

WHY AND HOW TO BELIEVE IN SACRED SCRIPTURE?¹

Translated from the Catechesis No. 2 “From zero to the Eucharist ...” on how to go gradually to the Party without end!
Cathedral of Noto – Saturday 21 December 2013 / 20:30 – 21:30

We will read and try to explain some passages of the

- **Word of God (OT, NT)**
- **Teaching of the Catholic Church (from the Fathers to Now)**
- **Experiences...**



INTRODUCTION:

- **Why?** ...and what are their words?
- Example of the lights turned off in Church or on the streets...
- And of the functioning of household appliances...
- And **How to believe in them?**... cf. theory of the treasure map or the street signs.

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¹ Design of the Structure: Friar Volantino V. of Jesus and Mary ;
Supervision: Friar Volantino V. of Jesus and Mary, and Friar Nathaniel M.A.-A ;
With the aid of the Little Friars and Little Nuns of Jesus and Mary.

1. WHY BELIEVE in the SACRED SCRIPTURE?

Word of God

OLD TESTAMENT

THE SACRED SCRIPTURES ARE A LAMP AND A LIGHT (WHICH LEADS TO THE LIGHT OF THE WORLD, THAT IS, TO CHRIST – CF. JOHN 8:12)

- ✓ *“Your word is a lamp for my feet, a light for my path” (Ps 119:105)*
- ✓ *For the command is a lamp, and the teaching a light” (Prov 6:23)*

THE WORD OF GOD DOES NOT REMAIN WITHOUT EFFECT (FOR THOSE WHO BELIEVE IN IT)

- ✓ *“Yet just as from the heavens the rain and snow come down and do not return there till they have watered the earth, making it fertile and fruitful, giving seed to the one who sows and bread to the one who eats, so shall my word be that goes forth from my mouth; It shall not return to me empty, but shall do what pleases me, achieving the end for which I sent it.” (Is 55:10-11).*

NEW TESTAMENT

THE SACRED SCRIPTURES WERE WRITTEN SO THAT WE WOULD BELIEVE IN CHRIST

- ✓ *“But if you do not believe his writings, how will you believe my words?” (John 5:47).*
- ✓ *“Amen, amen, I say to you, whoever keeps my word will never see death” (John 8:51).*
- ✓ *“But these are written that you may [come to] believe that Jesus is the Messiah, the Son of God, and that through this belief you may have life in his name” (John 20:31).*
- ✓ *“When he was raised from the dead, his disciples remembered that he had said this, and they came to believe the scripture and the words Jesus had spoken” (John 2:22).*
- ✓ *“Oh, how foolish you are! How slow of heart to believe all that the prophets spoke!” (Luke 24:25).*

THOSE WHO BELIEVE IN THE SACRED SCRIPTURES (AND PUT THEM INTO PRACTICE) WILL FIND THEIR JOY

- ✓ *“But the one who peers into the perfect law of freedom and perseveres, and is not a hearer who forgets but a doer who acts, such a one will find his joy in what he does.” (cf. Jam 1:25).*

THE WORD OF GOD WORKS IN THOSE WHO BELIEVE

- ✓ *“The word of God, which is now at work in you who believe” (1Thess 2:13)...So if the life of a man or a woman doesn't change after they have believed in God and in the Sacred Scriptures, it could mean that, in the depths of their heart, they don't really believe...*

THE SACRED SCRIPTURES ARE ETERNAL

- ✓ *“Heaven and earth will pass away, but my words will not pass away” (Matt 24:35).*

Teaching of the Catholic Church

PATRISTIC AGE

ALL THE THEORIES ABOUT IMMORTALITY COME – ACCORDING TO SOME OF THE FATHERS – FROM SACRED SCRIPTURE

- ✓ --- **ST. JUSTIN** (Martyr, † 165): *“And whatever both philosophers and poets have said concerning the immortality of the soul, or punishments after death, or contemplation of things heavenly, or doctrines of the like kind, they have received such suggestions from the prophets as have enabled them to understand and interpret these things.” (ST. JUSTIN, First Apology, 44).*

-- “This topic of the ‘Greek theft of the barbarian philosophy’, that is, the plagiarism towards the Hebrews from which the philosophers took their principles, will return extensively in the Stromata where Clement lists all those philosophical doctrines which in his opinion were “stolen” from the Hebrews (Cf. *Stromata* V,14,89-VI,4,38)” (A. SABETTA, Dispensa: *Fede e ragione. Analisi storiche e prospettive per il presente*. Facoltà di Teologia PUL - Il ciclo, corso 10511. A.A. 2012-13, p. 27 [unpublished translation by pfgsm])

