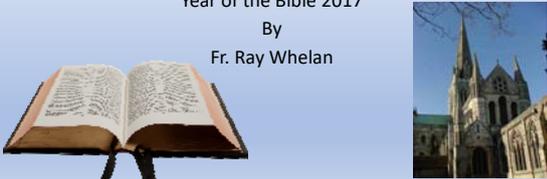


# THE BIBLE AND THE CHURCH

Year of the Bible 2017  
By  
Fr. Ray Whelan



## The Bible – Inspired – not dictated

-  The Bible was not handed down to us on golden plates (like the alleged plates of Mormon)
- The Bible was not dictated by God (as Muslims believe an Archangel told Mohammed exactly what to write)
-  **The Bible was inspired by God** through human beings using all their human and spiritual faculties - A little more about inspiration later  
**The Bible came to us** through the Old & New Covenant Church



## The meaning of 'Church'

- Church is a from a Greek word transliterated as "ecclesia" found in the original Greek texts, which meant generally in secular terms 'assembly'. Used 114 times in N.T. as Followers of Jesus
- The Four marks – Nicene Creed

1. UNITY
2. HOLINESS
3. CATHOLICITY
4. APOSTOLICITY



## What does CATHOLIC mean

- A.D. 107, a bishop, St. Ignatius of Antioch, a disciple of St John the Apostle, first used the term 'catholic' in a letter.
- Early Church vernacular language = Latin
- Universal in Latin is Universalis
- 'Katholikos' comes from two Greek words: kata or kath (meaning "through" or throughout") and holos (meaning "whole") - **Holy**.
- Katholikos used to identify Church from other groups
- Especially Arianism



## The Church is a visible Body

- Irenaeus born in AD 130 in the Tradition of the Apostles and Fathers, wrote, that the Church is "distinctive manifestation of the body of Christ according to the successions of the bishops
- The Fathers in the very early years, all saw that the Church was a **visible and organic body**, not just a spiritual one
- The Church is a Sacrament of salvation to all mankind.**



## The Bible – The Word of God

- So to look at the Bible within the Church, we really have to concentrate on both these terms as they were understood in the early centuries of Christianity
- As an Evangelical Christian I loved the Bible as the Word and still *do!*
- "In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God....And the Word was made flesh, and dwelt among us. (John 1). The Word, Jesus, the Second Person of the Holy Trinity, is in fact *person!**



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### The Bible – The Old Testament

- The Oral Tradition
- Two ‘canons’ or usages
- Rabbinical/Pharisaical; (Jerusalem)
- Alexandrian (Greek speaking Jews/dispersion)
- Septuagint (Greek) – quoted by Jesus and the Apostles
- Term ‘Testament’ or ‘Covenant’ mean the same [used interchangeably] (difference only appearing in Western Translations)



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### Jewish Scriptures Torah - Talmud



### The Bible – The New Testament

- The New Testament of the early church was of course, itself, the Eucharist. Jesus had said at the institution of the Eucharist, **This is my body, this is my blood of the covenant, or Testament.**
- Hebrew Septuagint canon used at Eucharist plus other writings
- Heresies to be excluded – Docetism, Arianism etc. Denying unity of Christ, His Divinity, Incarnation, Eternity and pre-existence
- Right belief deeply affects our relationship with God
- Not just esoteric niceties of theology



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### The New Testament The Earliest Scriptures

- 1, Thessalonians 51 AD
- Mark's Gospel 68-70 AD



### The Bible – Canon

- Athanasius canon widely accepted – 73 Books
- Approved by Pope Damasus (who commissioned Jerome)
- Ratified at Council of Rome in 382
- Then by Council of Hippo 393
- And by Council of Carthage 397
- Oldest New Testament Book 1 Thessalonians circa 51 a.d.
- Latest New Testament Book 2 Peter circa 110 a.d.



