

DIOCESE OF BOISE

OFFICE OF CATECHESIS



The Office of Catechesis supports the mission of the Diocese of Boise by assisting the Bishop in carrying out his role as the chief catechist of the diocese.



Catechist Certification

Scripture

Kathy Barkdull, Presenter

Welcome to the Diocese of Boise Catechist Training!

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Opening Prayer

Let your scripture be my chaste delight...

O Lord, perfect me and reveal those pages to me!

See, your voice is my joy. Give me what I love...

May the inner secrets of your words be laid open to me when
I knock.

This I beg by our Lord Jesus Christ in whom are hiding all the
treasures of wisdom and knowledge. These are the
treasures I seek in your books.

Amen

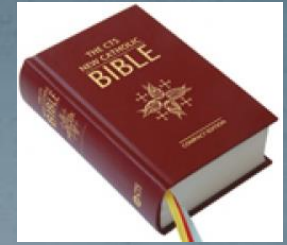
St. Augustine, The Confessions

Introductions

What do you find most intimidating in
the Bible?



Bibliophobia: Fear of the Bible



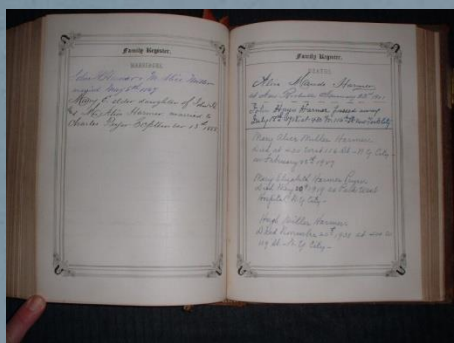
- 🤔 It's too long!
- 🤔 It has too many names I don't recognize!
- 🤔 It has too many places I've never hear of!
- 🤔 It uses images that don't belong to our time and culture!
- 🤔 It's not like other books!
- 🤔 You need to be a Scripture scholar to interpret the Bible!
- 🤔 I don't know anything about Judaism and that's all the Old Testament talks about!
- 🤔 All that talk about loving your enemy, turning the other cheek, blessings on being poor, dying in order to live is hard to digest!
- 🤔 Catholics don't read the Bible, that's a Protestant thing to do!

I was never taught to read the Bible...



Prior to Vatican II, only the clergy and those in religious life were thought capable of accurately interpreting Scripture.

Prior to Vatican II, Family Bibles were used primarily to record births, deaths and marriages.



Prior to Vatican II, Catholics focused only on the “real presence” in the Eucharist and forgot the “real presence” of the Lord in the Word.



Vatican II changed all that with...
*Dei Verum: the Dogmatic
Constitution on Divine Revelation*





Dei Verbum

- One of four “Constitutions” and only the second to be titled “Dogmatic” – meaning holding the highest level teaching authority (the magisterium) in the Church.
- Less doctrinal focus with a more pastoral tone that matched the vision of St. John XXIII for the Council.
- Published in 1965 at the end of the Council.

Balance between Word & Sacrament – not a new concept.

“God has two treasures for which he made the church his depository; the first is his body and precious blood; the second is the Word of his Scripture and divine testament, which is the deposit of his secrets and divine wishes...Now this holy treasure of the Sacred Scriptures has been given into the hands of his bride the Church by the goodness of God...”

St. Augustine quoted during the Council.

“The church has always venerated the divine scriptures as it has venerated the Body of the Lord, in that it never ceases, above all in the sacred liturgy, to partake of the bread of life and offer it to the faithful from the one table of the word of God and the Body of Christ....”

DV 21

“Access to sacred scripture ought to be widely available to the Christian faithful. For this reason the church, from the very beginning, made its own the ancient translation of the Old Testament called the Septuagint; it honors also the other eastern translations, and the Latin translations, especially that known as the Vulgate. But since the word of God must be readily available at all times, the church, with motherly concern, sees to it that suitable and correct translations are made into various languages, especially from the original texts of the sacred books. If, when the opportunity presents itself and the authorities of the church agree, these translations are made jointly with churches separated from us, they can then be used by all Christians.”

Divine Revelation



“Hearing the word of God reverently and proclaiming it confidently, this holy synod makes its own the words of St. John: “We proclaim to you the eternal life which was with the Father and was made manifest to us – that which we have seen and heard we proclaim also to you, so that you may have fellowship with us; and our fellowship is with the Father and with his Son Jesus Christ” (1 Jn 1:2-3). Following, then, in the steps of the councils of Trent and Vatican I, the synod wishes to set for the authentic teaching on divine revelation and its transmission. For it wants the whole world to hear the summons to salvation, so that through hearing it may believe, through belief it may hope, through hope it may come to love.”

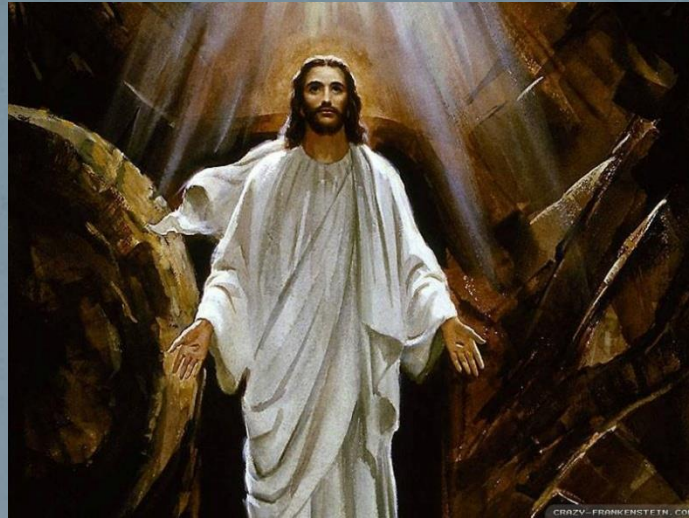
DV 1

God's Initiative

“It pleased God, in his goodness and wisdom, to reveal himself and to make known the mystery of his will, which was that people can draw near to the Father, through Christ the Word made flesh, in the Holy Spirit, and thus became sharers in the divine nature... The pattern of this revelation unfolds through deeds and words which are intrinsically connected: works performed by God in the history of salvation show forth and confirm the doctrine and realities signified by the words; the words, for their part, proclaim the works, and bring to light the mystery they contain. The most intimate truth thus revealed about God and human salvation shines forth for us in Christ, who is himself both the mediator and the sum total of revelation.”