IGNORANCE OF THE SCRIPTURES IS IGNORANCE OF CHRIST

- ✓ --- **ST. HIPPOLYTUS** (Priest and Martyr; † 235): *“There is only one God, brethren, and we learn about him only from sacred Scripture. It is therefore our duty to become acquainted with what Scripture proclaims and to investigate its teachings thoroughly...Sacred Scripture is God's gift to us and it should be understood in the way that he intends: we should not do violence to it by interpreting it according to our own preconceived ideas.”*
(HIPPOLYTUS, *Treatise against the heresy of Noetus*, in: *Office of Read.*, 23 December)
- ✓ **ST. JEROME** (Priest and Doctor of the Church, 347 - † 420): *“I interpret as I should, following the command of Christ: “Search the Scriptures,” and “Seek and you shall find.” Christ will not say to me what he said to the Jews: ‘You erred, not knowing the Scriptures and not knowing the power of God.’ For if, as Paul says, Christ is the power of God and the wisdom of God, and if the man who does not know Scripture does not know the power and wisdom of God, then ignorance of Scripture is ignorance of Christ.”* (JEROME, *Prologue of the commentary on Isaiah*, in: *Office of Read.*, 30 September.)
- ✓ --- **ST. AUGUSTINE OF HIPPO** (Bishop and doctor of the Church; 354 - † 430): *“All of you who search for the many words of men, try to understand the only Word of God”*
(cf. S. AGOSTINO, *Discorso 118*, 1 [unpublished translation by pfsgrm])

PASTORS MUST HELP OTHERS BELIEVE IN THE SCRIPTURES

- ✓ --- **ST. AUGUSTINE OF HIPPO** (Bishop and doctor of the Church; 354 - † 430): Augustine says to the pastors: *“[Help the believer] consider Scripture, which says to him: ‘He scourges every son he acknowledges’ [Heb 12:6]. Let him prepare to be chastised, or else not seek to be acknowledged as a son.”*
(ST. AUGUSTINE, *Off. of Read.*, Fri. Week XXIV O.T.)

MEDIEVAL AGE

FAITH IS NECESSARY TO PENETRATE THE SACRED SCRIPTURES

- ✓ --- **ST. BONAVENTURE** (Bishop and Doctor of the Church; 1218 - † 1274): *“It is impossible, therefore, for anyone to achieve this understanding [of the truth of all Sacred Scripture] unless he first receives the gift of faith in Christ. This faith is the foundation of the whole Bible, a lamp and a key to its understanding....[T]his same faith is the firm basis of all supernatural enlightenment.”*
(ST. BONAVENTURE, *Off. of Read.*, Mon. Week V O.T.).

THE FRUIT OF SACRED SCRIPTURE IS THE FULLNESS OF ETERNAL HAPPINESS

- ✓ --- **ST. BONAVENTURE** (Bishop and Doctor of the Church; 1218 - † 1274): *“The outcome or the fruit of reading holy Scripture is by no means negligible: it is the fullness of eternal happiness. For these are the books which tell us of eternal life, which were written not only that we might believe but also that we might have everlasting life. When we do live that life we shall understand fully, we shall love completely, and our desires will be totally satisfied....In order to achieve this, we must study holy Scripture carefully, and teach it and listen to it [and practice it] in the same way.”*
(BONAVENTURE, *Breviloquio*, in: *Office of Read.*, Monday Week V O.T.)

INERRANCY OF THE SACRED SCRIPTURES...

- ✓ --- **ST. THOMAS AQUINAS** (Priest and Doctor of the Church; 1225 - † 1274): *“Our faith rests upon the revelation made to the apostles and prophets who wrote the canonical books, and not on [other] revelations [...]. Hence Augustine says (*Epis. ad Hieron. xix, 1*): ‘Only those books of Scripture which are called canonical have I learned to hold in such honor as to believe their authors have not erred in any way in writing them. But other authors I so read as not to deem everything in their works to be true [...] - whatever may have been their holiness and learning.’”* (ST. THOMAS AQUINAS, *S. Th. I, q. 1 a. 8*).

Personal Experiences

WITNESSES

THE LITTLE GOSPEL WITH THE WRITING IN PEN: "A LAMP FOR MY STEPS"...

- ✓ *"The little story of the little book of the Gospel, where it was written in pen, "your Word is a lamp for my steps and a light on my way."*

THE BIBLE IN HAND AND THE SHIELD WHICH PROTECTED FROM THE DEVIL

- ✓ *"The story of the girl who dreamt that she had the Bible in her hands and a giant shield that the devil couldn't penetrate."*

THE LIBRARY WITH THE BOOKS WHICH MELTED AWAY...EXCEPT FOR THE BIBLE...

- ✓ *"The story of an Italian woman in France who dreamt of a library and all its books that transformed into liquid excrements...all except the Bible that was the only book remaining intact."*

2. HOW TO BELIEVE in the SACRED SCRIPTURES?

2.1. THROUGH THE PROPHECIES IN GENERAL

Word of God

OLD TESTAMENT

HOW TO DISTINGUISH THE TRUE PROPHECY FROM THE FALSE ONE?

