

St. Therese Catholic Church

Vatican II - *Dei Verbum* The Dogmatic Constitution on Divine Revelation

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Vatican II

- Dates for the Vatican II Course:
 - December 6
 - December 13



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Dei Verbum: The Dogmatic Constitution on Divine Revelation

- Promulgated on November 18th, 1965 in the Fourth Session
- Rivals *Lumen Gentium* in importance
- One of the more divisive subjects among the bishops

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Dei Verbum: The Dogmatic Constitution on Divine Revelation

- The shortest of the four major council documents.
- The topic of divine revelation was introduced in the First Vatican Council in 1870 (*Dei Filius*), but needed a deeper reflection on the essence and sources of divine revelation (127).
- Looked at relationship between Sacred Scripture and Tradition
Does the Bible teach without error? (127)

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Dei Verbum: The Dogmatic Constitution on Divine Revelation

- Concerns God's revelation and the way we encounter it
- Asks three big questions:
 - *What* is revealed?
 - *How* is it revealed?
 - *Why* is it revealed?



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Teachings of *Dei Verbum*: Divine Revelation Itself

- Begins with Divine Revelation in itself:
- The Word of God is not a book, but a Person of Jesus Christ (128).
- Divine Revelation is God's "self-communication" of himself through His Word/Logos. Britton says, "Divine revelation is God's unveiling of himself throughout history" (129).

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Teachings of *Dei Verbum*: The *Logos*

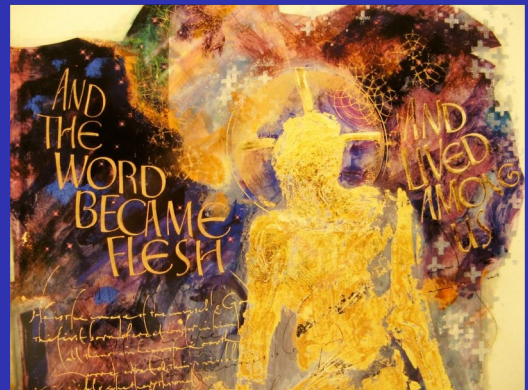
- Word = *Logos* in Greek. It is the origin of the English word “logic.” More than “word,” implies truth, reason, and order
- God’s *Logos* is the perfect expression of who God *is* and the source of truth and order of the universe. Christ reveals the deepest essence of the Father’s heart (128).
- **Key:** Christ is the logic of God; he reveals how God acts, thinks, and feels (129).

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Teachings of *Dei Verbum*: Divine Revelation Itself

- Word/*Logos* of God is NOT Scripture.
- God’s *Logos* IS Jesus Christ, the Incarnate Word through whom all things are made,
- Catholicism is not ‘Bible-based.’
- It is ‘Christ-based.’

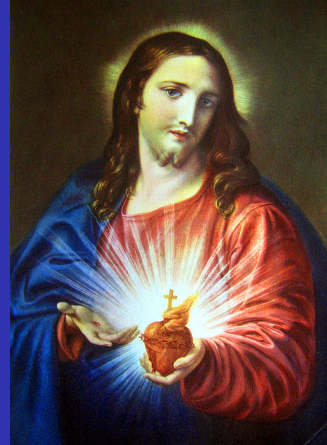


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Teachings of *Dei Verbum*: Divine Revelation Itself

- We are not a religion of the book alone, but a faith of the Christ who is in our midst. We are living stones built upon the chief cornerstone (1 Peter 2:5-7) (130).
- **Key:** We are a religion of Jesus Christ, the Word made flesh, who suffered and died for us, and who is risen from the dead.



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Teachings of *Dei Verbum*: Divine Revelation Itself

- Shift to Christ clarifies the What, the How, and the Why of Divine Revelation
- **The What:** God Himself
- **The How:** Through the Word (Christ)
- **The Why:** To make us share in the divine nature (*DV*, 2)

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Teachings of *Dei Verbum*: Divine Revelation Itself

- Two distinct modes of transmitting Revelation:
 - Sacred Scripture: Speech of God as it is put down in writing under the breath of the Holy Spirit (DV 9).
 - Sacred Tradition: Transmits in its entirety the Word of God which has been entrusted to the apostles by Christ the Lord and the Holy Spirit (DV 9).

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Teachings of *Dei Verbum*: Divine Revelation Itself

- Sacred Tradition
 - Examples : liturgy (preeminent), credal statements, writings of the Fathers, ecumenical councils, art, sacred music, Marian dogmas.
- Both flow from the same divine well-spring, come together in some fashion to form one thing, and move towards the same goal (DV 9).

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Teachings of *Dei Verbum*: Divine Revelation Itself

- **Same source**: God!
- **Same goal**: Glorify God (reveal God's goodness) and unite us with God
- **Deposit of Faith** = Sacred Tradition + Sacred Scriptures
- Body of saving truth entrusted by Christ to the Apostles and handed on them to be preserved and proclaimed.



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Teachings of *Dei Verbum*: Divine Revelation Itself

- How do Sacred Tradition and Sacred Scripture influence each other?
 - **Sacred Scripture**: Guides Sacred Tradition like a road map as we journey towards Jesus Christ
 - **Sacred Tradition**: Interprets Sacred Scripture – it gives Scripture meaning (it is not self-interpreting); Sacred Scriptures flows out of Sacred Tradition.
 - **Magisterium**: Teaching office of the Church that authentically interprets the Word of God, whether in written (i.e., Sacred Scripture) or in the form of Tradition (DV 10).

