

I. SCRIPTURE AND TRADITION

THESIS:

(1) Scrittura e Tradizione: dottrina cattolica sulla S. Scrittura e sulla Tradizione (Trento e Vaticano II). (2) La Tradizione (apostolica, del deposito della fede) e le tradizioni. (3) L'interpretazione della Scrittura nella Chiesa (DV 12). (4) Scrittura e tradizione nella loro funzione come fonti della conoscenza teologica.

I. Catholic Doctrine Concerning Sacred Scripture and Tradition as taught by Trent and Vatican II:

(This is a moment of *auditus fidei* - to listen to what was taught by the councils)

I. The Council of Trent

A. Background: The Protestant reformation:

1. In late medieval theology, there is an accent on the **juridic** structure of the Church as a reality that is distinct from the life of faith nourished by the scripture and sacraments.

2. **Protestant response: the fundamental equality of all believers** and their spiritual endowment, enabling them to judge Church teaching and practices by the norms of scripture. As such, the reformation itself denies any ecclesiastical authority to interpret the scriptures (democratization: Luther sees in the priesthood of the faithful that all may rightly judge and understand the demands of scripture). Furthermore, the Augsburg confession sees that certain human traditions have been instituted apart from the gospel as means by which we are led to believe that we can placate God and merit his saving grace. In addition, the hierarchy is charged with adding obligatory doctrines that do not derive from Scripture (sacraments other than Eucharist and baptism, prayers for the dead, transubstantiation).

3. The principle of “*sola scriptura*”

- a. Scripture has a **normative** role in the formation of the Church's doctrine of faith (this is held by Catholics as well)
- b. Calvin insists that the Church does not give Scripture its authority as the norm of faith; rather, it is a **self-validating norm** (scripture validates itself as the supreme norm for it is based upon the veracity of God who speaks it). The Church is built upon the foundation of the scriptures.
- c. **Scriptura sui ipsius interpretetis**: Scripture needs no other interpreter outside of itself: All interpretation takes place under the hermeneutical key of the central message of the gospel, namely, the justification of the sinner through saving faith in Jesus Christ.
- d. The gift of salvation comes through the word alone in such a way that there is an emphasis on personal salvation and personal

conversion apart from the community of faith.

B. Teaching of Trent: Session 4:

1. (DS 1501):

“The holy ecumenical and general Council of Trent. . . has always this purpose in mind that in the Church errors be removed and the purity of the Gospel be preserved. **This Gospel** was promised of old through the prophets in the Sacred Scriptures; Our Lord Jesus Christ, Son of God, ***first promulgated it from his own lips**; he in turn ordered that it be preached through the apostles to all creatures as ***the source of all saving truth and rule of conduct**. The Council clearly perceives that this ***truth and rule are contained in the written books and unwritten traditions** which have come down to us, having been received from the apostles from the mouth of Christ Himself, or from the Apostles by the dictation of the Holy Spirit, and have been transmitted, as it were, from hand to hand. Following then the example of the orthodox Fathers, it receives and venerates with the same sense of loyalty and reverence, all the books of the Old and New Testaments - ***for God alone is the author of both - together with all the traditions concerning faith and morals, as coming from the mouth of Christ or being inspired by the Holy Spirit** and preserved in continuous succession in the Catholic Church.”

2. (DS 1507):

“Furthermore, to restrain irresponsible minds, it decrees that no one, relying on his own prudence, twist Holy Scripture in matters of faith and morals that pertain to the edifice of Christian doctrine, according to his own mind, contrary to the meaning that holy mother Church has held and holds - ***since it belongs to her to judge the true meaning and interpretation of Holy Scripture.**” (Scripture cannot be its own source of interpretation)

C. Tridentine affirmation of the triad: Scripture/Tradition/Magisterium.

1. “Ecclesia est antiquior scriptura. . . Scriptura non est autentica sine autoritate ecclesiae.” Eck affirms that it was the Church which set the canon and, in controversies, judged the authentic (authoritative) meaning of the scriptures. In answering the reformation tradition that Christ rejected human traditions, Eck responds that Christ only rejected the traditions contrary to the divine law.

2. Affirmation of the Primacy of the Gospel: While Trent does not offer an explanation of the relationship between Tradition, Scripture and Church, it does affirm that it is not “sola scriptura” but a wider foundation upon which are built doctrines and ecclesiastical institutions. That fundamental reality is “the gospel” which is “the source of every saving truth and rule of conduct.” Thus, we hold to the primacy of the **Gospel**, the font of true salvation and communal life, which gives us the Tradition and the sacred books. [In this sense, the Gospel is akin to Mk. 1:15; 1 Cor. 15 and what DV 8 speaks of as the apostolic preaching which is a viva

vox evangelii that echoes throughout the church. This observation must be shown to the Lutherans].