### The Bible – Translation from Hebrew & Greek

- Jerome and the Vulgate – into Latin. 4<sup>th</sup> century
- Jerome used Old Hebrew Canon not Septuagint
- Augustine preferred Septuagint
- Vulgate not completed by Jerome
- Jerome used the word apocrypha for some books. It stems from the greek meaning "secret, or hidden"
- Apocrypha does not mean 'mythical' or dubious
- Deuterocanonical, a more accurate term, literally meaning a second or later canon



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### The Reformation

- The Church was in need of reform, but not 'remaking!
- Luther excluded 7 books: Sirach, Tobit, Wisdom, Judith, 1 and 2 Maccabees, and Baruch, and the longer versions of Daniel and Esther.
- Jesus quoted from Septuagint which did include them
- He also wanted to remove several New Testament books including James, Hebrews, Jude, and Revelation
- Justification by Faith Alone excluding 'good works' that flow from that.
- Luther eventually accepted all 27 books of the New Testament that Pope Damasus I had approved of in 382 AD.
- Reformation Bibles therefore had 66 books: 39 O.T & 27 N.T.
- Ancient Bibles had 73 books: 46 O.T & 27 N.T.



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## The Bible –in English



## The King James Bible

- This version, its main edition being 1611, has frequently been termed 'the Authorized Version'. It was to draw on the best of previous translations, mentioned being Tyndale, Matthew's Bible, Coverdale, the Geneva Bible. In fact in at least one place (Hebrew 11:1) the Rheims-Douai version was also pillaged
- The 7 Deuterocanonical' Books (agreed by Athanasius, Damasus and the early Councils) were part of the KJV for 274 years until being removed in the 1880s



## By What Authority

Now we come to the authority for interpretation. As Anglicans, we turn firstly to the The Declaration of Assent, made by deacons, priests and bishops of the Church of England when they are ordained and on each occasion when they take up a new appointment (Canon C 15). Readers and Lay Workers make the declaration, without the words 'and administration of the sacraments', when they are admitted and when they are licensed (Canons E 5, E 6 and E 8).

## The Declaration of Assent

- "The Church of England is part of the One, Holy, Catholic and Apostolic Church, worshipping the one true God, Father, Son and Holy Spirit. It professes the faith uniquely revealed in the Holy Scriptures and set forth in the catholic creeds, which faith the Church is called upon to proclaim afresh in each generation. Led by the Holy Spirit, it has borne witness to Christian truth in its historic formularies, the Thirty-nine Articles of Religion, The Book of Common Prayer and the Ordering of Bishops, Priests and Deacons..."

## Other Aspects of Authority

– see 47 Hooker and see His Three Legged Stool  
Scripture, reason, and tradition



## Luther Adopted Sola Scriptura

- Luther rejected Church tradition and embraced the principle of sola scriptura.
- Luther insisted that scripture was sufficient of itself
- Luther maintains that scripture is clear and needs no interpretation

### Truths not self evident from Sola Scriptura

- Does the Word made flesh have one nature or two? Is he wholly human? Did God die on the cross? Has he a human mind and will, and how are his human mind and will related to the divine mind and will? Has he a human personality?
- The Trinity, Infant Baptism, the Eucharist and other matters which go far beyond the 'plainest meanings' of scripture are enshrined in the decision of early councils, and were eventually accepted by the whole, or nearly the whole, of Christendom.

### Authority – The Lambeth Quadrilateral

- See 49
- (Scripture. Creeds. Sacraments. Episcopate)

### Authority - Lex orandi, lex credendi

### Inerrancy – can the Bible contain errors?

### Inspiration

### Second Vatican Council and ARCIC

See 51 Anglican and Roman Catholic International Commission

## When we read the Bible



- We have to respect the mystery of inspiration when we go about the task of reading and interpreting the Bible
- We need to have faith in what the writers themselves say; for they wish to convey not their own personal take on matters, but the divine perspective.
- Faith does not abolish reason or replace it. Faith builds upon reason as grace builds upon nature
- Readers of the Bible should be like Ezekiel in the Old Testament and John the Seer in the New. We need to "eat" the sacred texts—consume them—make them part of us. We have to assimilate the Word as food. We have to find the bread of life in Scripture just as we find it in the Eucharist

