

# Topic: Introduction to the Bible

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IHM

Rite of Christian Initiation of Adults (RCIA)

# Opening Prayer

In the name of the Father, and the Son, and the Holy Spirit, Amen.

“Bless us, O Lord, and these thy gifts, which we are about to receive. From thy bounty, through Christ our Lord, Amen.”



# Guest Speaker

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Fr. Ralph Thomas, IHM

What is the  
Bible,  
Theologically?





# Scripture as Divine Revelation

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A portrait of Saint Jerome, an elderly man with a long white beard and hair, wearing a red robe. The portrait is set against a dark background.

“Ignorance of  
Scripture is  
Ignorance of  
Christ.”  
-Saint Jerome

- God’s self-communication revealing to us what God wants to tell us of faith and salvation..
- “As prayer is the voice of [human beings] to God, so [divine] revelation is the voice of God to [human beings].”—Cardinal John Newman
- Catholics are “nourished and ruled” by the Scriptures.
- The Liturgy (Mass) flows from Scripture; including the Lectionary (the book containing the readings for Mass).
- Over the course of the 3-year Sunday & 2-year Weekday Cycle:
  - 13.5 percent of the Old Testament (not counting the Psalms)
  - 54.9 percent of the non-Gospel New Testament
  - 89.8 percent of the Gospels
  - 71.5 percent of the entire New Testament

# Who is the Author of Scripture?

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- Both God and humans are truly the author.
- Divine Inspiration=God the Holy Spirit truly inspired the authors of sacred scripture what to write *in regards to our salvation*.
  - However the Holy Spirit did not “override” the human nature of the author—they kept full use of their human knowledge and creativity.
- Biblical inerrancy=the books of sacred scripture are without error in regards to conveying the “truths of salvation.”
  - Human author’s limitations in science, geography, etc. remain; as well as cultural biases and assumptions.



# How do we interpret the Bible contextually?

- Exegesis ('out of the beginning'):
  - Explaining the original meaning, then applying that meaning to our context
    - Language, words, genre, culture, author, editors, audience
- Tools for exegesis:
  - Footnotes and References
  - Concordance (list of words)
  - Commentary
  - Literary Forms (genres); Different styles of writing must be understood differently
  - Biblical Archaeology
  - Analogy of Faith: connectedness of one doctrine with the rest of Divine Revelation
- Online NAB Catholic Bible with commentary, footnotes and searchable concordance:
  - [http://www.vatican.va/archive/ENG0839/\\_INDEX.HTM](http://www.vatican.va/archive/ENG0839/_INDEX.HTM)



# Biblical Exegesis Chart

Type of Method	Description	Questions This Method Asks
Textual Criticism	Scholars attempt to recover the most original version of biblical books, because no originals exist, only copies. These scholars compare different translations of the Scriptures to understand more clearly the meaning of a given passage.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Of the many ancient copies and fragments of Bible books, which ones are the oldest?</li> <li>• Can we identify why there are differences between different copies of the same book?</li> <li>• Can we identify why different translations use different words in passages?</li> </ul>
Historical Criticism	Scholars work to uncover the historical situation, or <i>Sitz im Leben</i> , of the writer at the time a particular book or story was written.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• What was the historical situation during the life of the author / editor or of the author / editor's community?</li> <li>• How did the historical situation influence the author's writing?</li> </ul>
Literary Criticism	Scholars look at the Scriptures and seek to understand them as a work of literature.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Did the writer use a particular literary form or device such as a poem, a historical story, a prophecy, a letter, or a gospel?</li> <li>• Did the passage use metaphors, puns, parables, exaggeration, a midrash, or other literary devices?</li> <li>• How did these particular literary forms or devices function in an ancient society?</li> </ul>
Source Criticism	Scholars attempt to identify if the biblical authors used an existing story, myth, or other literature as the basis for their work.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Are other writings from ancient cultures outside the Scriptures similar to a biblical passage?</li> <li>• What is the meaning of the differences between the way a story is told in the Bible and the way it is told in other sources?</li> </ul>