- Revelation is God's own desire to reveal himself to humanity.
- The invisible God making himself known visibly so that humans might become friends of God.
- A gracious act of loving friendship – God inviting us to fellowship!
- God reveals himself through creation and especially through the history of salvation that leads us to God's Word – Jesus Christ.

Jesus Christ – the Final Revelation



- Revelation begins with God and ends with God.
- Revelation is not just words about God, but a living encounter with God.
- Christ is the definitive revealer of this loving gesture of God.
- By our obedient response of faith through the Holy Spirit, we show ourselves to be God's humble servants, the creatures God made us to be.



The Transmission of Divine Revelation

“God graciously arranged that what he had once revealed for the salvation of all people should last forever in its entirety and be transmitted to all generations...

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.” This sacred tradition, then, and the sacred scripture of both Testaments, are like a mirror, in which the church, during its pilgrim journey here on earth, contemplates God, from whom it receives everything, until such time as it is brought to see him face to face as he really is (1 Jn 3:2)”

DV 7

Sources of Revelation:

Sacred Tradition and Sacred Scripture

“Sacred tradition and sacred scripture, then, are bound closely together, and communicate one with the other. Flowing from the same divine well-spring, both of them merge, in a sense, and move towards the same goal. Sacred scripture is the utterance of God put down as it is in writing under the inspiration of the Holy Spirit. And tradition transmits in the entirety the word of God which has been entrusted to the apostles by Christ the Lord and the Holy Spirit; it transmits it to the successors of the apostles so that, enlightened by the Spirit of truth, they may faithfully preserve, expound and disseminate it by their preaching. Thus is that the church does not draw its certainty about all revealed truths from the holy scriptures alone. Hence, both scripture and tradition must be accepted and honored with equal devotion and reverence.”

Scripture and Tradition

- Both Scripture and tradition come from the same source (God).
- Scripture is the word of God under the guidance of the Holy Spirit.
- Tradition takes the word of God and preserves it through the apostles and their successors, who are also under the guidance of the same Holy Spirit.
- Scripture and Tradition make up a single sacred deposit of the word of God entrusted to the Church.
- The Scriptures gave birth to the tradition and bestow on the church its apostolic and missionary identity.

The Magisterium

- Christ gave the church authority to exercise control over this deposit of faith.
- The Magisterium – living teaching office – of the church.
- The church's power and authority to teach and maintain the faith authentically, under the guidance of the Holy Spirit and in the name of Jesus Christ.
- Only the Magisterium can authentically interpret the Scriptures but this power is to be exercised as a servant, one who hears the Word as all believers must hear it, in order to teach it authentically.

Divine Interpretation

“Those things revealed by God which are contained and presented in the text of sacred scripture have been written under the inspiration of the Holy Spirit. For holy mother church, relying on the faith of the apostolic age, accepts as sacred and canonical the books of the Old and the New Testaments, whole and entire, with all their parts, on the grounds that, written under the inspiration of the Holy Spirit, they have God as their author, and have been handed on as such to the church itself. To compose the sacred books, God chose certain men who, all the while he employed them in this task, made full use of their powers and faculties 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.”

DV 11

“Seeing that, in sacred scripture, God speaks through human beings in human fashion, it follows that interpreters of sacred scripture, if they are to ascertain what God has wished to communicate to us, should carefully search out the meaning which the sacred writers really had in mind, that meaning which God had thought well to manifest through the medium of their words.”

DV 12

“In order to discover *the sacred authors’ intention*, the reader must take into account the conditions of their time and culture, the literary genres in use at the 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.”

CCC 110

Criteria for Interpreting Scripture

- Pay attention to the content and unity of the whole Scripture.
- Read the Scripture within the living Tradition of the whole Church - Interpretation does not take place in a vacuum.
- Mind the analogy of faith, that is, the coherence of teaching.

CCC 112-114

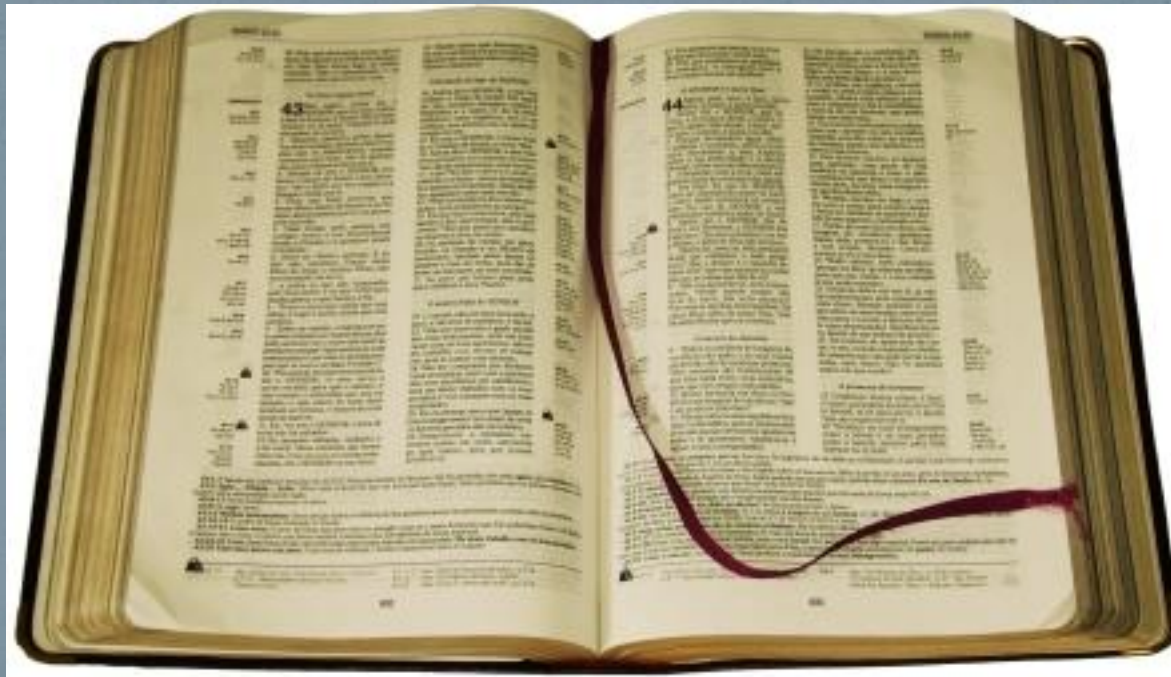
The Senses of Scripture

- Literal Sense – the meaning conveyed by the words of Scripture and discovered by exegesis (critical explanation or interpretation), following the rules of sound interpretation. All other senses of Scripture are based on the literal.
- Spiritual Sense
 1. Allegorical Sense – A profound understanding of events by recognizing their significance in Christ.
 2. Moral Sense – Events reported in Scripture that lead us to act justly.
 3. Anagogical Sense – View realities and events in terms of their eternal significance.

