

Formation of the Gospels

1. The Gospel was handed down in two ways:

- orally in preaching
- in writing under the inspiration of the Holy Spirit

2. Three stages in the formation of the Gospels:

(a) the period of
the public life and
teaching of Jesus

(b) a period of oral tradition
and preaching by the early
disciples in 3 key forms:

(c) the written
Gospels
themselves

The *kerygma* or
preaching to
unbelievers

The *Didache* or
Catechesis

The *liturgy* or
worship of
Christians



*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
Saviour” (CCC 125)*





Catholic Bible = 73 Books
Protestant Bible = 66 Books
How did that happen?





The Reformation

- ◆ Catholic: 73 Books
- ◆ Protestant: 66 Books
 - ◆ 7 Books were taken out during Martin Luther's Reformation
 - ◆ Martin Luther was a former Catholic priest that protested against certain teachings / actions of the Roman Catholic Church; hence, that's how PROTESTants came to be

7 Books Removed

- ◆ So what happened? How come the King James Bible only has 66 books? Well, Martin Luther didn't like 7 books of the Old Testament that disagreed with his personal view of theology, so he threw them out of his bible in the 16th Century. His reasoning was that the Jewish Council of Jamnia in 90 AD didn't think they were canonical, so he didn't either.
- ◆ Protestants call these 7 books the *Apocrypha* (Ah-Paw-Kri-Pha), meaning hidden or obscure
 - ◆ Tobit
 - ◆ Judith
 - ◆ Baruch
 - ◆ Wisdom
 - ◆ Sirach (also called Ecclesiasticus)
 - ◆ 1 Maccabees
 - ◆ 2 Maccabees
- ◆ In addition, certain verses of Daniel (2 chapters and a prayer) and Esther (7 chapters) were removed in Protestant Bible

Canon of Scripture – The Apocrypha

↑
“Rule” or “measure”

↑
“Those having been
hidden away”



Why the Protestant church rejects the Apocrypha:

1. The writers of the books don't claim themselves to have the same authority as the writers of the Old Testament.
2. They weren't widely regarded by Jewish historians. *“not... worthy of equal credit”* - Josephus.
3. Not reference by Jesus or other New Testament writers. (There's 295 OT references in the NT.)
4. There are factual errors and teaching that is inconsistent with the rest of the Bible.

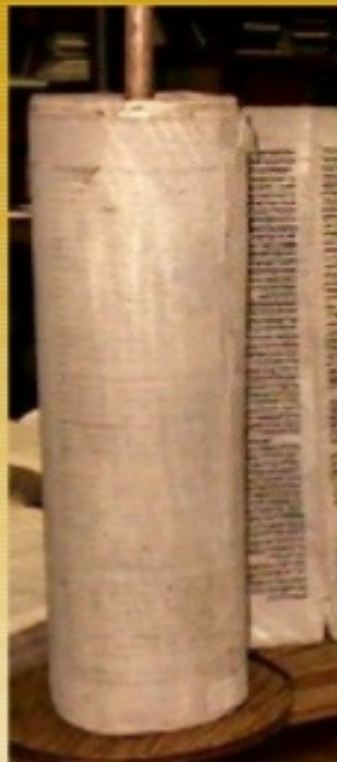
SACRED SCRIPTURE: A CATHOLIC STUDY OF GOD'S WORD
PART 1 THE OLD TESTAMENT

The Canon of Sacred Scripture

46 OT books
+ 27 NT books
= 73 Books

- written between 1000 BC and 150 BC
- predominantly written in Hebrew

- ***Deuterocanonical books***: 1 and 2 Maccabees, Judith, Tobit, Baruch, Sirach, and Wisdom mostly written in Greek after 300 BC; also known as the ***Apocrypha***



Inspiration

"All scripture is inspired by God and is useful for teaching, for refutation, for correction, and for training in righteousness, so that one who belongs to God may be competent, equipped for every good work." – 2 Tim 3:16-17

"Inspired" – from the Greek – literally means "God-breathed," a good way to think about Scriptural inspiration

Just as God fashioned Adam out of the earth's clay and blew the breath of life into him (Gen 2:7), God breathes His Spirit into the words of the human authors of Scripture and makes them the Living Word of God.