3. The one gospel is transmitted in two ways: “written books and unwritten traditions.” J. H. Geiselman and others have shown that in this formulation, Trent did not intend to teach that there are two sources of revelation. Two drafts were presented to the council Fathers: the first stated that the truth of the gospel is contained partim in libris scriptis, partim in sine scripto traditionibus. The council did not adopt the formula partim/partim (partly in scripture, partly in tradition, as if the two means of transmission were mutually exclusive of one another) but instead used “et” (in libris scriptis et sine scriptis traditionibus) without explaining the relationship of the parts.

4. The unwritten tradition is “from the apostles from the mouth of Christ Himself, or from the Apostles by the dictation of the Holy Spirit” and is therefore constitutive in the life of the Church.

5. The Church has the task of judging the interpretation of Scripture. (DS 1507). One must formulate Christian doctrine in harmony with the Church and its doctrinal patrimony. It has a directive of a biblical hermeneutical type. Here we begin a complete and long list of affirmations on biblical interpretations. It speaks of the normative character of the meaning of the S.S. which has and continues to sustain the Church in order to judge the biblical interpretations.

6. Cardinal Marcello Cervini of Trent (who was first recognized by Ratzinger in 1965 in his book with Rahner) offers an instruction on the thought of Trent.

- a. There are three principles:
 - a. revelation of God to the patriarchs of the OT
 - b. revelation of God in the Gospel of the Son
 - c. revelation of the H.S. who clarifies and develops # 1 & 2.
- b. The Gospel exists in 3 forms:
 - a. Oral form in the preaching
 - b. Spiritual form in hearts of men
 - c. Written form in the NT

D. Post-tridentine lines:

1. The use (at least pedagogical) of partim/partim formula to explain that the revealed truth is found in part in Scripture and in part in the oral apostolic tradition.

2. A certain loss of the pneumatological dimension in understanding the development of doctrine within the tradition of the Church.

II. Tradition and Scripture in Vatican II

A. Background: questions raised prior to Vatican II

1. Proximate Issue: Declaration of Assumption, 1950

2. Theological Issues:

a. Does Scripture give the material foundation of all the doctrines of faith (theory of material sufficiency of Scripture) or does tradition transmit some truths of faith not contained in Scripture (theory of two sources)?

b. The function of tradition: is it a transmitter and vital interpreter of the one gospel contained in the scriptures, or is it a parallel source and in part materially diverse from scripture?

3. The 1962 schema: *De Fontibus Revelationis*

a. Affirms two materially distinct sources: “santa mater Ecclesia semper creditit et credit integram revelationem, non in sola Scriptura, sed in Scriptura et Traditione, **tamquam in duplici fonte contineri**, alio tamen ac alio modo.”

b. The schema tended to identify tradition as the propositions taught by the Magisterium without offering an exposition as to the process of tradition, how tradition comes to be transmitted in the Church.

c. The schema, in its rejection, showed that the Fathers did not accept the two source theory, as it had come to be known in the 18th and 19th centuries.

B. Teaching of Vatican II: *Dei Verbum* on Scripture and Tradition:

1. DV 4: The time of Revelation: The Council refused to make precise the closing of Revelation with the death of the last apostle. This remains in Denz. as part of Pope St. Pius X’s *Lamentabili*, nonetheless. The foundational Revelation did close with the death of the last apostle, but not the actualizing Revelation. CCC 66: “The Christian economy, therefore, since it is the new and definitive Covenant, will never pass away; and no new public revelation is to be expected before the glorious manifestation of our Lord Jesus Christ’ (DV 4). Yet even if Revelation is already complete, it has not yet been made completely explicit; it remains for Christian faith gradually to grasp its full significance over the course of the centuries.”

2. DV 7: The apostolic communication of the Gospel of salvation

This section begins Chapter 2 (*The Transmission of Divine Revelation*), whose title some Council fathers wanted to change. What is at issue here is more the *actualization* of Revelation than only *transmission*. Msgr. Schaeffer recommended: *Della Presenza Meravigliosa della Divina Rivelazione nella Chiesa*.

“Christ, who is the full revelation of the supreme God. . . commissioned the apostles to preach to all that gospel which is the source of all saving truth and moral teaching. . . This commission was faithfully fulfilled by the apostles who, by their oral preaching, by example and by ordinances, handed on what they had received from the lips of Christ, from living with

Him, and from what He did, or what they had learned through the promptings of the Holy Spirit. The commission was fulfilled too by those apostles and apostolic men who under the inspiration of the same Holy Spirit committed the message of salvation to writing. But in order to keep the gospel forever whole and alive within the Church, the apostles left bishops as their successors, handing over their own teaching role to them.”

DV 7 was written during the Council, and there is a fluidity in the use of terms. Tradition is an action: 1 Cor. 11:23 (“I have handed on what was handed on to me.”); 2 Thess. 2:15 (Preserve the traditions in which you were instructed.”). Yet tradition is also an object: 1 Tim 6:20 (“Oh Timothy, guard the deposit.”) *DV* is faithful to this duality, the action of the Church and also the object of the faith in a unitary sense, which works in the Church.