The Literal speaks of deeds; Allegory to faith;
The Moral how to act; Anagogy our destiny.

CCC 115-118

Interpretation Tools: Forms of Criticism



Historical Criticism

- What was happening at the time?
- What were the people experiencing?
- Who was the audience for whom the author was writing?
- Early scriptures were passed down orally for centuries, sometimes taking on the flavor of those passing them on.
- As long as the scripture was said to have been from the tradition of an individual, it was proper to add that person's name to the title of the book.

Textual Criticism

- Ideally Textual Criticism would be going back to the original texts to determine the author's intended meaning.
- Since we do not have the original texts, we have to rely on the earliest manuscripts available which are copies of the original works.
- Many of the early manuscripts contain inconsistencies among the different copies.
- Textual criticism tries to determine what they said in the original language so the best interpretation can be made.
- Dead Sea Scrolls - 1947

Form Criticism

- Form Criticism attempts to determine what type of literature is being used, how that form of literature was understood in its time, and how we are to understand it today.
- Each literary form has a unique purpose and a proper place depending on the message, the time and the audience.

Source Criticism

- It was common practice for one author to use other sources and edit, delete, incorporate, or expand upon them.
- Source criticism attempts to determine what previous sources an author may have available and how that source may have influenced the piece we are reading.
- We know that Matthew and Luke relied heavily upon Mark's gospel to write their own.
- Matthew and Luke also have verses in common that are not in Mark.
- Matthew and Luke were not written at the same time, in the same place, or by the same author.

Redaction Criticism

- Redaction criticism attempts to discover what portions of Scripture may have been altered or affected by later editors and why.
- These alterations should not change our understanding of the validity of the Scripture but provides a window into the minds of people who were attempting to do just what we are trying to do: discover a way of making God's Word speak to the present age.

The Canon of Scripture

“It was by the apostolic Tradition that the Church discerned which writings are to be included in the list of the sacred books. This complete list is called the canon of Scripture. It includes 46 books for the Old Testament (45 if we count Jeremiah and Lamentations as one) and 27 for the New.”

CCC 120

The Process of Deciding the Canon



Old Testament Canon

1st Century after Christ

- Rabbis in Palestine formed the canon of Hebrew Scriptures from the 39 that were written in Hebrew and had existed for a significant period of time.
- Greek-speaking Jews used an Old Testament canon made up of 46 books with some written in Greek or were of more recent authorship than those in the Hebrew Canon.
- Early Christians used both Canons & opinions were divided on the extra 7 books.

5th Century

- St. Jerome translated the Bible into Latin (the Vulgate) & referred to the 7 books as the apocrypha meaning “hidden.”
- St. Jerome considered these 7 books to be outside of the canon.
- The standing of these 7 books were called into question for many centuries.

16th Century Reformation

- During the Reformation, Protestants established an Old Testament canon using only the 39 books dismissing the apocryphal books.
- The Catholic Church at the Council of Trent definitively affirmed the canon with the 7 apocryphal books referring to them as deuterocanonical meaning “second canon.”

Criteria for determining New Testament Scripture for the Canon

- The author must be an apostle or have a close connection with an apostle.
- The book must have been accepted by the body of Christ at large.
- The book had to contain consistency of doctrine and orthodox teaching.
- The book had to bear evidence of high moral and spiritual values that would reflect a work of the Holy Spirit as the divine Author.
- It must be recognized that it was God, and God alone, who determined which books belonged in the Bible. God, via the inspiration of the Spirit, imparted to His followers what He had already decided.

New Testament Canon

- Very early on, some of the New Testament books were recognized as inspired.
- Paul considered Luke's writings to be authoritative.
- Peter referred to Paul's writings as Scripture.
- Clement of Rome mentioned at least eight New Testament books (A.D. 95).
- Ignatius of Antioch acknowledged about seven books (A.D. 115).

- The first "canon" was the Muratorian Canon, compiled in A.D. 170, which included all of the New Testament books except Hebrews, James, and 3 John.
- Polycarp, a disciple of John the apostle, acknowledged 15 books (A.D. 108).
- Irenaeus mentioned 21 books (A.D. 185).
- Hippolytus recognized 22 books (A.D. 170-235).
- The Council of Laodicea (A.D. 363) concluded that only the Old Testament (along with the Apocrypha) and the 27 books of the New Testament were to be read in the churches.



- **St. Pope Damasus decreed the final canon of Scripture at the Council of Rome in 382**
- **The Councils of Hippo (A.D. 393) and Carthage (A.D. 397) reaffirmed the same 27 books as authoritative.**
- **Council of Trent codified the canon of New Testament Scripture after the reformation. (1545-1563)**