*The first Christians knew that the OT had
been inspired by the Holy Spirit:*

- *Cf. 2 Tím 3:16-17*
 - *2 Peter 1:21*
 - *Sts. Peter and Paul when quoting
OT say, “as the Holy Spirit said...”*
 - *Jesus also did the same*
- 



*Inspiration does not mean
'dictation'.*

*Inspiration is a metaphor for
breathing.*

*God did not dictate the Sacred
Writings word for word, as a
businessperson dictates a letter to a
secretary.*



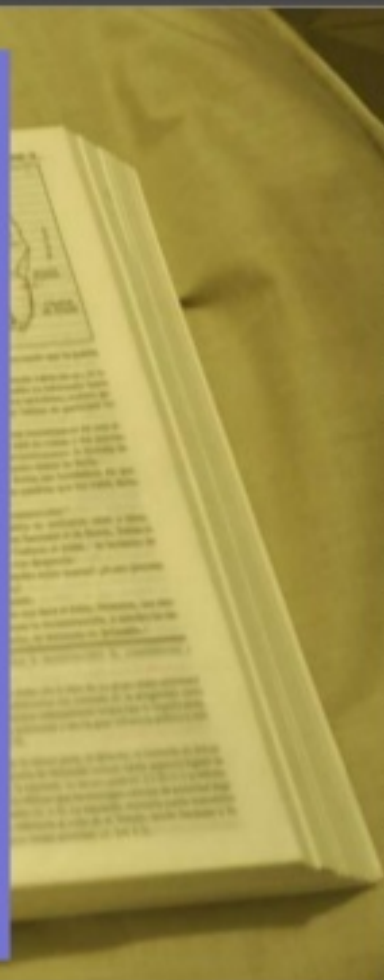
“To compose the sacred books, God chose certain men who, all the while he employed in this task, made full use of their own faculties and powers so that, though he acted in them and by them, it was as true authors that they consigned to writing whatever he wanted written, and no more” (CCC 106).



Biblical Inerrancy

-that since the Scripture was written, compiled and edited under the inspiration of the Holy Spirit, “we must acknowledge that the books of Scripture *firmly, faithfully and without error*, teach the truth which God, for the sake of our salvation, wished to see confided to the Sacred Scriptures.”

(Dei Verbum 11)





*Inerrancy does not remove difficulties in the
Texts:*

*“Since I am completely convinced
that no text of Scripture
contradicts another, if a text of
Scripture is brought forward and
there be a pretext for saying it
contradicts another, I shall admit
rather that I do not understand
what is recorded” (Justin Martyr)*