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Teachings of *Dei Verbum*: Divine Revelation Itself

Deposit of Faith

Sacred Scripture



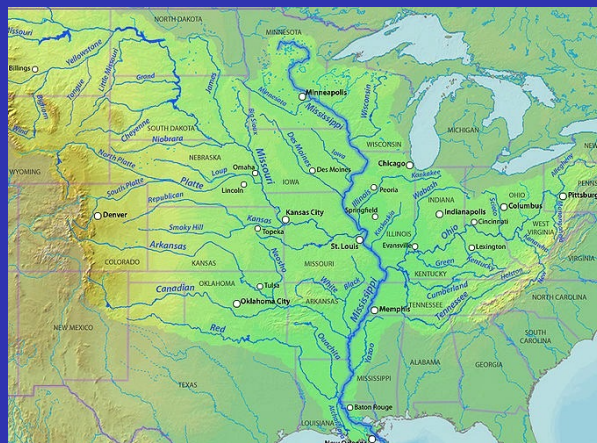
Sacred Tradition

Magisterium: Authentically interprets Sacred Scripture and Sacred Tradition

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Teachings of *Dei Verbum*: Divine Revelation Itself

- **Lake Itasca**: Paschal Mystery
- **Mississippi River**: Life of Christ via Sacred Tradition Sacred Scripture
- **Gulf of Mexico**: Eternal Life
- **Key**: Magisterium guarantees river remains clean





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Teachings of *Dei Verbum*: Sources of Revelation - Tradition

- We encounter the Word of God through the “single deposit” of Tradition and Scripture (DV, 10).
- Tradition - from *tradere* “to hand on”
- Sacred Tradition is the Word of God (Christ) as *handed on* through the whole life of the Church - Liturgy, Sacrament, Preaching, Holiness
 - New Testament derived from Tradition of preaching
- Rooted in the Apostles, maintained in Apostolic Succession, with Scripture interpreted by the Magisterium

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Teachings of *Dei Verbum*: Scripture

- Bearings from Pius XII’s *Divino Afflante Spiritu*:
 - Historical-critical method can be used
 - However, it should not be used to undermine the Faith of the Church or empty Sacred Scripture of its full wealth, including its mystical and spiritual depth.

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Teachings of *Dei Verbum*: Divine Inspiration of Scripture

- Scripture is “the Spirit’s testimony concerning the Word” (Hans Urs von Balthasar)
- The Holy Spirit “inspires” the human authors.
- Spirit makes “full use of their powers and faculties so that...it was as true authors that they consigned to writing whatever he wanted written” (DV, 11)

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Teachings of *Dei Verbum*: Scripture

- ‘Seamless’ work of Spirit and human authors
 - Spirit *elevates* the natural powers of human authors.
- Historical-critical scholarship *can* help determine the meaning the human authors intended to communicate (DV, 12).
 - Especially through study of the literary genres can be found in Scripture

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Teachings of *Dei Verbum*: Scripture

- In order to interpret Scripture, one must:
 - Meaning the sacred writers really intended and what God wanted to manifest by their words;
 - Attention to the content and unity of the whole Scripture;
 - The living tradition of the whole Church must be taken into account along with the harmony which exists between the elements of the faith (DV 12) (138).

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Teachings of *Dei Verbum*: Scriptural Inerrancy

- Divine inspiration leads to inerrancy.
- **Key:** "...the books of Scripture, firmly, faithfully and without error, teach that truth which God, for the sake of our salvation, wished to see confided to the Sacred Scriptures." (DV, 11)

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Teachings of *Dei Verbum*: Inerrancy

- What is the truth necessary for salvation? God’s own truth, the Word
- In Scripture, we encounter *Christ*
- To ‘uncover’ Christ in Scripture, we must consider the intention of the human author (and therefore the Holy Spirit)
 - especially through the genre of the sacred texts
- Catholics do not read Scripture like fundamentalists

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Teachings of *Dei Verbum*: Inerrancy

Old Testament	New Testament
Foundational Myths	Gospels
Legal Codes	Acts
Genealogies	Letters
Historical Narratives	Church orders
Prophetic Books	Testament
Poetry	Homily / Sermon
Wisdom Literature	Wisdom Collection
Apocalypses	Apocalypse

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Teachings of *Dei Verbum*: Scripture in the Life of the Church

- Encourages Catholics to study, venerate Scripture as “ignorance of Scripture is ignorance of Christ.”
- A great success of Vatican II
- Study should be rooted in Prayer, Liturgy, Tradition
 - A dialogue between God and the soul

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Nostra Aetate: Declaration on the Relation of the Church to Non-Christian Religions

- Promulgated October 28th, 1965 (3 weeks before *Dei Verbum*)
- The shortest document of Vatican II
- Began as statement on Judaism to be attached to *Unitatis Redintegratio*

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Nostra Aetate: Declaration on the Relation of the Church to Non-Christian Religions

- The Church “rejects nothing of what is true and holy” in other religions, which “often reflect a ray of that truth that enlightens all men and women.” (NA, 2)
- Christians are to witness to their faith in Christ
- And, “...acknowledge, preserve and encourage the spiritual and moral truths found among non-Christians.”

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Nostra Aetate: Declaration on the Relation of the Church to Non-Christian Religions

- Builds upon and applies long standing teachings:
 - **St. Justin Martyr**: “seeds of the *Logos*” ‘planted’ throughout creation and glimpsed by non-Christians
 - **Vatican I**: All men and women can know of the Creator through reason

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Nostra Aetate: Declaration on the Relation of the Church to Non-Christian Religions

- Highlights the roots of the Church in Israel
- God does not revoke his Covenant with the Jews
- Rejects the idea that all Jews are guilty of the death of Christ
- Denounces all forms of hatred and bigotry directed at the Jews or anyone else.

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Nostra Aetate: Declaration on the Relation of the Church to Non-Christian Religions



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Next Time

- December 6
- **Chapter 6** – The Church in the Modern World
- Pages 141-162