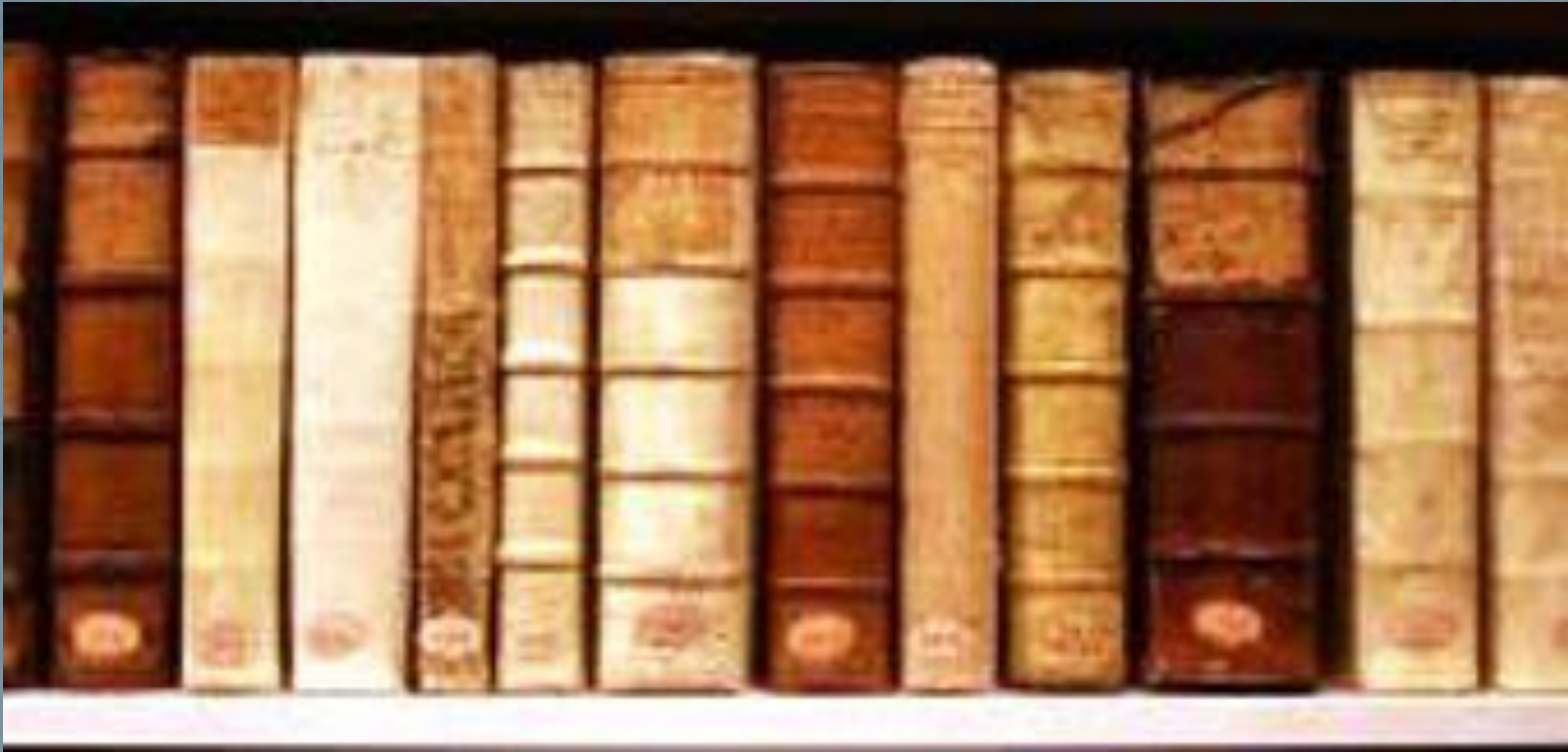
The Old Testament

Genesis	Exodus	Leviticus
Numbers	Deuteronomy	Joshua
Judges	Ruth	1 and 2 Samuel
1 and 2 Kings	1 and 2 Chronicles	Ezra
Nehemiah	Tobit	Judith
Esther	1 and 2 Maccabees	Job
Psalms	Proverbs	Ecclesiastes
Song of Songs	Wisdom of Solomon	Sirach (Ecclesiasticus)
Isaiah	Jeremiah	Lamentations
Baruch	Exekiel	Daniel
Hosea	Joel	Amos
Obadiah	Johah	Micah
Nahum	Habakkuk	Zephaniah
Haggai	Zachariah	Malachi

The New Testament

Matthew	Mark	Luke
John	Acts of the Apostles	Romans
1 and 2 Corinthians	Galatians	Ephesians
Philippians	Colossians	1 and 2 Thessalonians
1 and 2 Timothy	Titus	Philemon
Letter to the Hebrews	Letters of James	1 and 2 Peter
1, 2 and 3 John	Jude	Revelation

Types of Books of the Bible



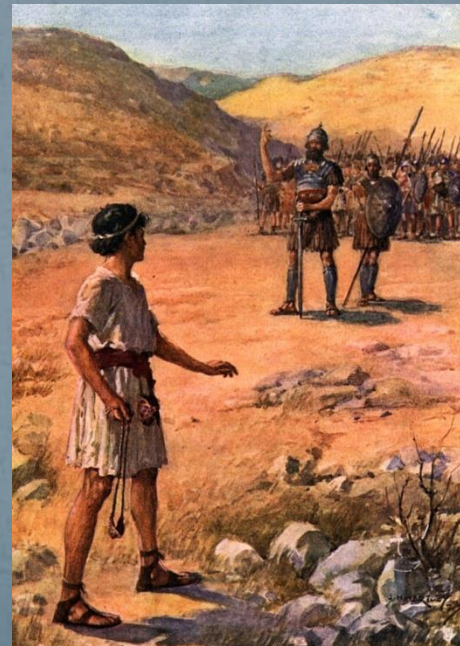
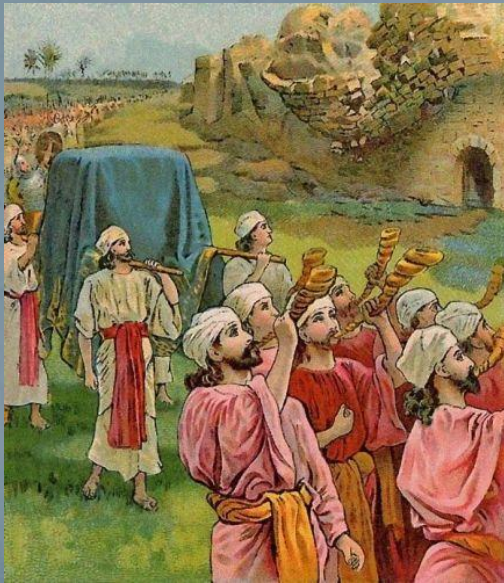
Pentateuch (Torah)

- First five books of the Old Testament: Genesis, Exodus, Leviticus, Numbers, Deuteronomy.
- The beginnings of the relationship between God and the people of Israel.
- Central focus is the Exodus event.



