

**THE**  
**Catholic**  
**Youth**  
**Bible**<sup>®</sup> **Third Edition**

**Pray It! Study It! Live It!**<sup>®</sup>  
resources offer a holistic approach  
to learning, living, and passing on the  
Catholic faith.

*For the text of the articles and introductions*

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*For the text of the New American Bible (NAB)*

OLD TESTAMENT

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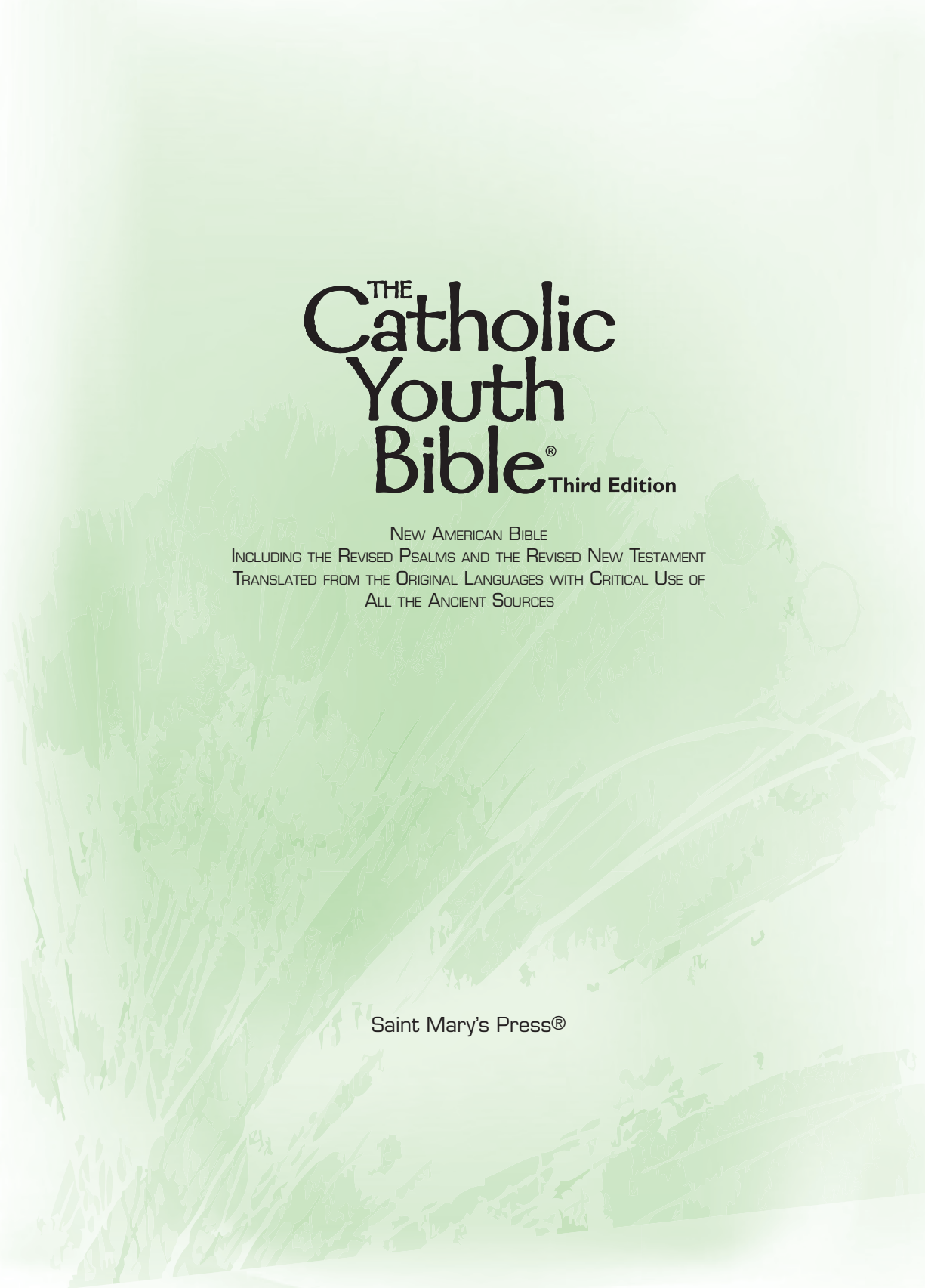
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INCLUDING THE REVISED PSALMS AND THE REVISED NEW TESTAMENT  
TRANSLATED FROM THE ORIGINAL LANGUAGES WITH CRITICAL USE OF  
ALL THE ANCIENT SOURCES