3. DV 8: The Tradition and the life of the Church

“And so the apostolic preaching, which is expressed in a special way in the inspired books, was to be preserved by a continuous succession of preachers until the end of time. . . Now, what was handed on by the apostles includes everything which contributes to the holiness of life, and the increase of faith of the People of God; and so the Church in her teaching, life and worship, perpetuates and hands on to all generations all that she herself is, all that she believes. This tradition which comes from the apostles develops in the Church with the help of the holy Spirit. For there is a growth in the understanding of the realities and the words which have been handed down. . . . 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. By means of the same Tradition the full canon of the Sacred books is known the the Church and the holy Scriptures themselves are more thoroughly understood and constantly actualized in the Church. Thus God, who spoke in the past, continues to converse with the spouse of his beloved Son. And the Holy Spirit through whom the living voice of the Gospel rings out in the Church -- and through her in the world -- leads believers to the full truth, and makes the Word of Christ dwell in their hearts in all its richness.” There is an influence in this last section (par. 3) of Congar, who as a peritus had underlined the way in which the actuality of the sacred words is realized when they are read in the community of the Church. (Cf. *DV* 21,25)

3. DV 9: Mutual relationship between SS and Tradition

“Hence there exist a close connection and communication between sacred tradition and sacred Scripture. For both of them, flowing from the same divine wellspring, in a certain way, merge into a unity and tend toward the same end. . . Both sacred tradition and sacred scripture are to be accepted and venerated with the same sense of devotion and reverence.”

4. DV 10: One Deposit (SS & Tradition) and the Magisterium

“Sacred tradition and sacred Scripture form one sacred deposit of the word of God which is committed to the Church. . . The task of authentically interpreting the word of God, whether written or handed on, has been entrusted exclusively to the living, teaching office of the Church, whose authority is exercised in the name of Jesus Christ. This teaching office is not above the word of God, but serves it, teaching only what has been handed on, listening to it devoutly, guarding it scrupulously, and explaining it faithfully by divine commission and with

the help of the Holy Spirit; it draws from this one deposit of faith everything which it presents for belief as divinely revealed.”

5. DV 11: The Sacred Scripture inspired and true

[Concerning scripture: it has God as its author and is inspired by the Spirit who uses people in their own abilities to write those things which He wanted.]

“Therefore, since everything asserted by the sacred writers must be held to be asserted by the Holy Spirit, it follows that the books of scripture must be acknowledged as teaching firmly, faithfully and without error that truth which God wanted to put into the sacred writings for the sake of our salvation.”

6. DV 12: Scientific Exegesis and “Spiritual Sense”

Concerning the interpretation of Scripture: investigating the meaning the sacred writer intended, understanding the literary forms. The Council was afraid of relying too much on a “spiritual reading” beyond what exegesis could reach, as pious fantasy is always a danger. Three principles: Unity of Scripture, living Tradition in the Church, analogy of faith (the coherence of the faith).

“But since Holy Scripture must be read and interpreted according to the same Spirit by whom it was written, no less serious attention must be given to the content and unity of the whole of Scripture, if the meaning of the sacred is to be correctly brought to light. The living tradition of the whole Church must be taken into account along with the harmony which exists between elements of the faith. . . For all of what has been said about the way of interpreting scripture is subject finally to the judgment of the Church, which carries out the divine commission and ministry of guarding and interpreting the word of God.” [“Sacred theology rests on the written word of God, together with sacred tradition, as its primary and perpetual foundation.” (DV 24)]

C. Ecclesiology that founds an understanding of the relationship of Scripture, Tradition and the Magisterium

1. The Church is not identified with the Kingdom: “She becomes on earth the initial budding forth of that Kingdom.” (LG 5) Hence “there is a growth in the understanding of the realities and the words which have been handed down.” (DV 8)

2. The Church is not above the word but at the service of the Word, that deposit of faith, listening to that Word, reflecting upon that word.

D. Summary of Central Themes of DV 7-13.

1. The meaning of Tradition [DV 7-8]:

Tradition is no longer seen as the sum of non-written doctrines but rather as the ecclesial life and milieu that is transmitted through a multiplicity of expressions and means. The **entire Church** (believing, loving and praying) is the subject which transmits what she is and what she

believes (what has been consigned to her) through her teaching, life and worship (it is more than just handing on propositional truths).

2. The development of Tradition [DV 8]:

Is tradition simply the passing on of final truths and set statements? The council clearly says no: “This tradition which comes from the apostles develops in the Church with the help of the Holy Spirit. **For there is a growth in the understanding of the realities and the words which have been handed down.**” Certainly what is meant by development is from our perspective: our understanding of the words and realities through the grace given by the Holy Spirit.