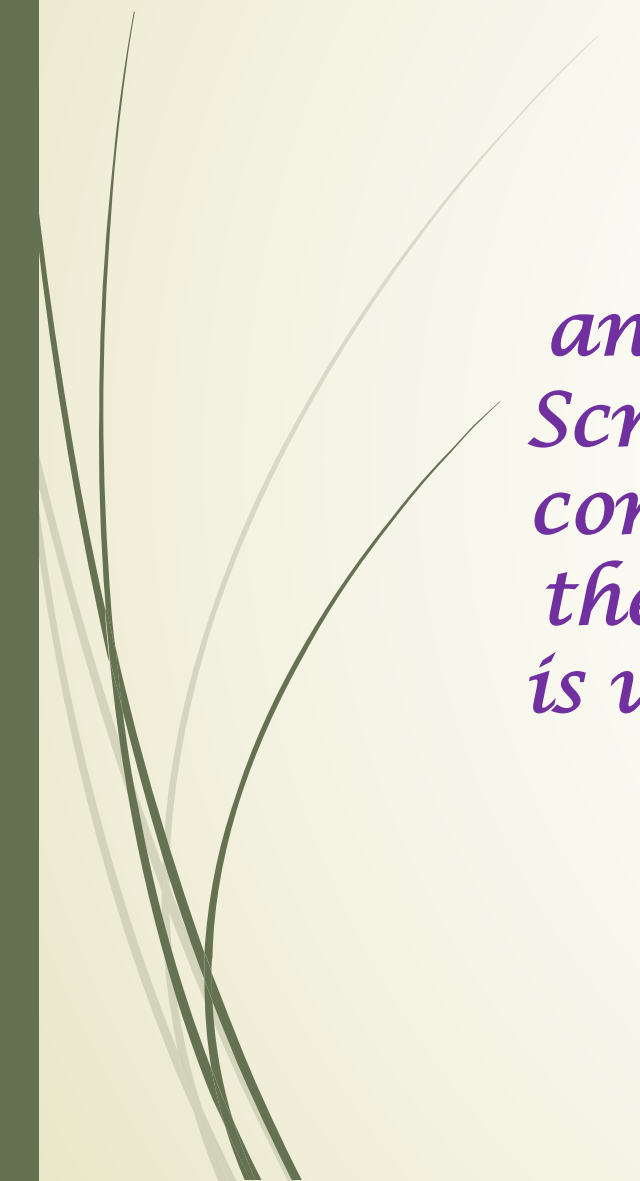




Inerrancy does not remove difficulties in the Texts:

“I most firmly believe that none of the Biblical authors has erred in writing anything. If I come across anything in those Scriptures which troubles me because it seems contrary to the truth, I will unhesitatingly lay the blame elsewhere; perhaps the manuscript is untrue to the original, or the translator has not rendered the passage faithfully, or perhaps I have not understood it”

(St. Augustine)





Five kinds of difficulties found in the Bible:

- *Textual difficulties (e.g., problems in manuscripts)*
 - *Literary difficulties (e.g., different times, culture and languages)*
 - *Difficulties in reconciling the Bible with other sources (e.g., science)*
 - *Difficulties in reconciling certain texts with other texts*
 - *Theological difficulties*
- 



“In order to discover the sacred authors’ intentions, 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” CCC110.



“... We must note on what occasion the author spoke, to whom he was writing, and why he wrote, lest we miss his real meaning...”

(St. Athanasius, Oration against the Arians, I, 54).





*Are we to take the
bible literally?*

*Catholic response: “I
take the bible
literarily.”*



*Three criteria for interpreting
Scripture in accordance with the
Spirit who inspired it:*

- *Be attentive “to the content and unity of the whole Scripture”*
- *Read Scripture within “the living Tradition of the whole Church”*
- *Be attentive to the analogy of faith*

Four Senses of Scripture

Catechism of the Catholic Church, 115-119

Literal	The meaning conveyed by the words of Scripture, interpreted soundly	
Spiritual	Allegorical	Symbolic; recognising the significance of events in Christ
	Moral	Scripture leads us to act justly
	Anagogical	Viewing realities and events in terms of eternal significance



Our Lady of Mount Carmel
Wentworthville
a Carmelite family parish



*“The Letter speaks of
deeds;
Allegory to faith;
The Moral how to act;
Anagogy our destiny”*

*(A medieval couplet that summarizes the
significance of the four senses, CCC 118).*



Sacred Scripture in the Life of the Church:

“The Bible, an instrument ‘by which God speaks every day to the faithful’, thus becomes a stimulus and source of Christian life for all situations and for each person... Through meditation on and knowledge of the Scriptures, one ‘maintains the equilibrium of the soul’. Only a profound spirit of prayer and the Holy Spirit’s help can introduce us to understanding the Bible. In the interpretation of Sacred Scripture we always need the help of the Holy Spirit” (Benedict XVI, General Audience, 14 Nov. 2007).



Lectio Divina

How to Pray:

- Choose a verse from the Gospel or Epistle to pray
- READ the verse slowly, several times, listening with the "ear of the heart"
- REFLECT on the words, attentive to which word or phrase speaks most to your heart
- RESPOND to the word or phrase that spoke to you, turning it over and over in your heart, offering it up in prayer
- REST in God, sit in silence and listen for how God speaks through that word or phrase





