

*The Holy Bible:
The heritage of...*

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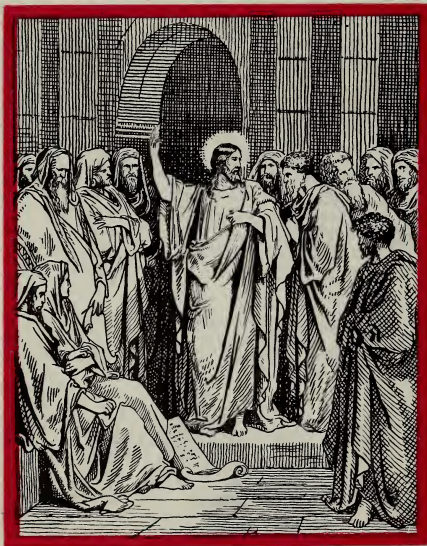
HOLY BIBLE

THE
HERITAGE
OF
CATHOLIC
FAMILY LIFE



The Catholic Biblical Association of America

In the Bible, declares His Holiness Pope Pius XII, "are laid open the fountains of Divine Guidance without which both peoples and their rulers can never arrive at, never establish, peace in the state and unity in the heart." Ever since the Bible was brought into being by the Church, the Church has expressed the desire that it be made "abundantly accessible to the flock of Jesus Christ." (Pope Leo XIII) ¶ This booklet aims to point



out afresh for Catholics what the Bible is and how it came to be. It takes up the questions raised by geological findings and evolution. It traces the Church's role in preserving Sacred Scripture and tells how the laity is re-discovering it today. In the final pages appear readings for Lent from the Holy Gospels, the Acts of the Apostles and the Epistles, and the Psalms.

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An Open Book



A few years ago a devout Catholic woman presented a friend with the family Bible which had lain upon her parlor table for sixty years. When he opened it he was startled to find as the frontispiece a picture of coarse-looking monks dancing around a pile of burning Bibles. The pious family had been treasuring a version published by a Bible society with scant love of the Church, because in sixty years no one had opened it! Much knowledge, much inspiration and much grace is lost to all of us because of a similarly closed Book.

The spirit of the Bible is found at all times in the history of the Church. It pervades the very atmosphere of the Catholic home by the presence of the crucifix, the recitation of the Our Father, the Hail Mary, the Rosary and the Angelus. In Catholic theology the Bible and sacred tradition are considered as the two sources of revealed truth.

The Church makes frequent use of the Bible in her official prayers. The Mass Book, the Breviary and all the liturgical books are compiled almost verbally from the Hcly Bible . . . the Bible is the official prayer book for our Sacrifice, our Sacraments and our Supplications. The Bible has also been an inspiration at all times for all the arts. The most famous masterpieces of the pictorial arts represent biblical scenes. Themes taken from the Bible have inspired some of the greatest music ever written. From the pages of the Bible poetry and prose have derived some of their noblest themes and grandest imagery.

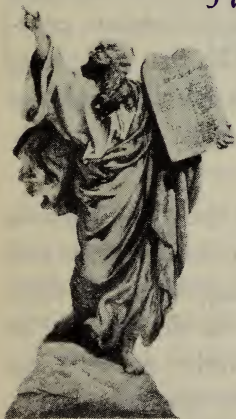
Never Withheld from the Faithful

The Church has never withheld the sacred volume from her children. After the Sacraments, which are the unfailing instruments of divine grace and the authentic means of holiness or its increase, prayer and spiritual reading, especially of Holy Scripture, are the most effective means for approaching God, and for preserving and increasing our union with Him.

In reading the Bible, everyone should bear in mind this principle: Unless the context clearly limits the bearing or sense of a text or a saying to a particular person or situation we should take the words of the inspired writers—above all, the words of Our Lord—as addressed to ourselves individually. Thus we shall find that the New Testament in particular will have a special meaning and value for us, because it speaks to us directly of Christ and no longer in type

or prophecy as in the Old Testament. At the same time, we shall find that Jesus Christ is also broadcasting to us and that His words are reaching our ears and stirring our hearts through the centuries, because we are tuned in to receive His message and are deriving spiritual profit from His words. Thus, we shall find that reading the Bible in the spirit of faith will effect enduring spiritual values in our souls, and will minister to many of our needs in these troublesome times, giving us inspiration, courage and hope.