3. The relationship between Scripture and Tradition [DV 9]

a. The council decided not, on the one hand, absolutely to deny the manualist position of two sources (although it is implicitly rejected with the rejection of the 1962 schema); on the other hand, it does not deny the opposite opinion -- that Scripture contains, materially speaking, all of the Revelation. (Geiselman’s work on Trent was important in allowing Vatican II to reach this conclusion: either *partim et partim* or *totum et totum* was a possible interpretation from the beginning.)

b. Scripture and Tradition are interrelated by: **unity of origin** (God speaking through Christ) and they have **the same goal**: (eschatological fulfillment of the gospel when God will be all in all). The interdependence will be further treated below.

4. Magisterium and the Word of God: [DV 10]

The function of the Magisterium is to “authentically interpret the Word of God” as it comes to us both written and handed down. It is not a matter of passing down set formulas, for the Word of God is a living Word. Neither does it fabricate “new truths.” What is handed on is listened to devoutly and explained faithfully through the power of the Holy Spirit.

5. Scripture Inspired and True: [DV 11, 12]

Key phrase: “the books of scripture must be acknowledged as teaching firmly, faithfully and without error that truth which God wanted to put into the sacred writings for the sake of our salvation.” The scope of the truth of the bible are the matters pertaining to salvation. However, the truth is expressed in various modes and literary genres. The texts are to be read in light of the **whole message, both written and unwritten**. That is the hermeneutical key by which the texts are to be understood. “no less serious attention must be given to the whole of Scripture, if the meaning of the sacred texts is to be correctly brought to light. The living tradition of the whole Church must be taken into account along with the harmony which exists between elements of the faith.” Revelation is one and the parts are understood in relation to the whole.

E. Post Vatican II developments: Faith and Order world conference in Montreal (1963): “Scripture, Tradition and Traditions:” Points of convergence

1. Sees Tradition as the Gospel itself, that is the self-disclosure of God in Jesus Christ as that disclosure has been transmitted from generation to generation in the Church. “Thus, we can say that we exist as Christians by the Tradition of the Gospel, testified in Scripture, transmitted in and by the Church through the power of the Holy Spirit.

2. The conference grappled with the diverse ways in which Scripture is interpreted. Certain reformation themes are clear (any portion of scripture is interpreted against the whole of scripture or according to certain central themes, or by individual consciences) as well as the affirmation of Vatican II, namely that scripture is interpreted in light of the deposit of faith (the total fabric of revelation) by the Church itself.

II. Tradition and traditions: (Yves Congar)

[Background: According to DV 8, the apostolic tradition is closed with the redaction of the last book of the NT However, the apostolic tradition is present in the church as a living and actual font (real font). It progresses in the church and has the fullness of truth

Congar's general principles can be summarized as follows:

1. The Tradition includes a vital aspect, because revealed truth lives in the coscienza of believers with whom God has established a covenant. As Maria, so too the Church, conserves the Word in her heart and realizes under the divine initiative a living divine colloquia with God.

2. The SS and the tradition understood as inscribed: The church does not cease to render testimony in an integral way to revelation. Our lives are formed under a variety of influences: preaching and catechesis, liturgy, example of life and holiness, the institution of a structured people.

3. If our reflection on the origins of tradition is connected with **Jesus**, i.e. tradition seen as the transmission of a deposit constituted once and for all time, it must also be linked to the **Spirit**, i.e., tradition as a gift received interiorly and made actual in the life of believers in every historical age.

4. It is under the guidance of the Holy Spirit that the whole Church maintains, protects and communicates this received revelation. But in the progressive flowering of the tradition in the church, it is up to the magisterium to discern what expresses the true sense of the apostolic deposit.]

A. Tradition as Apostolic and Deposit of Faith

1. Jesus gave everything to his apostles, but nothing in writing. The apostles themselves built up the Church by the most complete possible communication of the gospel, by words and actions, preaching and example, by the exercise of authority and by organization; not by writing. In this sense, Tradition precedes the written word.

a. Scriptural affirmation of a “deposit” - Pastoral epistles. It is called the teaching of God our Savior, the word of faith, the instruction of faith, the secure doctrine handed on, the word of truth.

b. Content: The person of Christ and His work

2. The Apostolic tradition has four dimensions that penetrate each other: Oral, Institutional, Spiritual and Real.

a. The New Testament (written 50-100 AD.) is the product of the oral tradition of the apostolic age.

b. The apostolic tradition, however, is not merely the content of the deposit of faith, but it is also the interpretation of that content. Once the oral tradition is placed in writing, the apostolic tradition continues to guide the proper understanding of the scriptures, the New Testament in light of the Old.

c. Institutional element: The institutions of the New Testament developed under the guidance of the Holy Spirit.

d. The most profound and central reality of the Christian Tradition is the communal and individual relationship with God, that is, the participation in the Trinitarian life. The Apostolic tradition is both spiritual and real in that it effects this participation.