Saint Mary's Press<sup>®</sup>

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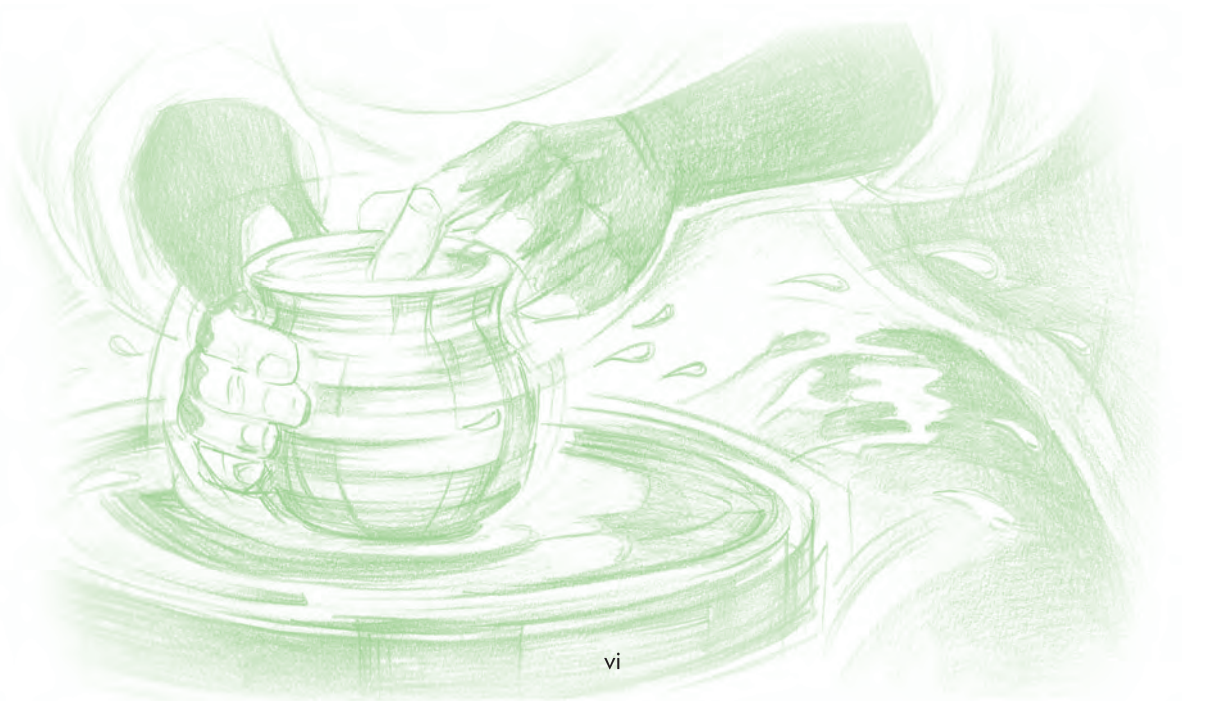
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# Welcome!

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## This Unique Bible Is for YOU!

*The Catholic Youth Bible*® (*CYB*) is filled with things that will make it easier for you to understand the Bible's message. The authors, editors, designers, and artists involved in creating its special features were focused on you — a young person seeking answers to life's important questions. The *CYB* can be a true companion, helping you find the answers you seek and perhaps raising new questions along the way. It will help you see yourself in God's image and likeness...  
**a vital part of God's saving work in the world.**



## What Makes this Youth Bible CATHOLIC?

For starters, its introductions and articles reflect Catholic interpretation of the Bible and make connections to Catholic beliefs and traditions. In addition, this Bible contains all seventy-three books and letters that form a complete Catholic Bible, seven more than most other Bibles (see “The Case of the Missing Books,” near Tb 1:16). Does this mean that other Christians cannot use ***The Catholic Youth Bible***? Not at all. When it comes to the Scriptures, Christians from all cultures and denominations have more in common than they have differences.