How the Bible Grew



The Bible is the greatest book in the world. The word Bible means simply the book. God is the Author. From time to time during a period of about 1,400 years, He inspired men whom He chose to write the different smaller books which compose it. Those written before the birth of Christ are called The Old Testament; those after His birth, The New Testament. The word testament, which means will or inheritance, indicates that these are God's legacy to us.

The New Testament contains the four Gospels, the Acts of the Apostles, twenty-one Epistles or Letters, and the great book of the Apocalypse. The Gospels, which mean

good tidings, are four short records of the life and teachings of our Lord Jesus Christ. Three of them parallel one another quite closely and are called synoptic. The fourth, the Gospel of Saint John, was written last and includes much that was omitted in the earlier accounts. All of them were written within sixty-five years after the death and resurrection of Christ and are His earliest and original biographies. They are also a summary of His teachings and His instructions to us, His will, which He wishes us to cherish and fulfill.

The Acts of the Apostles was written at about the same time as the Gospels. It records the work of the Apostles during the first thirty years after Christ's ascension, especially that of Saint Peter and Saint Paul. In that time they established and organized His Church in all the countries around the Mediterranean Sea.

Apostles Wrote Many Letters

During their travels, the Apostles and their companions wrote numerous letters to their Christian communities and their friends. These are filled with the inspiration of their zeal to do what Christ had asked them to do, that is, to preach His Gospel over all the world. Twenty-one of these Epistles or Letters are included in His Testament to us.

Christ wished us to know something of the end of the world, of His return to it, and of heaven. He entrusted this knowledge in a vision to Saint John and commanded him to record it in a book. This book, called the Apocalypse, was written about 96 A.D. and concludes our New Testament.

Monks Copied the Bible

There can be no doubt that the world must thank the Catholic Church for the Bible—if only to account for the 1,500 years which elapsed before the first of the Reformers



appeared on the scene. Who spanned the gulf? We ask that the monks who copied for centuries, working from dawn until dark, day in and day out—

we ask that these anonymous servants of God be given their due. But for them we would have no Bible.

With the invention of printing during the middle of the fifteenth century the Bible ran through edition after edition—124 altogether in the first fifty years. Between 1452 and 1522 (when Luther began his twelve-year translation) there were fourteen complete editions of the Bible in High German at Augsburg, Basle, Strassburg, and Nuremberg; five in Low German at Cologne, Delf, Halberstadt, and Luebeck. During this interval there were 156 Latin, six Hebrew, eleven Italian, ten French, one Flemish, one Limousine, one Russian, and two Bohemian editions. All of these were sponsored and approved by the Catholic Church. Thus the Church insists on her own version for Catholic use.

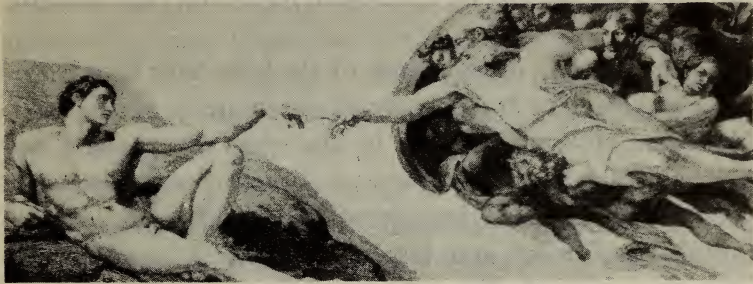
The Bible and Science

When a Catholic opens the Bible at the very first page he often thinks of the "conflict" between the Bible and "Science." Here is a chapter that presents formidable difficulties. Ever since Galileo it has been the object of learned discussion. Moses describes God creating the universe in six days. But science has proved that our earth broke off from the sun millions of years ago. The gradual cooling and hardening of this earth, the formation of continents and seas, the invasion of the glaciers, form an epic narrative of staggering time-proportions. Only in quite recent times did this earth bring forth the animals and vegetation of today, these having evolved gradually from different forms. Can the six days of which Moses speaks be these long periods described by geologists?

Certainly they are not. Moses knew nothing of modern science; his picture of the universe is quite naive, no further advanced, in fact, than that of the people among whom he lived three thousand years ago. But no human mind has ever surpassed him in the ultimate explanation which he gives of the universe in his first words: "In the beginning God created the heavens and the earth..." (Gen. 1:1). The full realization of this truth has made saints. And Moses wants us to realize it fully, to ponder it in detail. That is why he goes on to list everything in the universe, as he knew it, and insist that it all sprang from a mere word of God. His time-limits, however, are not to be taken literally.