3. In time, the content of that transmission not recorded as scripture became designated by the term tradition. The drift of history has been to allow this term to designate a content of propositions distinct from what are recorded in the scriptures.

B. Distinction: Tradition and traditions

1. Tradition: admits of various meanings:

a. Broadest Meaning: Transmission of the whole of the Gospel (what the council calls the “sacred deposit of the word of God.” [DV 10] This transmission can be taken either in its objective sense (that which is transmitted, orally, in writing or other forms of expression) or in the act of transmitting.

b. Tradition as the interpretation of the Mystery. If we look at “what” has been handed on over the centuries (Scripture, Sacraments, ecclesial institutions), we may distinguish from the “what” of the meaning or the interpretation which the community has attached to that content. In this notion of Tradition, tradition is the interpretation or meaning of the content of the mystery (here, particularly, we might think of the interpretation of scripture). With reference to Scripture, Tradition is a certain usage and reading of Scripture made from the viewpoint of the Christian mystery.

c. Tradition can also be used to express the “spirit” or living understanding of the community which does the interpreting and thematization. Tradition is thus that Catholic sense which the Church possesses as the supra-individual and living subject of a series of testimonies in which is expressed its interpretation of what it transmits and what it lives by.

d. In its narrowest sense, Tradition, in contradistinction to Scripture, is that which is transmitted otherwise than by writing, at least originally. Some modern people (Congar,

Schmaus) emphasize the act of transmitting rather than the content transmitted (the latter meaning - more in line with 19th century apologists)

2. Traditions: specific determinations of the living faith of the Church which are not contained formally in the canons of Scripture. They may originate with Jesus, the apostles, or the Church, and thus may be respectively called divine, apostolic or ecclesiastical.

a. Apostolic traditions: particular points which have always and universally been held in the Church as having come down from the apostles. It does **not** mean a kind of whispered secret passed on from generation to generation whose substance at some future date would be revealed; rather it includes everything that the Churches have received from the apostles by way of teaching, rules of conduct, matters of worship, the meanings of the Christian mystery and prophetic writings, organization, etc.

b. Ecclesiastical traditions have the church as its originating subject. In its thematized form, this can refer to any number of disciplinary or cultic institutions, expressions, etc. It includes many forms of activity and verbal content (preaching, doctrine, symbols and dogmas, catechesis, theology, ministries, engagements in the world, Christian art, models of holiness). In its non-thematized form, it can refer to the *sensus ecclesiae*, the charism by which the Church understands the mystery which she herself is.

3. Discerning the Tradition within the traditions:

(Memory Aid: My very small car can actually save cash)

a. Magisterium: We believe, in faith that the Church will persevere in the truth of what God has revealed. It is the part of God's design that in every age of the Church there should be successors of the apostles, not as immediate recipients of revelation, but as **authorized witnesses**, with authority from Christ to teach and preach his word, and when questions that arise concerning the normative faith of the community. As successors of the apostles, it is their function to discern what in fact is the lived faith of the community.

b. Vincentian Canon: *quod semper, quod ubique, quod ab omnibus creditur.* (Origins: Cicero and Stoical definition of truth which invokes antiquity, universality and consensus). Of course, this canon needs to be further qualified:

(1) one might add: "to be part of the gospel."

(2) need the belief be explicit - or is it what has been believed, at least implicitly.

(3) What is the nature of "ab omnibus?" Newman discovers that there is not a unanimous voice but rather divergent traditions which can be misunderstood by heretics.

c. Sensus fidei: the present instinctive judgment of all believers (people fully incorporated into the life of the Church) who are led by the Spirit.

d. Continuity: The particular insight of the Matthean community - continuity with the past; openness to new beginnings. Continuity is not just repeating the past, but there is a preservation of the essential elements. Newman's analogy of the growth of a seed into a tree.

e. Creeds: They disclose the relativity and contingency of many past traditions and present experiences.

f. Apostolicity: For Irenaeus, the post-scriptural tradition is located in the consensus of the churches that were directly founded upon the apostles (such as the Church of Rome)

g. Scriptures: The Scriptures are not just one part of the tradition, but represent the **Unnormed norm** in discerning the tradition. Scriptures themselves are to be interpreted within the entire message of salvation (not just the historical-critical method).

h. Christ: All other criteria converge upon the crucified and risen Savior. Do these traditions, present experiences and proposed innovations help us to celebrate the Eucharist better and help us proclaim more powerfully the death of the Lord until he comes? Do these traditions which we are discerning help to configure us more effectively to the paschal mystery?

III. The interpretation of Scripture in the Church (DV 12)

1. DV 9: SE/Tradition: “in unum quodammodo coalescunt...”

2. DV 11.2: SS teaches that truth which God, for our salvation wished to have been written/formed in a written way.

a. commentaries on DV 9 encounter a great and imp't relationship bet. SS & tradition (“certainly form una sola cosa”).

b. DV 11:2 refers to the truth for our salvation. It is not a cosmological truth or chronology of salvation history. The interpretation is the hermeneutical function of the tradition in the life of the church.