# Composition of the Bible

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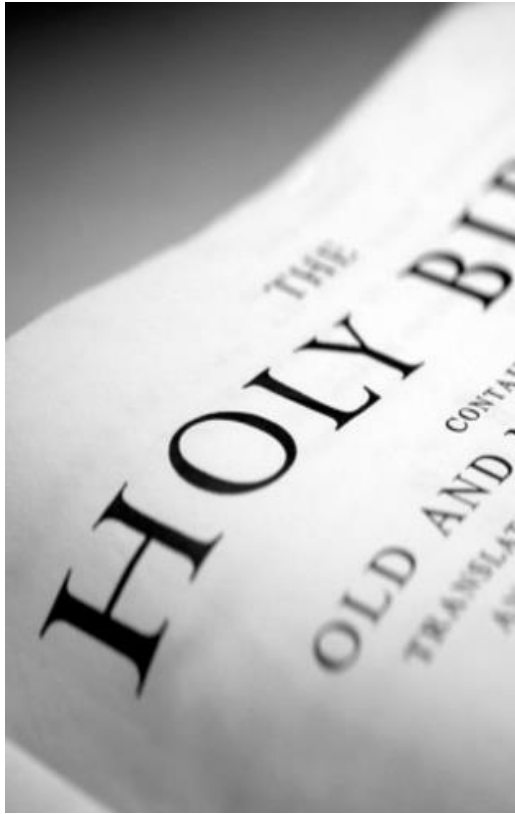
# How was the Bible written?

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- Four-Step Process:
  - Event/experience
    - Something happened
  - Oral tradition
    - People talked about it
  - Written tradition
    - People wrote about it
  - Redaction (Editing)
    - People edited it







# How long did it take to write the Bible?

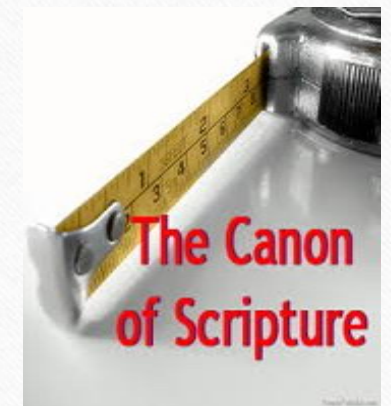
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- The actual writing spanned about 1,100 years
  - c. 1,000 BC – c. 100 AD
    - The events were much longer (~1850BC-100AD)
- Many books in the Old Testament were written hundreds of years after the actual events occurred.
- Most books do not occur in chronological order.

# How was the Canon of the Bible determined?

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- Canonical- part of the canon (“standard/rule”)
  - Canon: the collection of books the Church recognizes as inspired by God
- Old Testament Canon
  - Already established by the time of Jesus (included Greek books=Septuagint; after Judaism and Christianity split, Jews will reject the Greek books from their Canon—this is why Protestant and Catholic OT lists vary).
  - These 7 books found in the Catholic, but not Protestant Bible, are called the Deuterocanonical (“2<sup>nd</sup> canon”) books by Catholics and often Apocrypha (“hidden) by Protestants.
- New Testament Canon
  - Four Standards:
    - From apostles or their companions?
    - Universally accepted by all Christians?
    - Use of the text in Christian liturgy?
    - Message consistent with rest of revelation?





# Why are there different translations?



- The first Bible was compiled in Latin by St. Jerome (late 4<sup>th</sup> c.-early 5<sup>th</sup> c.)
  - The Vulgate, meaning “common” because it was translated into the common language of Latin.
  - “Ignorance of the Scriptures is ignorance of Christ!”
- Any translation must decide between:
  - Word-for-word translation (Formal Equivalency) or
  - A translation of meaning (Dynamic Equivalency)
- The Bibles used by Catholics are in the middle:
  - New American Bible (NAB)
    - This is the version used in the Lectionary at Mass
  - New Revised Standard Version (NRSV)

