

THE BIBLE and TRADITION

KNOW YOUR FAITH SERIES

If you ask any Protestant how can one come to know the TRUTH as revealed by the Word of God, they will tell you that the Bible is the ONLY source. They will also tell you that Catholics are wrong when they put TRADITION on the same level as the Bible.

What is the Catholic response to that?

Jesus sent his apostles to preach the Gospel to all nations for the salvation of souls. (Matthew 28).

“In order that the full and living Gospel might always be preserved in the Church the apostles left bishops as their successors. They gave them ‘their own position of teaching authority’. Indeed, the apostolic preaching expressed in a special way in the inspired books, was to be preserved in a continuous line of succession until the end of time.” (CCC 77).

The first generation of Christians did not yet have a written New Testament, and the New Testament itself demonstrates the process of living Tradition. (CCC 81).

In the first century of the Church existence, long before any books of the New Testament were written, the transmission or passing on of the Gospel was done orally (preaching): this is what we call SACRED TRADITION.

Only in the 4th and 5th centuries the Catholic Church, under the guidance of the Holy Spirit, decided which writings conveyed Apostolic truth and were inspired by God and which were not.

“Since the Bible is not self-interpreting, we look to the Tradition of the Apostles - communicated in the writings of the early Church Fathers and present in the teachings of the Church’s Magisterium throughout the course of history, for the correct interpretation of crucial Biblical texts in order to formulate doctrine.” (Unabridged Christianity- Fr. M. P. Romero).

Sacred Tradition (capital T, as opposed to changeable small “t” men-made traditions) and the Magisterium of the Church provide us with the correct interpretation of the Bible, in order to avoid the multiplication of conflicting private interpretations which gave rise to more than thirty thousand Christian denominations among the Protestants.

GOD’S REVELATION by Jesus is contained in both SCRIPTURE and TRADITION: they are bound closely together. They must be accepted and honoured with equal sentiments of devotion and reverence. (CCC 80-82).