- ✓ *“Should you say to yourselves, ‘How can we recognize that a word is one the Lord has not spoken?’ if a prophet speaks in the name of the Lord but the word does not come true, it is a word the Lord did not speak. The prophet has spoken it presumptuously; do not fear him” (Deut 18:21-22).*
- ✓ *“If there – instead - arises in your midst a prophet or a dreamer who promises you a sign or wonder, saying, ‘Let us go after other gods,’ whom you have not known, ‘and let us serve them’, and the sign or wonder foretold to you comes to pass, do not listen to the words of that prophet or that dreamer; for the Lord, your God, is testing you to know whether you really love the Lord, your God, with all your heart and soul.” (Deut 13:2-4)*
- ✓ *Therefore: “You shall know that I am the LORD, when I open your graves and make you come up out of them, my people!” (Ezek 37:13). – Cf. Jesus raising Lazarus from the dead (John 11:14, 43-44), as well as the son of the widow of Nain (cf Luke 7:11-17) and the daughter of Jairus (cf. Mark 5:35-43)...*

SOMETIMES TRUE PROPHECIES ARE NOT FULFILLED BECAUSE OF THE CONVERSION OF THE PEOPLE...

- ✓ *“The people of Nineveh believed God; they proclaimed a fast and all of them, great and small, put on sackcloth....When God saw by their actions how they turned from their evil way, he repented of the evil he had threatened to do to them; he did not carry it out.” (Jonah 3:5, 10)*

NEW TESTAMENT

PROPHECIES OF JESUS ABOUT HIS RESURRECTION

- ✓ *“When he was raised from the dead, his disciples remembered that he had said this, and they came to believe the scripture and the words Jesus had spoken.” (John 2:22)*
- ✓ *“And now I have told you this before it happens [that Jesus will die and return to them bringing His peace], so that when it happens [cf. John 20:19b] you may believe.” (John 14:29)*

PROPHECY OF JESUS ABOUT THE BETRAYAL OF JUDAS

- ✓ *“From now on I am telling you [about the betrayal of Judas] before it happens, so that when it happens you may believe that I AM” – [the Verb, or rather God, the Living Word] (John 13:19).*

PROPHECY OF JESUS ABOUT THE DENIAL OF PETER

- ✓ *“At that [Peter] began to curse and to swear, ‘I do not know the man.’ And immediately a cock crowed. Then Peter remembered the word that Jesus had spoken: ‘Before the cock crows you will deny me three times.’ He went out and began to weep bitterly.” (Matt 26:74-75)*

2.2. THROUGH THE SPECIFIC PROPHECIES REGARDING THE END OF THE COSMOS

Word of God

NEW TESTAMENT

END OF THE UNIVERSE AND END OF THE WORLD ACCORDING TO THE BIBLE (NT)?

- ✓ *Amen, I say to you: until heaven and earth pass away, not the smallest letter or the smallest part of a letter will pass from the law, until all things have taken place” (Matt 5:18).*
- ✓ *“And behold, I am with you always, until the end of the world!” (cf. Matt 28:19-20).*
- ✓ *“Heaven and earth will pass away, but my words will not pass away” (Matt 24:35).*
- ✓ *“Then I saw a new heaven and a new earth. The former heaven and the former earth had passed away, and the sea was no more” (Rev 21:1).*
- ✓ *“The day of the Lord will come like a thief, and then the heavens will pass away with a mighty roar and the elements will be dissolved by fire, and the earth and everything it contains will be burned up. Since everything is to be dissolved in this way, what sort of persons ought [you] to be, conducting yourselves in holiness and devotion, waiting for and hastening the coming of the day of God, because of which the heavens will be dissolved in flames and the elements melted by fire. But according to his promise we await new heavens and a new earth in which righteousness dwells. Therefore, beloved, since you await these things, be eager to be found without spot or blemish before him, at peace” (2Pet 3:10-14).*

- the most recent scientific theories affirm that the actual world will disappear due to the magnification of the sun; now, how could the Holy Scripture have already declared these facts so long ago, when the scientific discovery of these certainties had not even remotely begun? Who could have known that the earth would finish in such a way as Saint Peter describes it, if not only God Himself who created it? Likewise, what about the end of heaven and earth as Jesus Himself prophesied?...In the Greek Hellenic mentality, the universe was spoken of as eternal (the “eternal return”), but Jesus said that heaven and earth (the universe) would pass away, as opposed to the Word that would never pass away – and not one of these words would be unfulfilled! (Cf. Matt 5:18). (an open question)...

Teaching of the Catholic Church

POSTMODERN (CONTEMPORARY) AGE

END OF TIME, END OF THE WORLD...