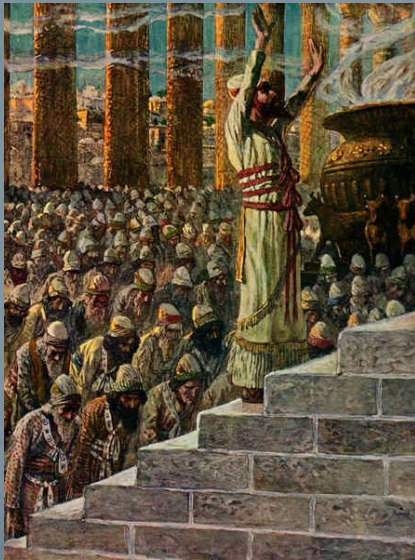
Historical Books

- Joshua, Judges, Ruth, 1 & 2 Samuel, 1 & 2 Kings, 1 & 2 Chronicles, Ezra, Nehemiah, Tobit, Judith, Esther, 1 & 2 Maccabees.
- The story of the people of Israel who, under various leaders, fought to establish and keep the promised land.



Wisdom Books

- Job, Psalms, Proverbs, Ecclesiastes, Song of Songs, Book of Wisdom, Sirach.
- The wisdom teachings of the people of Israel that were collected over thousands of years wandering in the desert, living in the Promised Land, worshiping in the temple, and struggling through the exile.



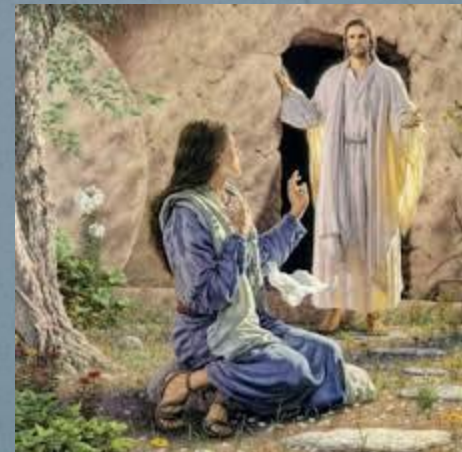
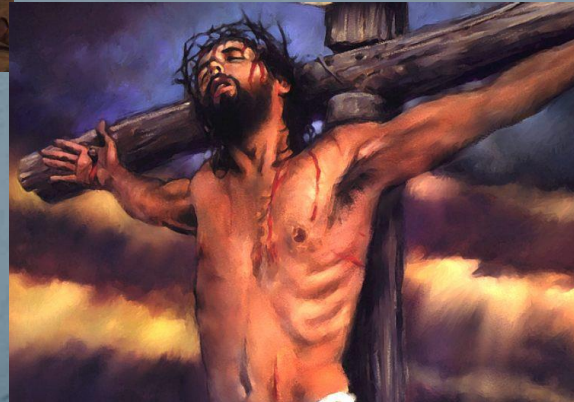
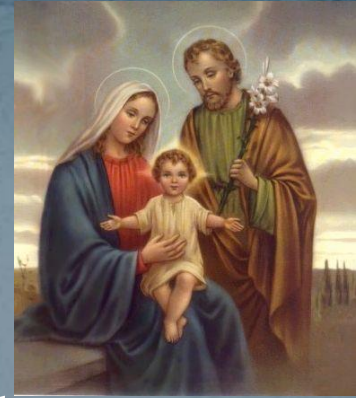
Prophetic Books

- Isaiah, Jeremiah, Lamentations, Baruch, Ezekiel, Daniel, Hosea, Joel, Amos, Obadiah, Jonah, Micah, Nahum, Habakkuk, Zephaniah, Haggai, Zechariah, Malachi.
- The purpose was to call the people of Israel to return to their past fidelity to God lest they face dire consequences. Held out hope during the Exile.



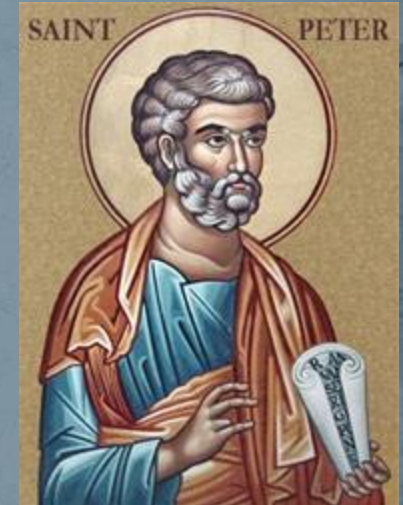
The Gospels

- Matthew, Mark, Luke, and John
- Sacred stories of our Christian faith and heritage: stories of the life, teachings, miracles, Passion, death, and Resurrection of Jesus of Nazareth.



Acts of the Apostles

- Only one book.
- An account of the experience of the early Christian Community.



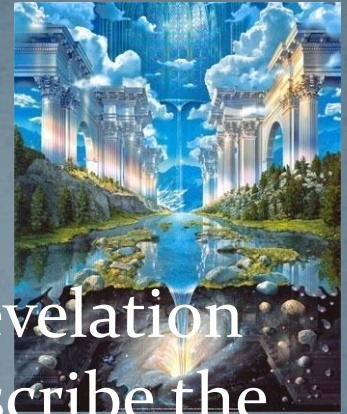
Epistles or Letters

- Romans, 1st & 2nd Corinthians, Galatians, Ephesians, Philippians, Colossians, 1st & 2nd Thessalonians, 1st & 2nd Timothy, Titus, Philemon, Hebrews, James, 1st & 2nd Peter, 1st, 2nd, 3rd John, Jude.
- Letter addressed to communities of Christians and their leaders designed to teach, admonish, encourage, correct and update the various churches.



Book of Revelation

- Last book of the Bible.
- Written in apocalyptic style, the Book of Revelation uses symbols and figurative language to describe the eternal struggle between good and evil. Uplifting message that good has and always will prevail.



Major Genres in the Old Testament

- **Foundational Myths & Legends** – origins of the world, first humans, etc.
- **Legal Codes** - laws and instructions by which people are to live.
- **Genealogies** – inter-relationships between peoples.
- **Annals** - semi-historic narrative focusing on political & military exploits of its leaders.
- **Prophetic Books** – oracles or words of God spoken to the people through human intermediaries and the symbolic actions they perform.
- **Psalms/Odes/Songs** – poetic lyrics of songs/hymns for communal worship and individual prayer.
- **Prayers/Laments** – words addressed by people to God reflecting situations of crisis or lament.
- **Proverbs** – sayings or truths containing advice on how to live well.
- **Wisdom Literature** – inspirational stories encouraging people to live wisely.
- **Apocalyptic** – symbolic narratives that interpret historical crises through God's eyes to provide hope for the future.