The Bible and Evolution

The second story of Genesis, with its detailed description of the creation of Adam and Eve, may awaken in the mind of the Catholic reader still more bitter controversy. Here is the problem of evolution! Can evolution be found described in the narrative? Certainly not! Can it be recon-



ciled with the teaching of this chapter? Yes, if it is that form of evolution which recognizes the action of God both at the beginning and throughout the evolutionary process. Is evolution a fact? We shall never find the answer to this in the Bible. What we shall find in this second chapter is a lesson in humility. What are we? Like the beasts around us, we are mere earth, to which death once more reduces us.

This bit of earth, however, is the object of God's special action, which raises it above the rest of creation. The first chapter said simply that God created man in His own "image and likeness" (1:26). The second chapter expresses the same truth by means of a picture: God breathes into man the breath of His own life.

Bible Discussion Groups

Shortly after ascending the Chair of Peter, Pope Pius XII wrote: "The needs of our age demand that the laity too should be able to give assistance to the clergy; and that not on a small and grudging scale; they should equip themselves . . . by reading, by discussion, by circles that meet for study."

Since then tens of thousands of the laity have been learning every year of the power and the majesty of the God-Man who changed the face of the earth. By reading and discussing the New Testament in Confraternity discussion groups they discover the personality of Christ, see Him establish His Church and vest in it authority in all matters of faith and morals. By reading and discussion they discover the Christian's obligation to live by the truths of the Gospel, become convinced that grace is a free gift of God, working in man's soul, however, only when man's soul works with grace.

The laity are leaders as well as learners in these informal groups. At meetings, which are usually held in homes, members in turn read aloud a brief passage from the text while the others follow silently. Then discussion is developed by carefully prepared questions, which encourage members to re-tell in their own words what they have read. In the beginning expression is limited and halting. Eventually all acquire a religious vocabulary and discuss the matter with the ease that accompanies an act performed instinctively.

Husbands and Wives Meet Together

Our bishops have encouraged and directed organized effort on the part of the laity to meet in circles to read and discuss the doctrine of Christ and His Church; to discipline their lives by this doctrine; to equip themselves to spread it wherever they go. Men, women and youth from every walk of life are forming circles or clubs of from six to ten members to steep themselves in Christ's doctrine. Husbands and wives meet together; non-Catholic parties of mixed marriages join their groups. Young men and women form clubs separately and jointly. Out-of-school and college youth assemble in homes, clubrooms or wherever they can conveniently come together. Informally and cooperatively the members of each small group read and discuss the Gospel truths. Catholic students in secular high schools, under the guidance of an adult leader, relate and dramatize the Savior's deeds and miracles.



DAILY LENTEN READINGS FROM THE HOLY GOSPELS

FIRST WEEK

	Text	Subject
Weds.	Jn. 1:1-18	The Prologue
Thurs.	Lk. 1:5-25	Announcing the Baptist
Fri.	Lk. 1:26-38	Announcing the Savior
Sat.	Lk. 1:39-56	The Visitation

SECOND WEEK

Sun.	Lk. 1:57-80	Birth of Baptist
Mon.	Lk. 2:1-21	Birth of Jesus
Tues.	Mt. 2:1-23	The Magi, etc.
Weds.	Lk. 2:41-52	Jesus in the temple
Thurs.	Mk. 1:1-13	John the Baptist
Fri.	Jn. 1:35-51	First disciples
Sat.	Jn. 2:1-12	Marriage at Cana

THIRD WEEK

Sun.	Jn. 2:13-25	Temple cleansed
Mon.	Jn. 3:1-21	Nicodemus
Tues.	Jn. 3:22-36	The Baptist speaks
Weds.	Mk. 2:1-28	Conflict with Pharisees
Thurs.	Mk. 3:1-19	Further conflict
Fri.	Mt. 5:1-20	Sermon on the Mount
Sat.	Mt. 6:1-18	The same continued