If one interprets: DV 9 reminds us that the unity includes the text itself and the living tradition. .

[**NB:** Wicks recommends looking at two articles of DTF: “Chiesa interprets SS” and “Integral Exegesis”.]

3. DV 12: The Interpretation of SS:

a. 12:1: what God communicates in a human way (Divine communication with human means).

b. 12:2: recover the intention of the writer:

1. literary genre:

“In determining the intention of the sacred writers, attention must be paid *inter alia* to “literary forms 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.

2. “condition of the writer”

a. historical mentality of age

b. also need investigation of socio-economics and socio-cultural forms of Palestine and of the city to which St. Paul wrote. This is a task that is very full and that sees faith in an environment that is social (post-conciliar task). There are limits to the historical-critical method. This method alone is not enough. [NB: Lehman, p. 9 of tesario and Wick's article in Gregorianum, p. 9].

c. **12:3**: to understand what God desired to manifest to us.

One must read the Bible in the same spirit in which it was written.

a. **Reading in the Spirit**: this is not a charismatic fantasy but the same Spirit that inspired the SS

b. **United Content**: must read the particular texts in relation with other texts that can be earlier or later.

c. **Church tradition**: must read SS in relation to the Fathers of the Church, the liturgy, which offers to us a parameter in which to read the Bible. [Gadamer: said that the philosophical hermeneutic and the history of the re-interpretation of the text, that is to say, the history of the influence of the text].

d. **Analogy of faith**: (Rm. 12.2-5): no exact definition of what St. Paul wanted to say. The literal sense of the text must be recovered to have normative value. It is not an exclusive value, sin embargo. It has a meaning fuller than the literal one. One deals with the dynamic of the biblical interpretation “el juicio of the church”.

The point here is that we must place interpretations under the judgment of the Church. (4th document of Trent). In “Church's interpretation of SS”, one sees a mature advancement in the understanding of SS. Acc. to Cullmann, the symbol of faith is the mode by which the meaning of the SS is presented to the life of the Church. It deals with an simplified explication of the text.

IV. Scripture and Tradition as Fonts of Theological Knowledge:

Here we must reflect upon a whole and correct theological method in which we listen to the fonts in a **first moment** [NB: Here Kasper's text on pg. 9 of Biblio. and article “Method” in Dic. of Fund. Theology is crucial. Also look at Document from ITC in 1990.]

A. Dei Verbum, 24:

“Sacred theology rests on the written word of God, together with sacred tradition, as its primary and perpetual foundation. By scrutinizing in the light of faith all truth stored up in the mystery of Christ, theology is most powerfully strengthened and constantly rejuvenated by that Word.

For the sacred scriptures contain the word of God and, since they are inspired, really are the word of God; and so the study of the sacred page is, at it were, the soul of sacred theology.”

B. Points from Leon-Dufour's *Theology and Sacred Scripture*

1. Unity of the scripture:

In various times in the Church ' s history, there have been attempts to see the unity of the scriptures as containing a central message, a theme which acts as the hermeneutical key through which the rest of scripture is read (justification by faith, “liberation,” etc .). Rather, the unity of the scriptures is in its origin (God) and in the Church which has discerned them as the inspired word of God.

2 . Relationship of Scripture and Tradition:

The Church was willed by God as the transmitter of the whole of the Christian reality and truth, and with Scripture as the norm and means of fulfilling its apostolic character. (Congar) Ecclesial tradition is the living faith of the Church. It cannot be considered on the same plane as the inspired Word of God. Yet, there is the mutual interrelation brought out in the council. At the beginning, Tradition, which is chronologically anterior to the written word, becomes, in its oral elements, reflected in the Scripture. But, Tradition defined this “corpus” to which it is normatively bound, without ceasing to interpret the corpus (important to insist upon this - otherwise we'd be caught in affirming sola scriptura!) Without a living tradition, scripture would be an inert object and we would be people of the book.

3 . The Theologian and the Scriptures:

What does the “study of the sacred page” mean? Lest we think that the historical-critical method is the only way in which the bible can be read, it is necessary to look at how the Scriptures have been read by the people of God in the history of the Church .

In the Patristic age, the Scriptures is the single story of the people, who have been called by the God of the covenant and now, through union with Christ in a new covenant, eagerly await their final destiny . The **allegorical** reading of the scripture allowed for the individual portions of the Scripture to be read in light of the whole message . Of course, this was not the only reading of scripture - there was also the **literal, tropological** (ethical) and **anagogical** (eschatological) senses of scripture .

For today: the theologian is bound to understand the **literal sense**, that is, **the meaning intended by the author**. The literal sense is achieved through the historical-critical method . However, to be bound only to this reading of the Bible is to say that God cannot use the human word to say more to the present situation. Thus, the theologian's task is to elucidate for the faithful in the present situation the message of Scripture.