Major Genres in the New Testament

- **Gospels** – proclamations of the “good news” about Jesus to establish or strengthen people’s faith, semi-historical portraits of the life, teachings and actions of Jesus.
- **Acts** – partial narrative account of the beginnings and growth of early Christianity (actions of a few missionary leaders).
- **Letters** – real letters addressing practical and theological issues relevant to particular communities.
- **Church Orders** – instructions for the practical organization of religious communities.
- **Testament** – a dying person’s last wishes and instructions to their successors.
- **Homily/Sermon** – exegetical sermon that cites and interprets older biblical texts in reference to Jesus.
- **Epistles/Encyclicals** – “circular letters” intended for a broader audience.
- **Apocalypse** – vivid, symbolic narrative that reveals God’s views about a historical crisis to provide hope for the future.

Church Documents on Scripture after *Dei Verum*

- Scripture and Christology, Pontifical Biblical Commission, 1984
- The Interpretation of the Bible in the Church, Pontifical Biblical Commission, 1993
- Catechism of the Catholic Church, St. John Paul II, 1997
- The Jewish People and Their Sacred Scriptures in the Christian Bible, Pontifical Biblical Commission, 2002
- The Bible and Morality: Biblical Roots of Christian Conduct, Pontifical Biblical Commission, 2008
- *Verbum Domini* The Word of the Lord, Pope Benedict XVI, 2010
- *Evangelii Gaudium* The Joy of the Gospel, Pope Francis, 2013

THE CALL:

TO BE A DISCIPLE

And the Importance of
Scripture

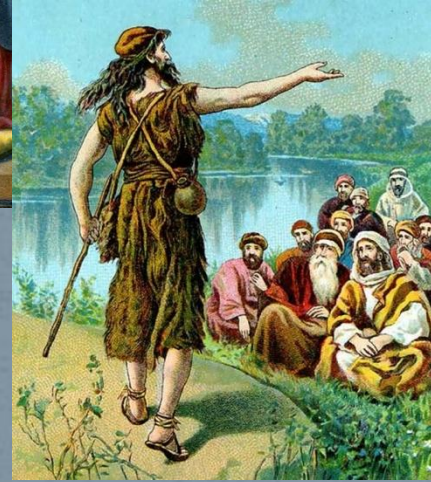
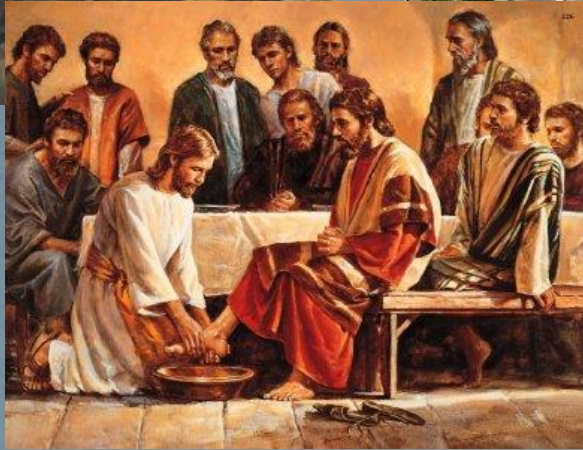
The Joy of the Gospel

The word of God constantly shows us how God challenges those who believe in him “to go forth”. Abraham received the call to set out for a new land (cf. *Gen 12:1-3*). Moses heard God’s call: “Go, I send you” (*Ex 3:10*) and led the people towards the promised land (cf. *Ex 3:17*). To Jeremiah God says: “To all whom I send you, you shall go” (*Jer 1:7*). In our day Jesus’ command to “go and make disciples” echoes in the changing scenarios and ever new challenges to the Church’s mission of evangelization, and all of us are called to take part in this new missionary “going forth”. Each Christian and every community must discern the path that the Lord points out, but all of us are asked to obey his call to go forth from our own comfort zone in order to reach all the “peripheries” in need of the light of the Gospel.

Scripture for the Disciple's Journey

The Bible serves as a source of guidance for our spiritual journey. The events and teachings were recorded for our salvation and the salvation of the whole world.

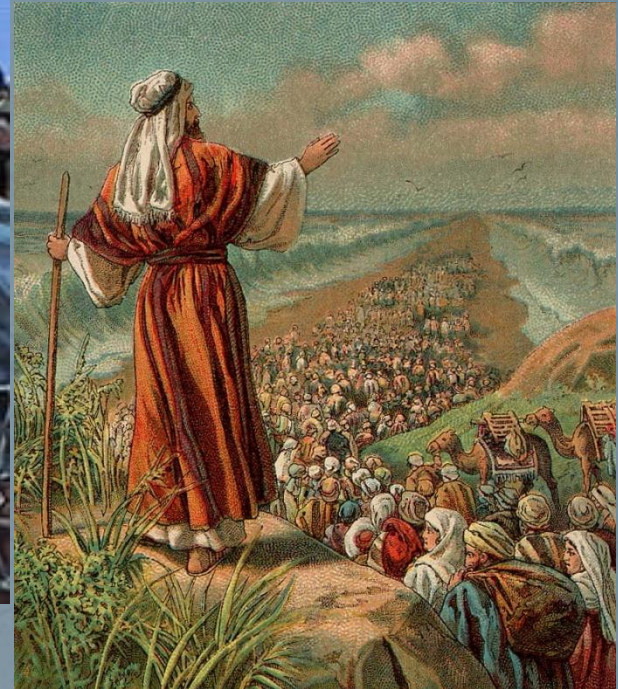
The Bible is full of stories that are the story of our life and the life of the Christian Community. These stories are considered sacred and inspired because, throughout the ages, they have been seen as the stories that capture and express the experience of salvation for all people for all time. The Bible is about living now and forever – it is a living Word!



We grow closer to God and have a better understanding of our journey as disciples when we meet the biblical figures who were God's chosen servants and probe the meaning of their journeys: Abraham, Moses, Miriam, Ruth and Naomi, Jeremiah, Hosea, John the Baptist, Mary, Peter, Paul and of course Jesus.



As we develop a deeper understanding of scripture, we become familiar with the Covenant that God had with Noah and everyone of His Chosen People and His gift of Jesus as the New Covenant. This leads us to the reality that God invites each one of us into that same Covenant relationship of everlasting love.