- ✓ --- **VATICAN COUNCIL II** (1962 - 1965): *“We do not know the time for the consummation of the earth and of humanity, nor do we know how the universe will be transformed. As deformed by sin, the shape of this world will pass away; but we are taught that God is preparing a new dwelling place and a new earth where justice will abide, and whose blessedness will answer and surpass all the longings for peace which spring up in the human heart. Then, with death overcome, the sons of God will be raised up in Christ, and what was sown in weakness and corruption will be invested with incorruptibility [...] but the expectation of a new earth must not weaken but rather stimulate our concern for cultivating this one. For here grows the body of a new human family, a body which even now is able to give some kind of foreshadowing of the new age. Hence, while earthly progress must be carefully distinguished from the growth of Christ's kingdom, to the extent that the former can contribute to the better ordering of human society, it is of vital concern to the Kingdom of God.”*
(VATICAN COUNCIL II, Pastoral Constitution *Gaudium et Spes*, n. 39)
- ✓ *“Go, therefore, make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, teaching them to observe all things whatsoever I have commanded you. And behold I am with you all days even to the consummation of the world’ (Mt 28:18-20). The Church has*

received this solemn mandate of Christ to proclaim the saving truth from the apostles and must carry it out to the very ends of the earth (cf. Acts 1:8) [...] and to the consummation of the world.”

(VATICAN COUNCIL II, Dogmatic Constitution *Lumen Gentium*, nn. 17, 18)

- ✓ *“Already the final age of the world has come upon us (cf. 1 Cor 10:11) [cf. SLC p. 402c] and the renovation of the world is irrevocably decreed and is already anticipated in some kind of a real way; for the Church already on this earth is signed with a sanctity which is real although imperfect. However, until there shall be new heavens and a new earth in which justice dwells (cf. 2 Pt 3:13), the pilgrim Church in her sacraments and institutions, which pertain to this present time, has the appearance of this world which is passing.”* (VATICAN COUNCIL II, Dogmatic Constitution *Lumen Gentium*, n. 48)
- ✓ --- **POPE FRANCIS** (Pope from 2013 ...): *“The [Scriptures] make us think of the final days, the end of time, the end of the world, of the time of the final coming of Our Lord Jesus Christ [...]. The Church turns our thoughts to the end of this world, since it will come to an end, for the world as we know it is passing away.”* (POPE FRANCIS, *Morning Meditation in the Chapel of the Domus Sanctae Marthae, Faith is never a private matter*. Thursday, 28 November 2013, in: *L'OSSERVATORE ROMANO*, Weekly ed. in English, n. 49, 6 December 2013.)

Word of God

OLD TESTAMENT

EVOLUTION ACCORDING TO SCIENCE OR CREATION ACCORDING TO THE BIBLE?²

- ✓ *“For in six days the Lord made the heavens and the earth, the sea and all that is in them” (Ex 20:11).*
- ✓ *“God looked at everything he had made, and found it very good. Evening came, and morning followed - the sixth day” (cf. Gen 1:1-30).*
- ✓ *“Like a drop of water from the sea and a grain of sand, so are these few years among the days of eternity” (Sir 18:10).*
- ✓ *“His gaze spans all the ages” (Sir 39:20).*

- The Bible clearly states that man appeared on the earth after 6 days (cf. Gen 1:1-31), but some scientific claims say this happened after 5-6 geological eras; isn't it clear, therefore, that these could be connected, given that both the Wisdom books and also the Apostle St. Peter (the first Pope) speak clearly of the day of Eternity (Eons) (cf. Sir 18:10; 2Pt 3:18)? Couldn't there be, therefore, a possible 'creatio' [creation] in 6 eternities?...as the Scripture also says that God's gaze spans from one Eternity to the next? (cf. Sir 39:20)... (open question)³...

NEW TESTAMENT

EVOLUTION ACCORDING TO SCIENCE OR CREATION ACCORDING TO THE BIBLE?

- ✓ *“But do not ignore this one fact, beloved, that with the Lord one day is like a thousand years and a thousand years like one day.” (2Pet3:8)*
- ✓ *“But grow in grace and in the knowledge of our Lord and savior Jesus Christ. To him be glory now and to the day [ἡμέραν] of eternity [αἰῶνος = Aeon]” (2Pet3:18).*