FOURTH WEEK

Sun.	Lk. 7:1-17	Centurion's servant
Mon.	Lk. 7:18-35	John the Baptist
Tues.	Lk. 7:36-50	The sinful woman
Weds.	Mk. 3:20-35	Blasphemy of the Scribes
Thurs.	Mt. 13:1-23	The Sower
Fri.	Mt. 13:24-52	Other parables
Sat.	Lk. 4:16-30	Jesus at Nazareth

FIFTH WEEK

	Text	Subject
Sun.	Mt. 14:1-12	Death of the Baptist
Mon.	Jn. 6:1-21	Jesus feeds five thousand
Tues.	Jn. 6:22-47	Jesus on the Eucharist
Weds.	Jn. 6:48-70	Jesus on the Eucharist
Thurs.	Mk. 7:24-37	Chanaanite woman
Fri.	Mt. 16:13-28	Peter's profession of faith
Sat.	Mk. 9:1-12	Transfiguration

SIXTH WEEK

Sun.	Mk. 9:32-49	Against various vices
Mon.	Jn. 8:12-30	Light of the world
Tues.	Jn. 10:1-18	Good Shepherd
Weds.	Lk. 15:11-32	Prodigal Son
Thurs.	Mt. 19:16-30	Danger of riches
Fri.	Jn. 11:1-44	Lazarus
Sat.	Jn. 12:1-11	At Bethany

SEVENTH WEEK

Sun.	Mt. 21:1-11	Palm Sunday
Mon.	Mt. 22:34-46	The Son of David
Tues.	Mk. 13:1-13	Destruction of Jerusalem and of the world
Weds.	Jn. 12:20-50	Jesus' last words to the people
Thurs.	Mk. 14:12-25	Last Supper
Fri.	Mk. 15:20-47	Crucifixion and death of Jesus
Sat.	Mk. 16:1-18	The Resurrection

EASTER SUNDAY

Jn. 21:1-25	Appearance of Jesus
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DAILY LENTEN READINGS FROM THE ACTS OF THE APOSTLES AND THE EPISTLES

FIRST WEEK

Text	Subject
Weds. Acts 1:1-11	The Ascension
Thurs. Acts 1:15-26	Election of Matthias
Fri. Acts 2:1-18	Descent of Holy Spirit
Sat. Acts 2:22-36	Peter's first sermon

SECOND WEEK

Sun. Acts 2:37-47	Results of Peter's sermon
Mon. Acts 3:1-11	Peter's first miracle
Tues. Acts 3:12-26	Peter explains the miracle
Weds. Acts 4:1-12	Apostles arrested
Thurs. Acts 5:1-16	Ananias' hypocrisy
Fri. Acts 5:17-33	Apostles arrested
Sat. Acts 5:34-42	Defense of apostles

THIRD WEEK

Sun. Acts 6:1-15	The deacons
Mon. Acts 7:54-8:3	Stephen's martyrdom
Tues. Acts 8:4-17	Faith in Samaria
Weds. Acts 8:26-40	The Ethiopian
Thurs. Acts 9:1-19	Conversion of Paul
Fri. Acts 9:31-43	Peter visits the churches
Sat. Acts 11:1-18	Gentiles received into the Church

FOURTH WEEK

Sun. Acts 12:1-17	Peter's life threatened
Mon. Acts 13:1-12	Paul goes on mission
Tues. Acts 14:7-17	Paul at Lystra
Weds. Acts 15:1-12	Decision on the Mosaic Law
Thurs. Acts 16:11-18	Paul at Philippi
Fri. Phil. 1:12-30	Paul to the Philippians
Sat. Acts 17:1-9	Paul at Thessalonica

FIFTH WEEK

Text	Subject
Sun. 1 Thes. 2:1-12	Paul to the Thessalonians
Mon. Acts 18:1-17	Paul at Corinth
Tues. 1 Cor. 1:17-2:5	Paul to the Corinthians
Weds. Acts 19:1-12	Paul at Ephesus
Thurs. Eph. 5:21-6:4	Paul to the Ephesians
Fri. Acts 20:17-38	Paul's farewell to the Ephesians
Sat. Acts 21:27-40	Paul arrested

SIXTH WEEK (Passion Week)

Sun. Acts 22:1-21	Paul's address
Mon. Acts 23:1-11	Paul before the court
Tues. Acts 23:12-21	Plot against Paul
Weds. Acts 23:22-35	Paul in prison
Thurs. Acts 24:1-21	Paul before the governor
Fri. Acts 25:1-12	Paul before Festus
Sat. Acts 25:13-27	Paul before Agrippa

