

taking into account the living Tradition of the entire Church and the analogy of faith.⁴⁰ Saint Athanasius the Great warns us that quoting individual passages, torn from the wholeness of Holy Scripture with no regard for the general context, can lead one astray.⁴¹ Saint Jerome professes that the content of the Gospel cannot be reduced to mere words:

We should not suppose that the essence of the Gospel is in the words rather than in the actual meaning of Scripture, or on the surface rather than in the inmost parts, or in the leaves of mere words rather than in the root of reason ... Scripture is advantageous to its hearers when it is spoken with Christ, when it is proclaimed with the Father, and when the preacher introduces it with the Spirit.⁴²

52 The criterion for understanding the Word of God is the reading and interpretation of the Holy Scriptures by the Church: "First of all you must understand this, that no prophecy of scripture is a matter of one's own interpretation, because no prophecy ever came by human will, but men and women moved by the Holy Spirit spoke from God" (2 Pt 1:20-21). Christ entrusted the Church with the authentic interpretation of Holy Scripture in her teaching ministry to God's word. "This teaching office [of the Church] is not above the word of God, but serves it, teaching only what has been handed on ... it draws from this one deposit of faith everything which it presents for belief as divinely revealed."⁴³

Therefore, Master, as we too remember his saving passion, the life-giving Cross, the burial for three days, the resurrection from the dead, the ascension into heaven, the sitting at your right hand, O God and Father, and his glorious and dread second coming; We offer to you, yours of your own, in behalf of all and for all. (Anaphora of the Liturgy of Saint Basil the Great)

D. Kerygma (Proclamation) and Catechesis

53 The holy apostle Paul teaches that our faith in God and his Revelation is born as a response to the Word that is heard (see Rom 10:17). Therefore, the Church from the very beginning, as we read in the Acts

⁴⁰ See VATICAN COUNCIL II, Dogmatic Constitution on Divine Revelation Dei Verbum [The Word of God], 12.

⁴¹ ATHANASIUS THE GREAT, Against the Arians, Discourse I, 53: PG 26, 121; see Against the Arians, Discourse II, 73-82: PG 26, 299-322; see First Letter to Serapion: PG 26, 580-581.

⁴² JEROME, Commentary on the Epistle to the Galatians, 1, 11: PL 26, 322.

⁴³ VATICAN COUNCIL II, Dogmatic Constitution on Divine Revelation Dei Verbum [The Word of God], 10.

of the Apostles, proclaimed the risen Christ (in Greek, kerygma) and taught the faith (in Greek, katekheisis; see Acts 2:14-41). Kerygma is the proclamation of the Paschal event of the Death and Resurrection of Christ, manifested in the witness of the life of a Christian community. Kerygma is united with the call to believe in Jesus Christ. Faith leads to conversion, reception of Baptism, and readiness to follow Christ: "In this do I believe and will not be ashamed; before the nations I will profess this faith, and for its profession I will lay down my life."⁴⁴

54 Catechesis is the explanation of Christian teaching, which serves for the preparation of catechumens for Baptism, the churching of faithful and the deepening of their faith (mystagogy). We find examples of apostolic catechesis especially in the First Epistle of Paul to the Corinthians, where the apostle responds to the questions of the faithful, and clarifies the relation between faith and daily life. The goal of catechesis, as the essential work of the Church, is to teach and to form Christians in the faith, leading them into fellowship with Jesus Christ and the Church community. Catechesis has a systematic character. It elucidates a Christian understanding of the personal and social life of the faithful, in light of the teachings of Christ and the Church.

1. Tradition of the Holy Fathers of the Church

55 The apostolic proclamation of the Gospel was continued by the Fathers of the Church, of whom the first were disciples of the apostles: the holy hieromartyr Clement, Pope of Rome; Saint Ignatius the God-Bearer; and Saint Polycarp of Smyrna. Their teaching and witness of the faith was received from Christ's apostles, and for this reason it is held in special esteem in the Christian community.

56 The Church acknowledges those who preached the Gospel in truthfulness of teaching and in holiness of life, and refers to them as Holy Fathers. For this reason they proclaimed the Good News by the power of the Holy Spirit, the Spirit of truth. Thus, for the Church they became Fathers in the faith, becoming like the apostle Paul, who said: "For though you might have ten thousand guardians in Christ, you do not have many fathers. Indeed, in Christ Jesus I became your father through the gospel" (1 Cor 4:15-16).

57 The Holy Fathers of the Church were witnesses of the Apostolic Tradition. They defended its purity and aligned their own theological teaching with it. The fullness of God's Revelation is found in Christ Jesus. However, in the course of history, the Church has progressively

⁴⁴ ILARION, METROPOLITAN OF KYIV, Confession of Faith.