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## Sacred Apostolic Tradition – St Paul

- The Greek word is paradidomi (παραδίδωμι) and it means 'to hand over'. In Latin it becomes tradere, from which we get the words 'tradition' (handing on wisdom of the past)
- Paul to the Thessalonians – "Therefore, brethren, stand fast, and hold the **traditions** which ye have been taught, whether by **word**, or our **epistle**. = Letter. 2 Thess 2:15
- Paul to the Corinthians – "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
- St Peter -First of all you must understand this, that no prophecy of scripture is a matter of one's own interpretation (2 Peter 1:20)

## Sacred Apostolic Tradition – The Church

- See 53

## What do Anglicans believe?

- The General Synod Debate of Friday 13 February 2004 concluded 'That the Synod do take note of this Report.'
- In the application of The Gift of Authority, we have to bear in mind the three main strands of Anglicanism as it has developed which are:
  - The Catholic or so called 'Traditionalist' strand.
  - The Protestant or Evangelical (Fundamentalist) strand
  - The Liberal or Doctrinally Diverse and 'Total Inclusivist' strand

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## Final Authority & Personal Application

- The only logical and inspired conclusion has to be that our ultimate appeal is reflected in the Canon named after St. Vincent of Lerins (d. 445) who wrote

"In the CHRISTIAN (*Catholic*) Church itself, all possible care must be taken, that we hold that faith which has been believed everywhere, always, by all".

## Final Authority & Personal application

- St. Bonaventure wrote

"The substance and fruit of holy Scripture is very specific: the fullness of eternal happiness..... our hearts should kneel down and ask the Father to give us, through his Son and the Holy Spirit, true knowledge of Jesus and of his love. Once we know him and love him like this, we shall be made firm in faith and deeply rooted in love, and we can know the breadth, length, depth and height of holy Scripture.. The desires of the saints draw them towards the Holy Trinity, in which all that is good and true is and finds its completion"

## Proclaiming Sacred Scriptures

- Proclaiming the Scriptures in the assembly was an ancient Jewish custom
- in the days of Nehemiah, and his co-leader of the Jews in Jerusalem in his day, Ezra, the practice of reading the Torah in public was particularly established
- In the New Covenant (Testament) Church the Scriptures were PROCLAIMED (not just 'read out').
- CHRIST IS PRESENT IN HIS WORD PROCLAIMED, especially in the Eucharistic Assembly. (*Verbum Domini*). Readers must be especially aware of this.
- The Sacred Scriptures are also for devotional and 'private' reading and study



## Practical Plans for Reading the Bible

See 54

## Modern Translations

- Literal translation. Attempts to keep the exact words and phrases of the original. Examples: R.S.V, KJV.
- Dynamic equivalent (thought for thought). Examples: Jerusalem Bible (JB), New International Version (NIV), Revised English Bible (REB).
- Free translation (paraphrase). Translates the ideas from the original text but without being constrained by the original words or language. Examples: The Living Bible (TLB), The Message. **Not for doctrine or public proclamation!**
- So called 'NEW', e.g NRSV, NJB in being 'gender neutral' lose meanings of original texts i.e. Christology, Doctrine of God etc

## Summary

- God used people of the Old and New Covenant Churches, by Inspiration, to write the books of the Bible.
- The Bible is God's written revelation of Himself
- Tradition is God's charismatic revelation of Himself rooted in Scripture *ibid* 33
- The Church decided which books were or were not canonical
- The Church is defined by Bishop Ignatius of Antioch 107 AD
- The Church alone can interpret Scripture for doctrine 2 Peter 1:20
- God speaks to us personally through the Scriptures

