



YEAR OF FAITH 2012 2013

LIVING OUR Relationship WITH JESUS CHRIST

"The Church has always venerated the divine Scriptures... since from both the word of God & the body of Christ she unceasingly receives and offers the faithful the bread of life."

(DOGMAIC CONSTITUTION ON DIVINE REVELATION, 21)

04/2013

# Vatican II | *What Difference Does it Make?*

## DEI VERBUM

DOCUMENT: *Dogmatic Constitution on Divine Revelation*

The Dogmatic Constitution on Divine Revelation addresses the process by which God communicates with humanity. Christians and Jews believe in a personal God who initiates a dialogue with us. God's words are revelation. Our response is faith.

The bishops at the Second Vatican Council reaffirmed the longstanding Catholic belief that revelation flows from both sacred Scripture and the sacred tradition of the Church. They highlighted tradition as the means by which the written text of the Bible grows in meaning as it is read by subsequent believers who are guided by the Holy Spirit. The task of authentically interpreting both Scripture and the tradition is reserved to the teaching authority of the Church.

The main focus of the Constitution, however, is to understand sacred Scripture, making this document the council's pronouncement on the Bible. It seeks to correct the misunderstanding that only the New Testament has value by asserting the inspired

and continuing validity of the Old Testament. It affirms the approach of modern biblical research by teaching that the words and deeds of Jesus were further interpreted by oral preaching and the creativity of the evangelists in light of the resurrection. The document draws a striking parallel between Jesus, the Eternal Word, and Scripture. Just as Jesus is fully divine and fully human, Scripture is both God's inspired word and also a fully human word. Catholics are therefore encouraged to investigate the scriptures as human documents—asking questions of dating, authorship, and composition. Such questions should not be seen to lessen the status of the Bible as God's revelation.

The Constitution on Divine Revelation strongly encourages the reading of Scripture by all believers. It calls for editions of the Bible with reliable explanations of the text which can guide bible study groups. It cites the words of St. Jerome, "Ignorance of the scriptures is ignorance of Christ."

Rev. George M. Smiga

### Reflection Questions

1. What passage from the scriptures has deepened my own faith in God?
2. Do I use a Bible with a modern translation and reliable commentary that can assist me in understanding God's word?
3. In this Year of Faith what can I do to become more familiar with the Bible and to read it more regularly?