• **Read**

• **Reflect**

Heart

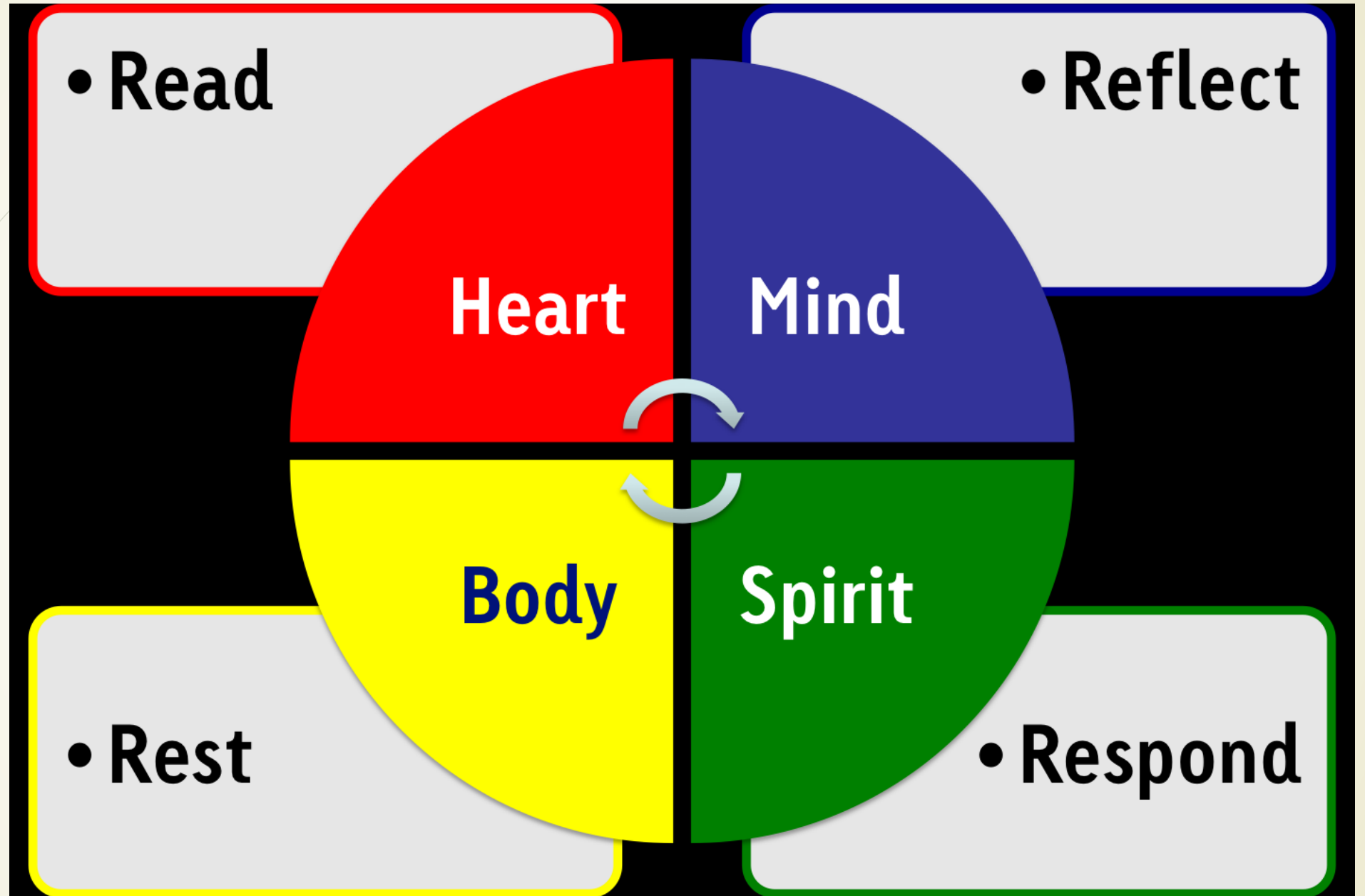
Mind

Body

Spirit

• **Rest**

• **Respond**





The Four R's of Lectio Divina

Lectio (Reading)

Take your time and read the passage. Get a sense of what it is saying. Read the passage a second time. Listen for any words or phrases that strike you, and listen in your heart.

Meditatio (Reflecting)

Read the passage again, slowly. As you pause on the words or phrases that strike you, take time to consider what the word, phrase, or passage means, particularly in your life.