SEVENTH WEEK (Holy Week)

Sun. Acts 26:1-18	Paul's defense
Mon. Acts 26:19-32	Paul's defense
Tues. Acts 27:1-13	Departure for Rome
Weds. Acts 27:14-26	Storm at sea
Thurs. Acts 28:1-16	Malta and Rome
Fri. Col. 1:15-23	Christ, God and Savior
Sat. Philem. 1-25	Paul's plea for a slave

EASTER SUNDAY

Col. 3:1-10	Mystical death and resurrection
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DAILY LENTEN READINGS FROM THE PSALMS

FIRST WEEK

	Psalms	Subject
Wednesday	6, 31, 50, 142	Prayers of the Repentant Sinner
Thursday	13, 35, 38, 89	The Misery and Brevity of Life
Friday	37, 101	Cries of the Distressed Penitent
Saturday	3, 4, 10, 55, 56	Unshaken Confidence in God

SECOND WEEK

Sunday	90, 107, 120, 124, 145	Safe in God's Care
Monday	14, 25, 100, 111, 127, 140	Innocence of Life
Tuesday	1, 48, 72	The Folly of a Wicked Life
Wednesday	36, 74, 126	The Fate of Sinners and of the Just
Thursday	29, 40, 112, 114, 115	God's Mercy Towards the Afflicted
Friday	5, 24, 85	Prayers for Divine Help and Guidance
Saturday	106, 137	God, the Savior in the Hour of Need

THIRD WEEK

Sunday	32, 33, 66	Praise of God's Power and Goodness
Monday	118, 1-56	Zeal for God's Holy Law
Tuesday	118, 57-120	Love of God's Holy Will
Wednesday	118, 121-176, 18B	Devotion Towards the Divine Law
Thursday	34, 52, 82	The Overthrow of God's Enemies
Friday	16, 9	Prayer in Time of Persecution
Saturday	15, 19, 60, 131	Prayers for the Lord's Anointed

FOURTH WEEK

Sunday	103, 148, 150	The Glory of the Almighty Creator
Monday	8, 18A, 28, 92, 138	God's Majesty and Power
Tuesday	79, 84, 125, 143	Prayers for the Restoration of God's Peo
Wednesday	11, 51, 108, 119	The Evil of Malicious Tongues
Thursday	64, 65, 134	Thanksgiving for God's Goodness to Isra
Friday	54, 69, 70	Prayers in Time for Sorrow
Saturday	105, 123	The Lord's Mercy to Israel

FIFTH WEEK

Sunday	91, 102, 110, 116	Grateful Praise of God's Goodness
Monday	77	Lessons from Israel's History
Tuesday	77, 43, 128	God's Love for His People
Wednesday	104, 149	The Lord, the Protector of Israel
Thursday	39, 95, 144	Grateful Hymns of Praise to God
Friday	58, 63, 139, 141	Prayers for Deliverance from Wicked Fc
Saturday	17	Thanksgiving for Help and Victory

SIXTH WEEK

Sunday	2, 20, 44, 109
Monday	46, 71, 96, 98
Tuesday	7, 57, 81, 93
Wednesday	49, 80, 94
Thursday	41, 42, 62, 83, 86
Friday	12, 68, 129
Saturday	67, 135

Christ, the Triumphant King
The Lord, The King of Justice
Pleas for True Justice
The Sacrifice Pleasing to God
Longings for God's Holy Dwelling
Lamentations of the Suffering Redeemer
The Lord's Triumphant Procession to Sion

SEVENTH WEEK

Sunday	23, 99, 117, 133
Monday	47, 78, 121, 132, 136
Tuesday	45, 59, 73, 75
Wednesday	88
Thursday	22, 26, 53, 61, 122, 130
Friday	21, 87
Saturday	27, 30, 76

Solemn Entry into the Temple
Love for the Holy City
God's Care of Sion
God's Promises to David
Trust in God's Love
The Sufferings and Abandonment of Christ
Anticipated Thanksgiving for Salvation

EASTER SUNDAY

Sunday	97, 113, 146, 147
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Grateful Praise for the Redemption



“Let also the minds of the faithful be nourished with the same food that they may draw from thence the knowledge and love of God and the progress in perfection and the happiness of their own individual souls.”

POPE PIUS XII

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