**As You Use this Bible**, keep in mind two important points. The first is that the Bible is for everyone. Wherever you are in your relationship with God, ***the Bible can speak to you***. The articles in the **CYB** invite you to consider what the church teaches about God’s message in the Bible, whether you are a committed Christian or a searcher with lots of questions.

The second point is that all the special features in ***The Catholic Youth Bible*** are designed to encourage you ***to read the Bible itself***. It is the Bible’s stories, poems, prophecies, and letters that carry this central message: ***God desires a loving relationship with us***. The special features of this Bible can help you understand God’s message. **But it is God’s word in the Bible that can CHANGE YOUR LIFE!**

# Special Features

**The Catholic Youth Bible** is loaded with special features to help make it easier for you to read and understand the Bible. Here is a list of some of those features and where to find them.

## SECTION INTRODUCTIONS

Each major section of the Bible (the Pentateuch, the historical books, the wisdom books, the prophetic books, the Gospels and the Acts of the Apostles, and the Letters and Revelation) begins with background on the books in that section.

## BOOK INTRODUCTIONS

Introductions at the beginning of most books (sometimes two or three books share a single introduction) give insight into each book's central message and an overview of its contents.

## COLOR INSERTS

The five sections of color inserts cover how to read and study the Bible; how to pray with the Scriptures; how to apply biblical principles to daily life and six saints who illustrate the principles, including a list of the seven principles of Catholic social teaching; photos and charts highlighting biblical people, places, and events; and an overview of Catholic practices and prayers.



The **“Live It!”** articles apply the Bible’s messages to situations you may be facing now or will face in the future.



The **“Pray It!”** articles can help you use the Bible for personal prayer. They show the biblical basis for the prayer and sacramental life of the Catholic Church.



## Did You Know?

The **“Did You Know?”** articles provide background from biblical scholars to help you understand the culture and traditions of biblical times, or the Church’s interpretation of certain passages.





### Introducing...

The “**Introducing . . .**” articles give a quick introduction to the lives of important biblical people.

### Catholic Connection

The “**Catholic Connection**” articles are full-page articles that show the biblical basis for many Catholic Christian beliefs and practices.

### Cultural Connection

The “**Cultural Connection**” articles explain how people in different cultures have understood and lived out God’s revelation in the Bible. The articles represent many of the diverse cultures that have found their home in the United States.

### Catholic Social Teaching

These articles focus on the seven principles of Catholic social teaching and help the reader to understand their biblical basis.



## WHERE DO I FIND IT?

Several indexes are located at the back of the Bible. The first index helps you locate Bible passages on events, people, and teachings of Jesus. The second index helps you find Bible passages related to Catholic teaching. The third index helps you find Bible passages related to each sacrament. The fourth index helps you find Bible passages related to life and faith issues. The fifth index leads you to articles on specific topics.

## STUDY AIDS

A calendar of the Church year and Sunday readings, a glossary of Scripture-related terms, color maps, pictures, and a timeline are found at the back of the Bible. The timeline and maps will help you locate where and when different biblical events occurred.



# The Bible Is Multicultural

**The Bible** developed in the midst of great cultural diversity. In fact, the Bible was originally written in at least two languages, Hebrew and Greek. The people of the Old Testament were influenced by Arabic, Egyptian, and other Middle Eastern cultures that surrounded them. Later, they and the early Christian church were influenced by the Greek and Roman cultures. In the Bible, God is revealed as the God of all nations and all cultures.

As the word of God, the Bible's core message of God's love for human beings speaks to people of any culture. That is one reason the Bible has been translated into more languages than any other book in the world. Christians also believe that God is at work in the lives of people of every culture, whether or not they have been formally introduced to the Christian message. Listening to other cultures' experience of God can deepen Christian people's appreciation of God's message present in the Bible.