4. Exegetical theology vs. Dogmatic theology:

Every theologian is called to “study the sacred page,” but each do so according to their own theological specialty. The exegete is concerned with the text and the *sitz-im-leben* of the inspired author. The dogmatic theologian considers the text as it has been reflected upon in the life of the tradition of the Church.

Dangers: the systematic theologian can use the Bible as “proof-text,” leaving aside the intended meaning. The exegete, on the hand, by ignoring the tradition, risks becoming a detached spectator of an “immobile” text - he risks isolating himself from the tradition, the living and ongoing faith which has shed light on the text.

5. The reading of Scripture as explained in DV 12:

“But since Holy Scripture must be read and interpreted ***according to the same Spirit** by whom it was written, no less serious attention must be given to the content and ***unity of the whole of Scripture**, if the meaning of the sacred texts is to be correctly brought to light. The living tradition of the whole Church must be taken into account along with the ***harmony which exists between elements of the faith.**”

a. the unity of the whole of scripture: presupposition that the bible forms a single book. Different writings do illumine one another. This fuller sense is what Leon-Dufour calls the “religious sense”

b. harmony between the elements of faith -the analogy of faith admits that there is a similarity as well as a dissimilarity among the individual elements of the biblical message. For example, to see the redemptive work of Christ in the pattern of the suffering servant is to admit points of similarity and dissimilarity.

c. according to the same Spirit. The Word is a living word, speaking to us today, but always in the Spirit who allows us to be inserted into the history of God's people and who enlightens us to see that the record of God's saving deeds is the message of salvation for us today.

The Relationship of Scripture and Tradition: (M. Hunt)

I. Revelation

A. Description

1. Revelation is the saving presence of Christ engaged in a process of self transmission through his Holy Spirit in the continuing life of the Church.
2. Revelation, as divine self-communication, calls human beings to enter a communion of life and love with the Triune God.

II. Trent

A. *Sitz im leben* (a denial, on the part of the ‘Reformers’ of the Church as a locus of the dynamic work of the Holy Spirit.)

1. The Council of Trent was summoned to correct and to reform the life of the Church in the midst of various controversies.

B. Concerning the issue of Scripture and Tradition

1. Trent, on this issue, was battling *sola scriptura* as well as the denial on the part of some of the Reformers that Tradition was a vehicle of Divine Revelation.
2. In a schema submitted to the Council Fathers, the periti put forth the following definition of revelation:
 - a. “...divine revelation is contained partly in Scripture and partly in Tradition.”
 - b. this schema statement clearly supports what later theology would term a “Two Source” theory of revelation, but
 - c. the Council Fathers overwhelmingly rejected this statement

C. Teachings of Trent *Decree on Sacred Books and on Traditions to be Received* [Fourth Session, 1546]

1. “this truth and rule (Gospel) are contained in the written books and unwritten traditions which have come down to us.” Such a unity forms a composite whole.
 - a. a clear dichotomy between Scripture and Tradition is not put forth as it was in the schema.
2. listing of the canon of Sacred Scripture for both Testaments, 46 for the Old Testament and 27 for the New Testament.
3. the Vulgate is an authentic translation
 - a. this decree countered those Reformers who stated that the Vulgate was not an acceptable nor valid translation of the Scriptures.
 - b. it does not forbid further refinements in translating of Scripture
4. “it belongs to her (the Church) to judge the true meaning and interpretation of Holy Scripture.”

- a. Tradition, as found in the Patristic writings and the decrees of the popes and councils, was declared the only legitimate guide to scriptural interpretation to the exclusion of private judgment not in accord with it
- b. counters the Lutheran position that absolute interpretation of Scripture lies with individuals, not the Church.

D. Points to consider vis-a-vis the teaching of Trent

- 1. the unity of Scripture and Tradition is not so much the issue as is the purity of the handing on of the Gospel
- 2. the Ultimate in revelation: the written form, Scripture, is a handing on of a source of all saving doctrine and conduct.

III. Vatican I

A. Sitz im leben

- 1. D. Haneberg: inspiration was only a subsequent and thus external approbation by the Church
- 2. J. Jahn: inspiration was an external and negative assistance which guarantees an inerrancy “in fieri.”

B. Teachings of Vatican I Dogmatic Constitution *Dei Filius* (On the Catholic Faith) [Third session, 1870], Chapter 2, “On Revelation.”

- 1. affirms the teaching of Trent on Revelation via Scripture and Tradition, but stress is placed upon Scripture. [cf. *sitz im leben*]
- 2. Church is the interpreter of Sacred Scripture
- 3. everyone must accept the Canon of Scripture as defined by Trent
- 4. “All those things are to be believed with divine and Catholic faith which are contained in the word of God, written or handed down, and which by the Church either in solemn judgment or through her ordinary and universal teaching office, are proposed for belief as having been divinely revealed.”