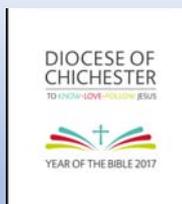
## Hungry World/ Christians

- Studying/reading the Bible not just an intellectual exercise
- The world is hungry: "Behold, the days are coming," says the Lord God, "when I will send a famine on the land; not a famine of bread, nor a thirst for water, but of **hearing the words of the Lord**." Amos 8:11 RSV.
- We have to open the door of our hearts: "Behold, I stand at the door and knock; if any one hears my voice and opens the door, **I will come in to him and eat with him, and he with me**" Rev 3:20 RSV.
- The Lord says "I am the Lord your God..... Open your mouth wide, and I will fill it. Psalm 81:10 NIV



## Eating The Bible!

- So, The Church gives us the doctrine. But we must always remember that the Bible speaks to us personally
- So let's love but more importantly, READ and EAT our Bibles. Eat in the sense of **Jeremiah** (15:16) "When your words came, I ate them; they were my joy and my heart's delight, for I bear your name, LORD God Almighty".
- **Ezekiel** (3:3) "Son of man, eat this scroll that I give you and fill your stomach with it." Then I ate it; and it was in my mouth as sweet as honey.
- And in the song of Psalm 119 v 103 - How sweet are your words to my taste, sweeter than honey to my mouth!



## Jewish Scriptures Torah - Talmud



- Torah, (the Pentateuch) the first five books of the Bible (Torah has wider meanings, including of course the Gemara and the Mishnah together known as the Talmud – oral law and rabbinic commentary. This was completed in the 5th century A.D. which added a plethora of additional rules.
- The Old Testament consists of many distinct books over a period of centuries. The **Tanakh** or **Hebrew Bible** canon formed in stages, first the **Pentateuch** by around 400 BC, then the Prophets during the **Hasmonean dynasty** (140-116 BC), and finally the remaining books up to the second century b.c.

## The Bible –in English

- The first steps towards putting the Bible into English seem to have been taken by the Venerable Bede. Before Bede we know only of paraphrases
- **Wyclif's Bible** The work of John Wyclif (c. 1320-1384)
- **Gutenberg** and the Invention of Printing
- **William Tyndale** - 1536
- **Others** - Coverdale's Bible: 'Matthews Bible': Great Bible of 1541: The Geneva Bible of 1560. The '**Bishops' Bible**' of 1569



## Other Aspects of Authority

- **Richard Hooker**. 16th century English Anglican Theologian - **Scripture, reason, and tradition**. This "Three-Legged Stool" has become the essential feature of a distinct "Anglican Ethos."
- Pursued by The **Oxford Movement**. Led by John Keble, John Henry Newman, and others.
- **Sola Scriptura or Two Sources of Revelation?**
- Luther insisted that scripture was sufficient of itself
- Problem! Different readers understand the same written words in different senses. See the following:



## By What Authority – The Lambeth Quadrilateral

• The Chicago-Lambeth Quadrilateral is a summation of the Anglican approach to theology, worship and church structure and is often cited as a basic summary of the essentials of Anglican identity. The four points are:

1. The Holy Scriptures of the Old and New Testaments, as "containing all things necessary to salvation," and as being the rule and ultimate standard of faith.
  2. The Creeds (specifically, the Apostles' and Nicene) as the sufficient statement of Christian faith;
  3. The dominical sacraments of Baptism and Holy Communion;
  4. The historic episcopate locally adapted.
- The four points originated in resolutions of the Episcopal Church in the United States of 1886 and were (more significantly) modified and finalised in the 1888 Lambeth Conference of bishops of the Anglican Communion. Primarily intended as a means of pursuing ecumenical dialogue with the Roman Catholic Church, the Quadrilateral soon became a "sine qua non" (without which it could not be) for essential Anglican identity.