# Structure of the Bible

## THE CATHOLIC BIBLE'S BOOKS



OLD TESTAMENT

1 <b>Gn</b> GENESIS 50	2 <b>Ex</b> EXODUS 40	3 <b>Lv</b> LEVITICUS 27	4 <b>Nm</b> NUMBERS 36	5 <b>Dt</b> DEUTERONOMY 34	6 <b>Jos</b> JOSHUA 24	7 <b>Jc</b> JUDGES 21	8 <b>Rt</b> RUTH 04	9 <b>1 Sm</b> 1 SAMUEL 31	10 <b>2 Sm</b> 2 SAMUEL 24		
11 <b>1 Ki</b> 1 KINGS 22	12 <b>2 Ki</b> 2 KINGS 25	13 <b>1 Ch</b> 1 CHRONICLES 29	14 <b>2 Ch</b> 2 CHRONICLES 36	15 <b>Ez</b> EZRA 10	16 <b>Ne</b> NEHEMIAH 13	17 <b>Tb</b> TOBIT 14	18 <b>Jdt</b> JUDITH 16	19 <b>Es</b> ESTHER 10	20 <b>1 Mac</b> 1 MACCABEES 16	21 <b>2 Mac</b> 2 MACCABEES 15	22 <b>Jb</b> JOB 42
23 <b>Ps</b> PSALMS 150	24 <b>Pr</b> PROVERBS 31	25 <b>Ec</b> ECCLESIASTES 11	26 <b>So</b> SONG OF SOLOMON 08	27 <b>Wis</b> WISDOM 19	28 <b>Sir</b> SIRACH 51	29 <b>Is</b> ISAIAH 66	30 <b>Je</b> JEREMIAH 52	31 <b>Lm</b> LAMENTATIONS 05	32 <b>Ba</b> BARUCH 06	33 <b>Ek</b> EZEKIEL 48	34 <b>Dn</b> DANIEL 14
35 <b>Ho</b> HOSEA 14	36 <b>Jl</b> JOEL 04	37 <b>Am</b> AMOS 09	38 <b>Ob</b> OBADIAH 01	39 <b>Jh</b> JONAH 04	40 <b>Mi</b> MICAH 07	41 <b>Na</b> NAHUM 03	42 <b>Hk</b> HABAKKUK 03	43 <b>Zp</b> ZEPHANIAH 03	44 <b>Ha</b> HAGGAI 01	45 <b>Zc</b> ZECHARIAH 14	46 <b>Mal</b> MALACHI 03

INFO

"Bible" comes from the greek βιβλία ("The books"). The Catholic Bible contains 73 books: 46 from the Old Testament and 27 from the New Testament.

NEW TESTAMENT

47 <b>Mt</b> MATTHEW 28	48 <b>Mk</b> MARK 10	49 <b>Lk</b> LUKE 16	50 <b>Jn</b> JOHN 15	51 <b>Ac</b> ACTS 28							
52 <b>Ro</b> ROMANS 16	53 <b>1 Co</b> 1 CORINTHIANS 16	54 <b>2 Co</b> 2 CORINTHIANS 13	55 <b>Ga</b> GALATIANS 06	56 <b>Ep</b> EPHESIANS 06	57 <b>Pp</b> PHILIPPIANS 04	58 <b>Cl</b> COLLOSSIANS 04	59 <b>1 Th</b> 1 THESSALONIANS 05	60 <b>2 Th</b> 2 THESSALONIANS 03	61 <b>1 Ti</b> 1 TIMOTHY 06	62 <b>2 Ti</b> 2 TIMOTHY 04	63 <b>Tt</b> TITUS 03
64 <b>Pm</b> PHILEMON 01	65 <b>Hb</b> HEBREWS 13	66 <b>Ja</b> JAMES 05	67 <b>1 Pe</b> 1 PETER 05	68 <b>2 Pe</b> 2 PETER 03	69 <b>1 Jn</b> 1 JOHN 05	70 <b>2 Jn</b> 2 JOHN 01	71 <b>3 Jn</b> 3 JOHN 01	72 <b>Ju</b> JUDAS 01	73 <b>Re</b> REVELATIONS 22		

Number  
**Symbol**  
NAME  
Chapters

KEY

- PENTATEUCH
- SAPIENTIAL
- MINOR PROPHETS
- PAULINE LETTERS
- HISTORICAL
- MAJOR PROPHETS
- GOSPELS
- GENERAL LETTERS
- REVELATIONS



