

which we call *Holy Scripture*. "All Scripture is inspired by God and is useful" (2 *Tm* 3:16). Holy Scripture is the Word of God addressed to every human being. Therefore, it is relevant in every time and every place. The Holy Scriptures are a collection of books, written *under the inspiration of the Holy Spirit* by holy people, which the Church of Christ has received and preserves as the Word of God. These books comprise the canon of Holy Scripture, which the Church has identified in the light of Apostolic Tradition. This canon includes 47 books of the Old Testament and 27 of the New Testament.

39 The Old Testament contains the Revelation which God gave to humankind from the beginning of the world to the coming of the Saviour. The Old Testament includes: the Pentateuch (Genesis, Exodus, Leviticus, Numbers, and Deuteronomy); the Historical Books (Joshua, Judges, Ruth, two books of Samuel, two books of Kings, two books of Chronicles, Ezra, Nehemiah, Tobit, Judith, Esther, and two books of Maccabees); the Poetic Books ( Job, Psalms, Proverbs, Ecclesiastes, Song of Songs, Wisdom, and Sirach); and the Prophetic Books (Isaiah, Jeremiah, Lamentations of Jeremiah, Baruch, Letter of Jeremiah, Ezekiel, Daniel, Hosea, Joel, Amos, Obadiah, Jonah, Micah, Nahum, Habakkuk, Zephaniah, Haggai, Zachariah, and Malachi). The Psalms of David are used in all the divine services of the Church, while selected texts of other books are used as readings at Vespers and at the Hours.

40 The Holy Scriptures of the New Testament contain the Revelation which God has given to humanity through his only-begotten Son, Jesus Christ, and his apostles. It consists of 27 books: the Four Gospels according to Matthew, Mark, Luke, and John, which announce the earthly life and teaching of Christ; the Acts of the Apostles, which describes the growth of Christ's Church, especially the service and preaching of the chief apostles Peter and Paul; fourteen epistles of the holy apostle Paul (one to the Romans, two to the Corinthians, one each to the Galatians, Ephesians, Philippians, and Colossians, two to the Thessalonians, two to Timothy, and one each to Titus, Philemon, and the Hebrews); seven catholic [universal] epistles, written by other apostles to various Christian communities (one by James, two by Peter, three by John, and one by Jude); and the Revelation of John the Theologian.

### **1. Divine and Human Aspects of Holy Scripture**

41 The fullness of God's Revelation is Jesus Christ, the God-man, in whom along with a human nature "the whole fullness of deity dwells bodily" (*Co*/2:9). As the divine and human natures are united

inseparably in Christ, so in the Holy Scriptures the divine Word of God is transmitted to us by human language. God's words, expressed in human words, adapted themselves to human language, just as the Word of the eternal Father, when he took upon himself the flesh of human weakness, lived just like a human being." "The Word of God permeates all of Holy Scripture. That one Word resounds from the mouths of all the holy sacred ministers; that Word which was with God from the beginning does not require syllables because that Word is not dependent upon time."<sup>29</sup>

- 42 In reading and interpreting Holy Scripture, the Church always takes into account two important dimensions: the divine and the human. Neglect of the human dimension in Holy Scripture leads to literalism, where human forms of transmitting the Word of God are given a divine character. On the other hand, rejection of the divine dimension reduces Holy Scripture to a mere historical-literary work.

## 2. Unity of the Old and New Testaments

- 43 From the earliest times, the Church has studiously preserved the divinely wise richness of the Old Testament, regarding it as her heritage. "The unity of the two Testaments proceeds from the unity of God's plan and his Revelation. The Old Testament prepares for the New, and the New Testament fulfils the Old; the two shed light on each other; both are true Word of God."<sup>30</sup> At first, God chose Israel to receive and carry the truth of Revelation; then, in the New Testament, this truth is received by the Church, which is called the New Israel.
- 44 God, the inspirer and author of the books of both Testaments, wisely arranged that the New Testament be hidden in the Old, and the Old be manifested in the New.<sup>31</sup> For although Christ established the New Covenant in his Blood (see *Lk* 22:20; *1 Cor* 11:25), all the same, the books of the Old Testament were thoroughly absorbed into the proclamation of the Gospel; they attain and reveal their full meaning in the New Testament (see *Mt* 5:17; *Lk* 24:27; *Rom* 16:25-26; *2 Cor* 3:14-16). In turn, they shed light on the New Testament and explain it.<sup>32</sup>

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<sup>28</sup> See VATICAN COUNCIL II, Dogmatic Constitution on Divine Revelation *Dei Verbum* [The Word of God], 13.

<sup>29</sup> AUGUSTINE OF HIPPO, *Exposition of Psalm 103, Sermon 4*: PL 37, 1348.

<sup>30</sup> *Catechism of the Catholic Church*, 140.

<sup>31</sup> AUGUSTINE OF HIPPO, *Seven Books of Questions on the Heptateuch*, 2, 73: PL 34, 623.

<sup>32</sup> See VATICAN COUNCIL II, Dogmatic Constitution on Divine Revelation *Dei Verbum* [The Word of God], 16.