Oratio (Responding)

Read the passage again, slowly. Consider now how God has spoken to you in this passage and respond back to Him. You may want to consider how this passage is asking you to act differently.

Contemplatio (Remaining)

Now take some time to simply remain in the presence of God.

Adapted from the *Catholic Youth Prayer Book*, St. Mary's Press, Winona, MN, 2006.

miles with him. 42 Give to anyone who asks you, and if anyone wants to borrow, do not turn away.

43 'You have heard how it was said, *You will love your neighbour^k* and hate your enemy. 44 But I say this to you, love your enemies and pray for those who persecute you; 45 so that you may be children of your Father in heaven, for he causes his sun to rise on the bad as well as the good, and sends down rain to fall on the upright and the wicked alike. 46 For if you love those who love you, what reward will you get? Do not even the tax collectors do as much? 47 And if you save your greetings for your brothers, are you doing anything exceptional? 48 Do not even the gentiles do as much? You must therefore be perfect, just as your heavenly Father is perfect.'

Almsgiving in secret

6 'Be careful not to parade your uprightness in public to attract attention; otherwise you will lose all reward from your Father in heaven. 2 So when you give alms, do not have it trumpeted before you; this is what the hypocrites do in the synagogues and in the streets to win human admiration. In truth I tell you, they have had their reward. 3 But when you give alms, your left hand must not know what your right is doing; 4 your almsgiving must be secret, and your Father who sees all that is done in secret will reward you.

Prayer in secret

5 'And when you pray, do not imitate the hypocrites: they love to say their prayers standing up in the synagogues and at the street corners for people to see them. In truth I tell you, they have had their reward. 6 But when you pray, go to your private room, shut yourself in, and so pray^a to your Father who is in that secret place, and your Father who sees all that is done in secret will reward you.

5k Lv 19:18. The rest of the sentence is not from the OT.

heard. 8 Do not be like them; you know what you need before you ask him. 9 So you should pray like this:

Our Father in heaven,
may your name be held holy,
10 your kingdom come,
your will be done,
on earth as in heaven.
11 Give us today our daily bread.
12 And forgive us our debts,
as we have forgiven those who are
in debt to us.
13 And do not put us to the test,
but save us from the Evil One.^b

14 'Yes, if you forgive others their failings, your heavenly Father will forgive you yours; 15 but if you do not forgive others, your Father will not forgive your failings either.

Fasting in secret

16 'When you are fasting, do not put on a gloomy look as the hypocrites do: they go about looking unsightly to let people know they are fasting. In truth I tell you, they have had their reward. 17 But when you fast, put scent on your head and wash your face, 18 so that no one will know you are fasting except your Father, who sees all that is done in secret; and your Father who sees all that is done in secret will reward you.

True treasures

19 'Do not store up treasures for yourselves on earth, where moth and woodworm destroy them and thieves can break in and steal. 20 But store up treasures for yourselves in heaven, where neither moth nor woodworm destroy them and thieves cannot break in and steal. 21 For wherever your treasure is, there will your heart be too.

The eye, the lamp of the body

22 'The lamp of the body is the eye; if follows that if your eye is clear, your

6a Is 26:20.

6b Lk 11:2-4.

body will be inside you; that will be

God and

24 'No one can enter the second slave both

Trust in

25 'That is worry about to eat, nor you are to food, and

26 Look at not sow or your heav you not we

27 Can any worry, add of life? 28

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Key Points:

- *All Scripture tells a single story – the story of salvation that culminates in Jesus*
 - *The OT prepares for the New, and the NT fulfills the Old*
 - *The Church, under the guidance of the Spirit, has discerned which books are included in the list (or canon) of authentic Scriptures (CCC 120)*
 - *Bible = 46 OT + 27 NT*
- 



Key Points:

- *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 assurances that their writings teach without error his saving truth (DV11)*
- *Interpretation of the inspired Scripture must be attentive above all to what God wants to reveal through the sacred authors for our salvation”*
- *The Church has always seen the Scriptures as essential to nourish and govern Christian lives (CCC 131)*