IV. overview prior to Vatican II

A. Two Font Theory of Revelation

- 1. When the decrees of Trent are removed from their historical context, it seems that the Council was endorsing this approach to revelation. It is more properly stated that such an approach to revelation stemmed from post-Tridentine theological reflection.
- 2. J. H. GEISELMANN, in studying the proceedings of Trent, postulates that the Two Source theory was not in keeping with the intention of the Council. Prior to adopting the present text, [II, C, #1], he points out that the first schema stated that the truth of the Gospel is contained partim in libris scriptis, partim in sine scripto traditionibus. This proposed draft does establish two distinct fonts or sources of revelation. This draft was rejected.
- 3. When Trent speaks of source, there is only one source of revelation, the Gospel of Jesus Christ. The adopted text reads: “...contineri in libris scriptis et sine

scripto traditionibus.” God’s word is thus contained both in Sacred Scripture and in the oral tradition.

4. Geiselman concludes that the text of Trent never intended to canonize a TWO FONT THEORY of Revelation (because the Council Fathers rejected the schema proposing such).

V. Vatican II and subsequent theological reflection

A. Vatican II [Dei Verbum, #'s 8, 9, 10. 18 November 1965]

1. Sacred Scripture is “apostolic proclamation through which God's word is transmitted in a ‘special way.’”
 - a. this ‘special way’ is not content, but its way of or mode of tradition; that is, being written.
 - b. this ‘special way’ is understood as embracing both the matter which is handed on and the act of handing it on.
 - i. the content is not just doctrine, but the whole life of faith
2. Scripture and Tradition: twofold time relationship
 - a. Past (apostolic sermons) and Future (proclamation of the Church’s teaching office). Both time aspects are in a dynamic relationship, that is, evolving
 - b. These aspects, Scripture and Tradition, do not exist in themselves but only in relation to their past and future.
 - c. Tradition has the function of deepening our understanding of Scripture. The act of handing on the Tradition involves the interpretation and explication of Scripture.
3. the Church [timeless and boundless] has objectified its faith in the writings of Scripture and therefore it is competent to interpret what it has objectified.
4. The Christ-Event
 - a. Interpretation of this apostolic proclamation has the character of revelation itself. [Scripture]
 - b. Post-apostolic interpretation does not increase the scope of revelation, but only to interpret it.

B. Subsequent reflection upon Vatican II

1. Sufficiency of Scripture
 - a. Scripture IS SUFFICIENT in the fact that Scripture offers us God's word in plenitude, sufficient for salvation.
 - b. Tradition, as such, contains no new content to revelation. Tradition is the unfolding of Scripture.
 - c. Sufficiency of Scripture, however, lies in faith in Jesus Christ; a faith which is not synonymous with credo, but faith which is a lived out Tradition of the reality proclaimed by Scripture.

C. Bearer of Tradition

1. *the charisma*, [I Jn. 2: 20-27] --- the People of God are the bearers of the tradition, *sensus fidelium* .

2. Sacred Scripture is normative even in the realm of *sensus fidelium* (this prevents un- or anti-Christian realities from entering the Church even though they may be held in common.)

VI. Bibliography

A. Sources

Council of Trent, Vatican Council I, and Lumen Gentium. Text and translation in *Decrees of the Ecumenical Councils, Volume II*. Edited by Norman P. Tanner, SJ. Washington: Georgetown University Press, 1990.

B. Literature

van Beeck, Frans Jozef, SJ. "Divine Revelation: Intervention or Self-Communication?" *Theological Studies* 52/2 (June 1991): 199-226.

Brown, Raymond E, SS. and Sandra M. Schneiders, IHM. "Hermeneutics." Chapter in *The New Jerome Biblical Commentary*. Edited by Raymond E. Brown, SS, Joseph A. Fitzmyer, SJ and Roland E. Murphy, O. Carm. Englewood Cliffs, NJ: Prentice Hall, 1990.

Dulles, Avery. "Faith and Revelation" Chapter in *Systematic Theology - Roman Catholic Perspectives, Volume I*. Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 1991.

Rahner, Karl, SJ., editor. *Encyclopedia of Theology - The Concise Sacramentum Mundi*. New York: The Seabury Press, 1975. S.v. "Revelation," by Norbert Schiffrers, Karl Rahner, and Heinrich Fries; "Tradition," by Karl-Heinz Weger; "Scripture and Tradition," by Karl Rahner.

Ratzinger, Joseph Cardinal. *Principles of Catholic Theology*. Translated by Sister Mary Frances McCarthy, SND. San Francisco: Ignatius Press, 1987.

Ratzinger, Joseph. "The Transmission of Divine Revelation." Translated by William Glen-Doepel. In *Commentary on the Documents of Vatican II, Volume III*. New York: Herder and Herder, 1967.

Schmaus, Michael. *Dogma 1: God in Revelation*. Westminster, MD; Christian Classics, Inc., 1984.