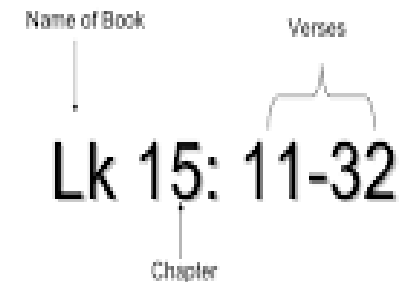


# Biblical Notation

- Bible from Greek “Biblios”=Books
  - Not a single book, but a library
- Divided into:
  - Books, Chapters (13<sup>th</sup> c.), and Verses (16<sup>th</sup> c.)
  - Colon divides chapters & verses
  - Dash means “through”
  - Comma means “and”
  - Semicolon divides blocks of material
  - \*=Footnotes
  - Raised letter indicates reference to another Bible passage
- [http://catholic-resources.org/Bible/Biblical\\_References.htm](http://catholic-resources.org/Bible/Biblical_References.htm)

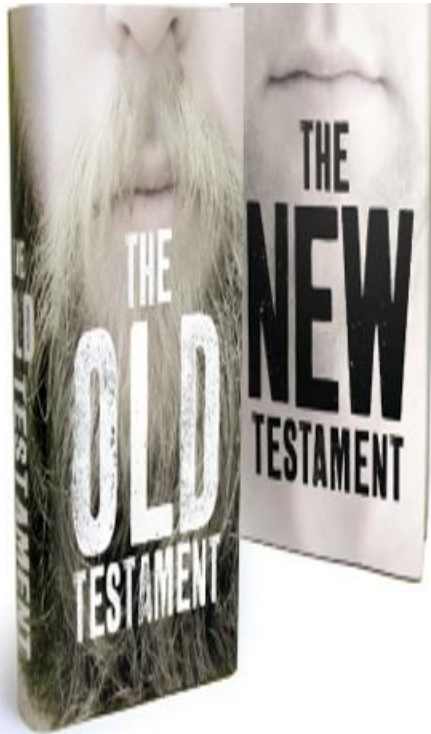
## How To Read the Bible?

Parable of The Prodigal Son – Luke 15: 11-32



# Two Major Divisions

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- Old Testament/Covenant
  - 46 books, originally written in Hebrew and Greek (some Aramaic)
  - History of Israel and God's first covenants with humanity
  - "old" meaning first & foundational (NOT out of date/irrelevant)
  - Jesus *fulfills* the OT; OT foreshadows the NT
- New Testament/Covenant
  - 27 books, originally written in Greek
  - History of Jesus & early Church
  - Jesus as the fullness of salvation
  - God's plan now clearly revealed
  - While the OT are also the Hebrew Scriptures, both the OT & NT together are the Christian Scriptures (not merely NT)



# The Old Testament

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- 4 Categories:
  - Torah/Pentateuch/The Law
    - 1<sup>st</sup> 5 books; Creation, Patriarchs & Matriarchs, Exodus & Sinai
  - Historical Books
    - Jewish history; Judges & taking over promised land, kings & monarchy, etc.
  - Wisdom Books
    - Poetry, songs, witty sayings, short stories, etc.
  - Prophetic Books
    - Prophets calling out for justice and fidelity to God & the Covenant



# The New Testament

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- 4 Categories:
  - Gospels
    - Life, ministry, teachings, Paschal Mystery of Jesus; central to the Christian faith
  - Acts of the Apostles
    - History of the early Church
  - Letters (Epistles)
    - Pauline (by Paul)
    - Deutero-Pauline (Disciple of Paul)
    - Pastorals (for Church leaders)
    - Catholic (Universal—to all)
  - Revelation
    - Apocalyptic literature



# Discussion Questions

- Please share:

- What struck you from today's Mass readings?
- How does a “contextualist approach” help us in understanding God's Word?
- Catholics believe the Bible is authored by both God and humans; how does this belief guide us in our understanding and interpretation of the Bible?
- How has Scripture been a part of your faith life, prior to RCIA?
- How might Scripture be more incorporated into your faith life, particularly as you explore becoming fully initiated into the Catholic Church?
- What questions did this topic and readings raise in your heart or mind?

# Closing Prayer

## by St. John Chrysostom

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O Lord Jesus Christ,  
open the eyes of my heart  
that I may hear your word,  
and understand and do your will,  
for I am a sojourner upon the Earth.

Hide not your commandments from me,  
but open my eyes,  
that I may perceive the wonders of your Law.

...On you do I set my hope, O my God,  
that you shall enlighten my mind and understanding  
with the light of your knowledge;  
not only to cherish those things which are written,  
but to do them...

For you are the enlightenment of those who lie in  
darkness,  
and from you comes every good deed and every gift.  
Amen.