Teaching of the Catholic Church

POSTMODERN (CONTEMPORARY) AGE

SEVERAL SCIENTIFIC THEORIES ON EVOLUTION, ONLY ONE SCRIPTURAL THEORY ON HOW MAN APPEARED ON EARTH...RECONCILABLE

- ✓ --- **ST. JOHN PAUL II** (Pope from 1978 - † 2005): *“And to tell the truth, rather than speaking about the theory of evolution, it is more accurate to speak of the theories of evolution. The use of the plural is required here—in part because of the diversity of explanations regarding the mechanism of evolution, and in part because of the diversity of philosophies involved. [...] As a result, the theories of evolution which, because of the philosophies which inspire them, regard the spirit either as emerging from the forces of living matter, or as a simple epiphenomenon of that matter, are incompatible with the truth about man. They are therefore unable to serve as the basis for the dignity of the human person. [...] To set us on guard against the grave temptations which face us, our Lord cites the great words of Deuteronomy: ‘Man does not live by bread alone, but by every word that comes from the mouth of God.’ (Deut 8:3; Mt 4:4)”* (JOHN PAUL II, *Speech to the Plenary Session of the Pontifical Academy of Science*, 22 October 1996. [https://humanorigins.si.edu/sites/default/files/MESSAGE%20TO%20THE%20PONTIFICAL%20ACADEMY%20OF%20SCIENCES%20\(Pope%20John%20Paul%20II\).pdf](https://humanorigins.si.edu/sites/default/files/MESSAGE%20TO%20THE%20PONTIFICAL%20ACADEMY%20OF%20SCIENCES%20(Pope%20John%20Paul%20II).pdf) (accessed 12/11/2019))

--- Considering that there are several scientific theories regarding the appearance of man on the earth – such as, for example, fixism, catastrophism, evolution, etc., and all are science – someone could say, which of them should we believe, since all of them are presented as possible scientific truths? Isn't the unique Scriptural Theory more credible, which states that we were created by God in six days, or rather (as we will see evidenced here by the

² Cf. *Postmodern Period in this file.*

³ Cf. *Idem*

Scriptures and the Magisterium) in 6 long historic periods (i.e. 1 day of Genesis can be also a historic period or one eternity)? – for (always sticking to the Scriptures) the Lord’s gaze spans from one eternity to the next...⁴

EVOLUTION AND CREATION OF THE HUMAN BODY AND SOUL...

- ✓ --- **PIUS XII** (Pope from 1939 to 1958): *“The Teaching Authority of the Church does not forbid that, in conformity with the present state of human sciences and sacred theology, research and discussions, on the part of men experienced in both fields, take place with regard to the doctrine of evolution, in as far as it inquires into the origin of the human body as coming from pre-existent and living matter - for the Catholic faith obliges us to hold that souls are immediately created by God. However, this must be done in such a way that the reasons for both opinions, that is, those favorable and those unfavorable to evolution, be weighed and judged with the necessary seriousness, moderation and measure, and provided that all are prepared to submit to the judgment of the Church, to whom Christ has given the mission of interpreting authentically the Sacred Scriptures and of defending the dogmas of faith. Some however, rashly transgress this liberty of discussion, when they act as if the origin of the human body from pre-existing and living matter were already completely certain and proved by the facts which have been discovered up to now and by reasoning on those facts, and as if there were nothing in the sources of divine revelation which demands the greatest moderation and caution in this question.”*

(POPE PIUS XII, Encyclical *Humani Generis*, 8 December 1950, n. 36)

THE 6 DAYS OF CREATION AS 6 HISTORIC PERIODS

- ✓ --- **PONTIFICAL BIBLICAL COMMISSION:** *“[Question]: In the designation and distinction of the six days mentioned in the first chapter of Genesis may the word Yom (day) be taken either in the literal sense for the natural day or in an applied sense for a certain space of time...? Answer: in the affirmative.”*
(PONTIFICAL BIBLICAL COMMISSION, “Concerning the Historical Character of the First Three Chapters of Genesis,” n. VIII, 30 June 1909, in: *The Replies of the Pontifical Biblical Commission On Questions of Sacred Scripture*. Translated by E.F. Sutcliffe S.J. <http://www.catholicapologetics.info/scripture/oldtestament/commission.htm> (accessed 12/03/2019))
- ✓ --- **BENEDICT XVI** (Pope from 2005 to 2013): *“The Fathers of the Church considered the six or seven days of the Creation narrative as a prophecy of the history of the world, of humanity. For them, the seven days represented seven periods of history, later also interpreted as seven millennia. With Christ we should have entered the last, that is, the sixth period of history that was to be followed by the great Sabbath of God.”* (BENEDICT XVI, *General Audience*, 10 March 2010)

ANOTHER ANSWER RE: FIRST 3 CHAPTERS OF GENESIS – WHETHER THEY ARE AN ALLEGORY (WITHOUT ANY OBJECTIVE OR HISTORICAL REALITY)

- ✓ --- **PONTIFICAL BIBLICAL COMMISSION:** (Question): *“...may it be taught that: the aforesaid three chapters of Genesis [do not contain] accounts of actual events, accounts, that is, which correspond to objective reality and historical truth, but, either fables derived from the mythologies and cosmogonies of ancient peoples and accommodated by the sacred writer to monotheistic doctrine after the expurgation of any polytheistic error; or allegories and symbols without any foundation in objective reality proposed under the form of history to inculcate religious and philosophical truths; or finally legends in part historical and in part fictitious freely composed with a view to instruction and edification? Answer: In the negative to both parts.”*
(PONTIFICAL BIBLICAL COMMISSION, “Concerning the Historical Character of the First Three Chapters of Genesis,” n. II, 30 June 1909, in: *The Replies of the Pontifical Biblical Commission On Questions of Sacred Scripture*. Translated by E.F. Sutcliffe S.J., in: <http://www.catholicapologetics.info/scripture/oldtestament/commission.htm> [accessed 12/03/2019].)