The Exodus event was not just about the journey of the people of Israel from slavery in Egypt to freedom in the Promised Land; it is the story of our own personal journey from the slavery of sin to the freedom we find in the place where we encounter God.

His divine power has bestowed on us everything that makes for life and devotion, through the knowledge of him who called us by his own glory and power. Through these, he has bestowed on us the precious and very great promises, so that through them you may come to share in the divine nature, after escaping from the corruption that is the world because of evil desire. For this very reason, make every effort to supplement your faith with virtue, virtue with knowledge, knowledge with self-control, self-control with endurance, endurance with devotion, devotion with mutual affection, mutual affection with love.

2 Peter 1:3-7

Making Scripture Part of Daily Life

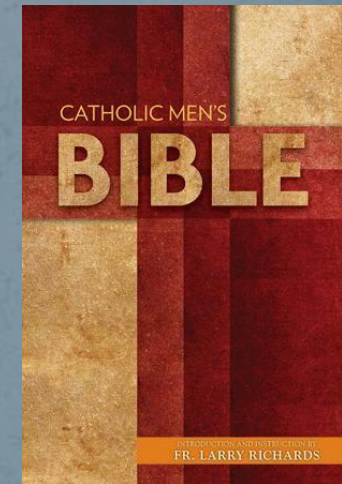
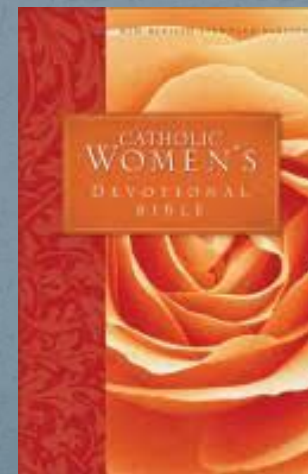
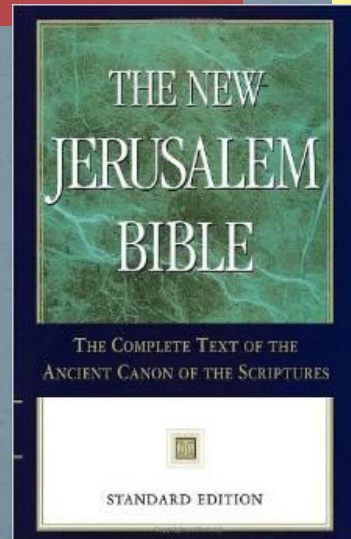
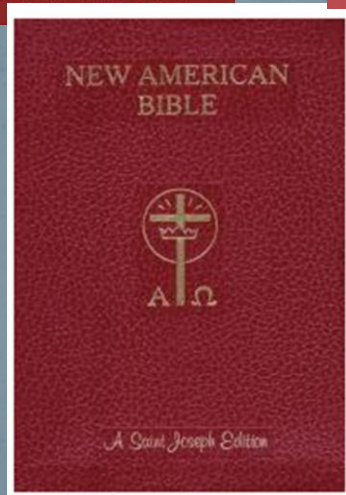
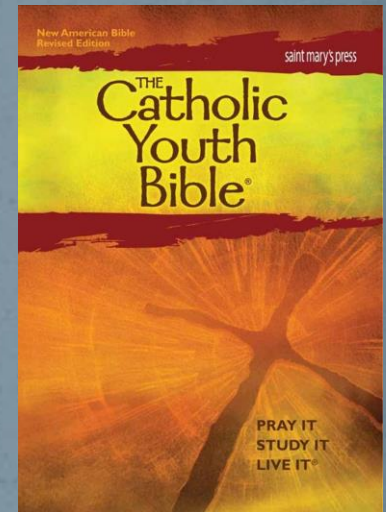
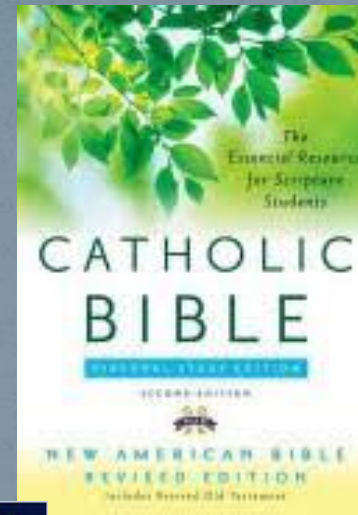
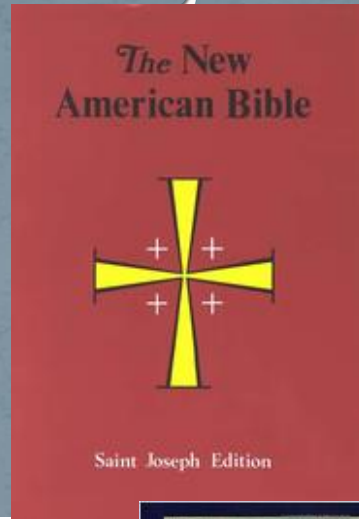
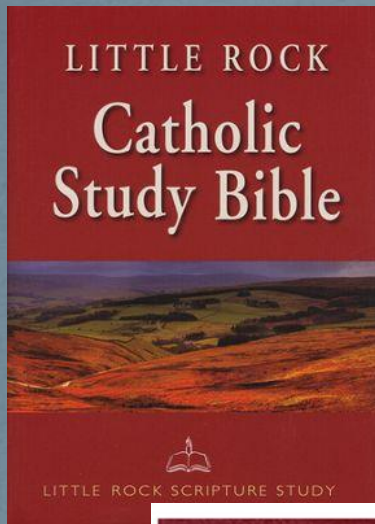
- Buy a recent Catholic Study Bible.
- Read the Bible 5-10 minutes a day.
- Read and discuss short passages or stories with your family, friends or co-workers.
- Learn and practice *Lectio Divino* on a regular basis individually or with a group.
- Prepare for Mass by reading the upcoming Sunday readings. (www.usccb.org has a calendar with the readings for each day).
- Make the gospel for the liturgical year your main scripture focus (Matthew-Year A, Mark-Year B, Luke-Year C, John is used every year especially during Lent and Easter).
- Join or start a Bible study.