## By what authority - Lex orandi, lex credendi

- Lex orandi, lex credendi (Latin loosely translated as "the law of praying [is] the law of believing") "What you pray is what you believe" is a motto in Christian tradition, which means that it is prayer which leads to belief, or that it is liturgy which leads to theology. It refers to the relationship between worship and belief, and is an ancient Christian principle which provided a measure for developing the ancient Christian creeds, the canon of scripture and other doctrinal matters based on the prayer texts of the Church, that is, the Church's liturgy. In the Early Church, there was liturgical tradition before there was a common creed and before there was an officially sanctioned biblical canon. These liturgical traditions provided the theological framework for establishing the creeds and canon.

## Inerrancy – can the Bible contain errors?

- The early chapters of Genesis certainly do not teach about history, physics or biology
- The gospels can be inaccurate about history - the census in Luke 2:2; ascribing the authorship of ALL the psalms to David (Mark 12:37).
- The Second Vatican Council in its revised document 'Dei Verbum' – The Word of God, left some questions blandly open: **'we must acknowledge that the books of scripture teach firmly, faithfully and without error such truth as God, for the sake of our salvation, wished the biblical text to contain'** (no. 11).
- The authority and reliability of God's Word in Scripture stands or falls with the authority and reliability of God's Word Incarnate – Jesus Himself

## Inspiration

- There is no clearer statement than Paul's affirmation in 2 Timothy 3:16-17: written about 100 a.d. *"All scripture is inspired by God"*
- In the Greek, Inspired means **"breathed by God."**
- TRANSLATION – Public worship - Synagogues use Hebrew, with some Aramaic. Mosques use classical Arabic. Both have English texts available –but not proclaimed
- The Church these days proclaims the Sacred Scriptures in translated English. Not ALL translations approved as reliable renderings of the Hebrew, Greek and Latin

## Second Vatican Council and ARCIC = Anglican and Roman Catholic International Commission

- **Dei Verbum - A New Focus, particularly in Dei Verbum (The Word of God)**
- Gift and Acceptance - Revelation is seen as a divine act of self-revelation, God's own self-disclosure, made not only to the mind but also to the heart.
- ARCIC - **The Gift of authority debated in Synod 2004** The Statement deals with the question of the relationship between Scripture, Tradition and the exercise of authority. It includes the *sensus fidei* (that is, the understanding of faith) **of the believer**
- This means 'an active capacity for spiritual discernment, an intuition that is formed by worshipping and living in communion as a faithful member of the Church'

## Sacred Apostolic Tradition – The Church

- Big "T" = **Apostolic Tradition**. Small "t" –man made
- John the Apostle -But there are also many other things which Jesus did; were every one of them to be written, I suppose that the world itself could not contain the books that would be written. John 21:25
- Dei Verbum (It is clear, therefore, that Sacred Tradition, Sacred Scripture and the teaching authority of the Church, in accord with God's most wise design, are so linked and joined together that one cannot stand without the others, and that all together and each in its own way under the action of the one Holy Spirit contribute effectively to the salvation of souls.
- This living transmission, accomplished in the Holy Spirit, is called Tradition, since it is distinct from Sacred Scripture, though closely connected to it. (*rooted in it RKW*) Through Tradition, "the Church, in her doctrine, life and worship, perpetuates and transmits to every generation all that she herself is, all that she believes."<sup>39</sup> "The sayings of the holy Fathers are a witness to the life-giving presence of this Tradition, showing how its riches are poured out in the practice and life of the Church, in her belief and her prayer CCC S1 Art 2 para 78 Pp 24

#### PRACTICAL PLANS FOR BIBLE READING

- Several of these covered in first talk
- Bible Alive notes. Bible Reading Fellowship notes. Scripture Union Notes
- Study Bibles
- Commentaries
- Best of all – follow the Church's Lectionary for the Eucharist. 3 Year Cycle for Sundays 2 Year Cycle for weekdays
- The whole Bible covered in 3 years.