⁴ On the issue of Biblical Creation and Scientific Evolution see also the period of the Old Testament in this file.

2.4. THROUGH A POSSIBLE RESOLUTION OF THE PROBLEM REGARDING GALILEO:

Word of God

OLD TESTAMENT

JOSHUA SAID – TO THE LORD – “SUN, STAND STILL”

- ✓ *“It was then, when the LORD delivered up the Amorites to the Israelites, that Joshua prayed to the LORD, and said in the presence of Israel: Sun, stand still at Gibeon, Moon, in the valley of Aijalon!”*
(Josh 10:12)

Teaching of the Catholic Church

MODERN AGE

THE CASE OF GALILEO, ERROR OF THE INTERPRETERS, AND INERRANCY OF THE SACRED SCRIPTURES...

(--- In regards to Galileo, error of the interpreters / authors and inerrancy of the sacred scriptures, see further on in John Paul II, in the postmodern age, where Galileo Galilei is mentioned.)

POSTMODERN (CONTEMPORARY) AGE

THE CASE OF GALILEO, THE ERRORS OF THE INTERPRETERS, AND THE INERRANCY OF THE SACRED SCRIPTURES...

- ✓ *--- St. JOHN PAUL II (Pope from 1978 - † 2005): “The geocentric representations of the world [that is, with the earth or the world at the center of the universe] was commonly accepted in the culture as fully in agreement with the teachings of the Bible, in which some expressions, taken to the letter, seemed to constitute statements of geocentrism. The problem that was posed therefore by theologians of the time was that of the compatibility of heliocentrism [the model in which the earth and planets revolve around a relatively stationary sun] and Scripture. So, too, the new science, with its methods and the freedom of research which they suppose, obliged theologians to ask themselves about their criteria of interpretation of the Scripture. The greater part of them did not how to do this. Paradoxically, Galileo, a sincere believer, showed himself on this point more insightful than the opposing theologians. ‘If the Scripture cannot err’ – he writes to Benedetto Castelli – ‘nevertheless sometimes and in various ways some of its interpreters and exhibitors may err.’” (GIOVANNI PAOLO II, *Discorso ai partecipanti alla sessione plenaria della Pontificia Accademia delle Scienze*, 31 ottobre 1992 [unpublished translation by pfgsm])*

2.5. THROUGH THE ANALYSIS OF THE HISTORICITY OF THE SACRED SCRIPTURE:

Word of God

NEW TESTAMENT

SOME HINTS REGARDING THE HISTORICAL CREDIBILITY OF THE SACRED SCRIPTURE (NT)

- ✓ *“Now Jesus did many other signs in the presence of [his] disciples that are not written in this book. But these are written that you may [come to] believe that Jesus is the Messiah, the Son of God, and that through this belief you may have life in his name” (John 20:30-31).*

--- There are also the following Roman, Hebrew and Greek authors who testify to the historical death of Jesus:

C. P. TACITUS, a Roman Senator (55 - †117 A.D.), affirms:

“Nero fastened the guilt [on others] and inflicted the most exquisite tortures on a class hated for their abominations, called Christians by the populace. Christus, from whom the name had its origin, suffered the extreme penalty during the reign of Tiberius at the hands of one of our procurators, Pontius Pilatus.”

(TACITUS, *Annals* XV. Translated by Alfred John Church and William Jackson Brodribb.
<http://classics.mit.edu/Tacitus/annals.11.xv.html> [accessed 12/10/2019])

G. FLAVIUS, a historian of a Hebrew background (about 37 †100 A.D.), testifies:

“Now there was about this time Jesus, a wise man; if it be lawful to call him a man. For he was a doer of wonderful works; a teacher of such men as receive the truth with pleasure. He drew over to him both many of the Jews, and many of the Gentiles. He was [the] Christ. And when Pilate, at the suggestion of the principal men among us, had condemned him to the cross; those that loved him at the first did not forsake him. For he appeared to them alive again, the third day: as the divine prophets had foretold these and ten thousand other wonderful things concerning him. And the tribe of Christians, so named from him, are not extinct at this day.”