Tips for Reading and Praying the Bible

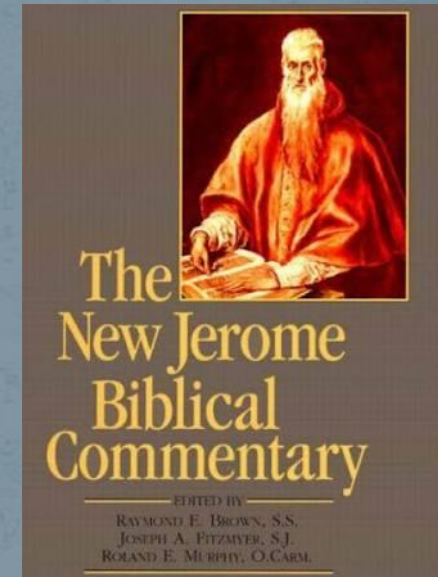
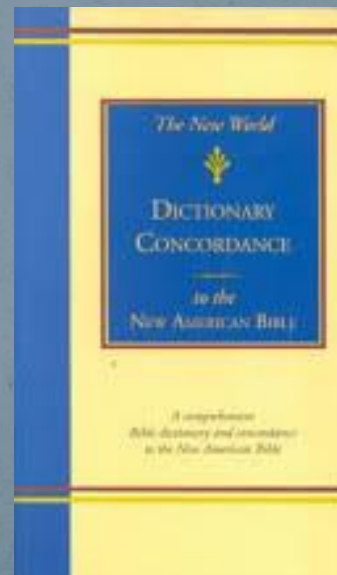
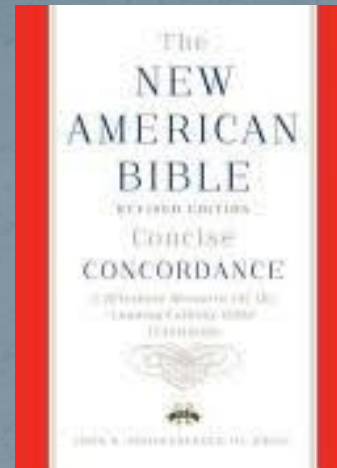
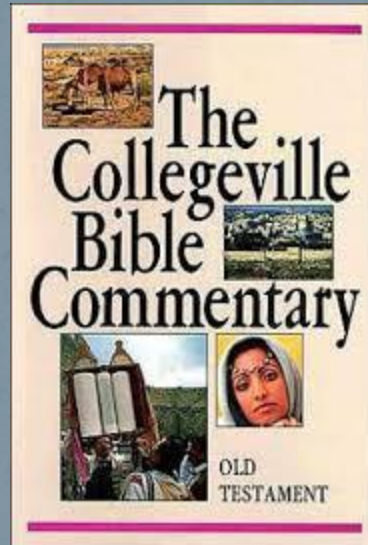
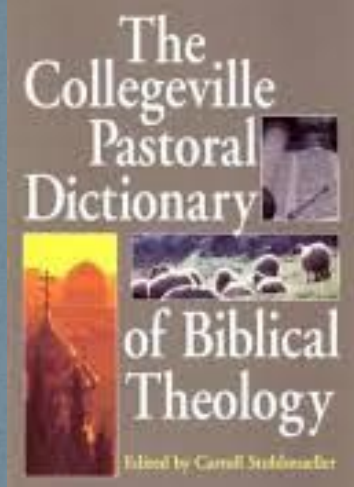
Typically, when you read a book, you just pick it up and jump into it. Reading the Bible is different. In essence, we do not read the Bible, we *pray* the Bible.

1. Set a prayerful mood of quiet.
2. Pray to the Holy Spirit to open up your mind and heart to the Word of God.
3. Read the passage once slowly. Look over any footnotes.
4. Go back and read the passage again, this time more slowly and prayerfully. If the passage describes a story or event, use your imagination to place yourself within the scene as a participant. Pause at phrases, words, or images that speak to you and allow them to resonate. Whereas your first read-through is for the head, this one is for the heart.
5. Be quiet. Let the Word of God continue to echo in your heart, mind and soul.
6. Pray in your own words thanking God for the Word and asking for the grace you need to apply (interpret) it to your life.

Catholic Study Bibles



Bible Commentary, Dictionary & Concordance

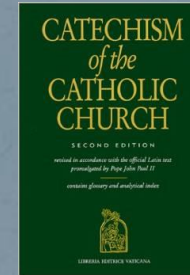


Scripture Resources

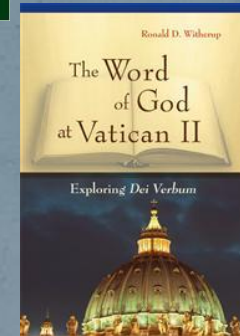
❖ Vatican II Documents



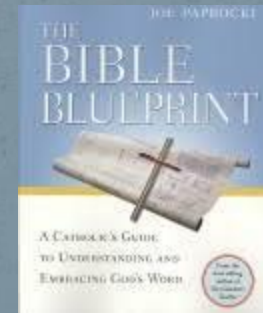
❖ 2nd Edition of Catholic Catechism, 2000



❖ The word of God at Vatican II: Exploring *Dei Verbum*, Ronald D. Witherup, Liturgical Press, 2014



❖ The Bible Blueprint: A Catholic Guide to Understanding and Embracing God's Word, Joe Paprocki, Loyola Press, 2009



DIOCESE OF BOISE OFFICE OF CATECHESIS



Bottom row l-r: Sr. Chela Gonzalez, Director of the Office of Catechesis; Cathy Wheaton, Administrative Assistant & Resource Center Coordinator
Top row l-r: Santiago Robles, Coordinator of Adult & Family Catechesis; Jackie Hopper, Coordinator of Children's Catechesis; Chris Kreslins, Coordinator of Youth & Young Adult Catechesis

We're here to serve – and only a phone call or email away!

Reflection Questions

- What is your favorite book of the Bible and why?
- What steps will you take to deepen your knowledge of the Bible?
- What does it mean that every Bible story is somehow your story?

Basic Catechist Certification

10th Session Webinar

Christology

Thursday, March 26

Noon PST, 1 pm MST

Closing Prayer

Lord, inspire us to read your Scriptures and to meditate upon them day and night.

We ask you for the understanding and wisdom of what we need to do to fulfill your plan for us.

We know that understanding and good intentions are worthless, unless rooted in your graceful love.

We ask that the words of Scripture may also be not just signs on a page, but channels of grace into our hearts.

Amen.