(FLAVIUS, *Antiquities of the Jews*, XVIII, 3. Translated by William Whiston, 1737, in:
<http://penelope.uchicago.edu/josephus/ant-18.html> [accessed 12/10/2019])

LUCIAN OF SAMOSATA, Greek author and rhetorician from Syria (ca. 120 † after 180), says:

“The Christians [...] worship a man to this day, the distinguished personage who introduced their novel rites, and was crucified on that account. [...] And then it was impressed on them by their original lawgiver that they are all brothers, from the moment that they are converted, and [for this reason] they deny the gods of Greece, and worship the crucified sage, and live after his laws.”

(LUCIAN, *The Death of Peregrine*, 11, 13, Translated by H.W. and F.G. Fowler. Oxford: The Clarendon Press, 1905, in:
http://lucianofsamosata.info/wiki/doku.php?id=home:texts_and_library:essays:peregrine [accessed 12/10/2019])

2.6. THROUGH A SERIOUS COMPARISON OF THE BIBLE, THEOLOGY, AND SCIENCE:

Teaching of the Catholic Church

MODERN AGE

BIBLE, THEOLOGY AND THE MAGISTERIUM OF THE CHURCH

- ✓ --- **ST. IGNATIUS OF LOYOLA** (Priest and Founder of the Jesuits; 1491 - † 1556): Among the “Rules [to] be observed to foster the true attitude of mind we ought to have in the church militant:” “The Eleventh. We should praise both positive theology and that of the Scholastics. It is characteristic of the positive doctors, such as St. Augustine, St. Jerome, St. Gregory, and others, to rouse the affections so that we are moved to love and serve God our Lord in all things. On the other hand, it is more characteristic of the scholastic doctors, such as St. Thomas, St. Bonaventure, the Master of the Sentences, and others, to define and state clearly, according to the needs of our times, the doctrines that are necessary for eternal salvation, and that more efficaciously help to refute all errors and expose all fallacies. Further, just because scholastic doctors belong to more recent times, they not only have the advantage of correct understanding of Holy Scripture and of the teaching of the saints and positive doctors, but, enlightened by the grace of God, they also make use of the decisions of the Councils and of the definitions and decrees of our holy Mother Church. (IGNATIUS OF LOYOLA, *Spiritual Exercises*, n. 363. Translated by L. J. Puhl, S.J., 1951. <http://spex.ignatianspirituality.com/SpiritualExercises/Puhl> (accessed 12/03/2019))

POSTMODERN (CONTEMPORARY) AGE

BIBLE, THEOLOGY, AND SCIENCE

- ✓ “Most desirable is it, and most essential, that the whole teaching of Theology should be pervaded and animated by the use of the divine Word of God....The Sacred Books hold such an eminent position among the sources of revelation that without their assiduous study and use, Theology cannot be placed on its true footing, or treated as its dignity demands....Nevertheless the judicious and instructed theologian will by no means pass by that method of doctrinal demonstration which draws its proof from the authority of the Bible; ‘for (Theology) does not receive her first principles from any other science, but immediately from God by revelation. And, therefore, she does not receive of other sciences as from a superior, but uses them as her inferiors or handmaids.’”
(POPE LEO XIII, Encyclical *Providentissimus Deus*, 18 November 1893, n. 16)

THE BIBLE AND SCIENCE...

- ✓ --- **BENEDICT XV** (Pope from 1914 - † 1922): “How can a cleric teach others the way of salvation if through neglect of meditation on God’s word he fails to teach himself? What confidence can he have that, when ministering to others; he is really ‘a leader of the blind, a light to them that are in darkness, an instructor of the foolish, having the form of knowledge and of truth in the law’ [Rom 2:19ff], if he is unwilling to study the said Law and thus shuts the door on any divine illumination on it? Alas! Many of God’s ministers, through never looking at their Bible, perish themselves and allow many others to perish also. ‘The children have asked for bread, and there was none to break it unto them’ (Lam. 4:4); and ‘With desolation is all the land made desolate, for there is none who take it to heart’ (Jer. 12:11)....it is from the Bible that we gather confirmations and illustrations of any particular doctrine we wish to defend.” (POPE BENEDICT XV, Encyc. *Spiritus Paraclitus*, 15 September 1920, nn. 47-48)
- ✓ --- **VATICAN COUNCIL II** (1962 - 1965): “Therefore if methodical investigation within every branch of learning is carried out in a genuinely scientific manner and in accord with moral norms, it never truly conflicts with faith... Consequently, we cannot but deplore certain habits of mind, which are also sometimes found among Christians, which do not sufficiently attend to the rightful independence of science and which, from the arguments and controversies they spark, lead many minds to conclude that faith and science are mutually opposed.” (VATICAN COUNCIL II, Pastoral Constitution *Gaudium et Spes*, n. 36)

Teaching of the Catholic Church

POSTMODERN (CONTEMPORARY) AGE

INERRANCY OF ALL OF HOLY SCRIPTURE...

- ✓ --- **VATICAN COUNCIL I** (1869 – 1870): *“[The] books of the Old and New Testament, whole with all their parts, ...are to be accepted as sacred and canonical. But the Church holds these books as sacred and canonical, not because, having been put together by human industry alone, they were then approved by its authority; nor because they contain revelation without error; but because, having been written by the inspiration of the Holy Spirit, they have God as their author and, as such, they have been handed down to the Church itself.”* (VATICAN COUNCIL I, Dogm. Const. *Dei Filius*, 24 April 1870, II)
- ✓ --- **LEO XIII** (Pope from 1878 - † 1903): *“But it is absolutely wrong and forbidden, either to narrow inspiration to certain parts only of Holy Scripture, or to admit that the sacred writer has erred. For the system of those who, in order to rid themselves of these difficulties, do not hesitate to concede that divine inspiration regards the things of faith and morals, and nothing beyond, because (as they wrongly think) in a question of the truth or falsehood of a passage, we should consider not so much what God has said as the reason and purpose which He had in mind in saying it – this system cannot be tolerated. For all the books which the Church receives as sacred and canonical, are written wholly and entirely, with all their parts, at the dictation of the Holy Spirit; and [it is far] from being possible that any error can co-exist with inspiration,... as it is impossible that God Himself, the supreme Truth, can utter that which is not true.”* (LEO XIII, Encyclical *Providentissimus Deus*, 18 November 1893, n. 20)

INERRANCY OF THE SACRED SCRIPTURES...

- ✓ --- **PIUS XII** (Pope from 1939 to 1958): *“The [First] Vatican Council...declared that these same books [of Sacred Scripture]...’contain revelation without error.. having been written under the inspiration of the Holy Spirit, they have God for their author, and as such were handed down to the Church herself’ (Session III, Chap. 2; Enc. *Bibl. No. 62*). When, subsequently, some Catholic writers, in spite of this solemn definition of Catholic doctrine, by which such divine authority is claimed for the ‘entire books with all their parts’ as to secure freedom from any error whatsoever, ventured to restrict the truth of Sacred Scripture solely to matters of faith and morals, and to regard other matters, whether in the domain of physical science or history, as ‘obiter dicta’ and - as they contended - in no wise connected with faith... Leo XIII... justly and rightly condemned these errors.”*
(PIUS XII, Encyclical *Divino Afflante Spiritu*, 30 September 1943, n.1)
- ✓ --- **VATICAN COUNCIL II** (1962 - 1965): *“For holy mother Church, relying on the belief of the Apostles (see John 20:31; 2 Tim. 3:16; 2 Peter 1:19-20, 3:15-16), holds that the books of both the Old and New Testaments in their entirety, with all their parts, are sacred and canonical because written under the inspiration of the Holy Spirit, they have God as their author... In composing the sacred books, God chose men and while employed by Him they made use of their powers and abilities, so that with Him acting in them and through them, they, as true authors, consigned to writing everything and only those things which He wanted...The books of Scripture must be acknowledged as teaching solidly, faithfully and without error that truth which God wanted put into sacred writings for the sake of salvation.”* (VATICAN COUNCIL II, Dogm. Const. *Dei Verbum*, n. 11)
- ✓ --- **CATECHISM OF THE CATHOLIC CHURCH** (1992): *“God is the Author of Sacred Scripture because he inspired its human authors; he acts in them and by means of them. He thus gives assurance that their writings teach without error his saving truth.”* (CCC 136)

CONCLUSION

- ✓ Without the Bible we could never understand the mystery of true life with its most profound meaning...
- ✓ Therefore, it's true that the Bible is more soteriological (salvific) than scientific, but it's also somewhat scientific; that is, there is enough evidence within it alone to give it most certain credibility.

IN BRIEF:

- ✓ Somebody said: *If you can lift up the world with a lever, with a Bible one can lift up all mankind on its journey, up to heaven and up to the Beatific (and glorious – cf. 1Cor 15:43; Phil 3:21) immortality! Indeed, the Sacred Scripture says: “And after this corruptible body clothes itself with incorruptibility and this mortal body clothes itself with immortality, then the word of the Scripture shall come true” (cf. 1Cor 15:54). (Friar V.V.)*
- ✓ Therefore, *“Sine Biblia sine Gloria!”* (friar G.M.G.)

NB. In regards to all the passages that we did not read or explain: if you are interested in having a deeper knowledge of the topic, according to God, the Church, and experience, you can make an appointment with us at the end of the catechesis or by email and we will do what we can (even come to your house, if possible!). All we have to do is agree on the details and gather some people who are thirsty for the truth. You can find the email at: www.poorfriars.net. – with Christian affection, the “Little Friars of Jesus and Mary”