We also live in a multicultural world. ***The Catholic Youth Bible*** responds to this reality in two main ways. First, all the articles attempt to speak in a way that people of all cultures can appreciate and understand. Second, some articles have been specially written to represent distinct cultural perspectives. Most of these articles represent African American, Asian American, Hispanic and Latino, and Native American perspectives. The revised edition of ***The Catholic Youth Bible, Third Edition***, also includes additional articles representing cultural perspectives from around the world.

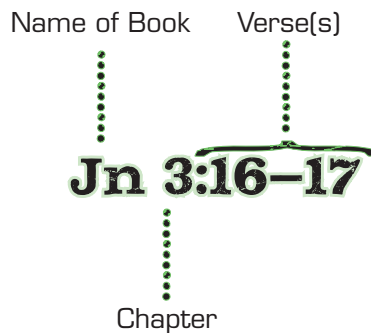
All the articles share cultural experiences and traditions, religious symbols, prayers, and poetry, and they connect all these elements to the Bible. "Cultural Connections," an entry in the subject index at the back of the Bible, lists the locations of all these articles. If you would like to read articles from one of the four major cultural perspectives mentioned above, the subject index still contains entries for those.

The cultural perspectives represented in ***The Catholic Youth Bible*** are a small sampling of the many unique cultures in the world. Because of space restrictions, articles on many cultures could not be included. Despite these limitations, the multicultural articles can deepen your appreciation of the Bible's message and of the rich ways different cultures live that message.

# Navigating The Catholic Youth Bible

**The Catholic Youth Bible** has several aids to help you locate references to Bible books and the Bible's special features. The contents on pages iv–v will be your main guide in locating the different books and features. However, the last page in the color section (facing the back cover) lists all the Bible books alphabetically and gives their abbreviations and beginning page numbers. You will find this a useful and easy-to-locate guide. Also, the section “Where Do I Find It?” offers several types of indexes to help you locate specific passages and articles.

Throughout **The Catholic Youth Bible**, there are many references to specific Bible passages. These references are given in shorthand form, such as Jn 3:16–17. The initial letters are the abbreviation for (or, in a few cases, the full name of) the Bible book. The number before the colon stands for the chapter, and the number(s) after the colon stands for the verse(s). So Jn 3:16–17 refers to the Gospel According to John, chapter 3, verses 16 to 17.



Most of the articles end with a citation identifying the Bible passage the article is based on. It is important to read the passage before reading the article.

In addition to the Bible text, you will find footnotes and Scripture cross-references printed along the bottom of each page. Every time you see an obelisk (†) in the Bible text, you will find a corresponding footnote labeled with the same chapter and verse numbers at the bottom of the page. The footnotes provide you with added information about words and phrases mentioned in the Bible. Every time you see an asterisk (\*) in the Bible text, you will find a corresponding cross-reference labeled with the same chapter and verse numbers at the bottom of the page. The cross-references direct you to similar Scripture passages.

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# Preface to the New American Bible

## The Old Testament

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On September 30, 1943, His Holiness Pope Pius XII issued his now famous encyclical on scripture studies, *Divino afflante Spiritu*. He wrote: "We ought to explain the original text which was written by the inspired author himself and has more authority and greater weight than any, even the very best, translation whether ancient or modern. This can be done all the more easily and fruitfully if to the knowledge of languages be joined a real skill in literary criticism of the same text."

Early in 1944, in conformity with the spirit of the encyclical, and with the encouragement of Archbishop Cicognani, Apostolic Delegate to the United States, the Bishops' Committee of the Confraternity of Christian Doctrine requested members of The Catholic Biblical Association of America to translate the sacred scriptures from the original languages or from the oldest extant form of the text, and to present the sense of the biblical text in as correct a form as possible.

The first English Catholic version of the Bible, the Douay-Rheims (1582-1609/10), and its revision by Bishop Challoner (1750) were based on the Latin Vulgate. In view of the relative certainties more recently attained by textual and higher criticism, it has become increasingly desirable that contemporary translations of the sacred books into English be prepared in which due reverence for the text and strict observance of the rules of criticism would be combined.

*The New American Bible* has accomplished this in response to the need of the church in America today. It is the achievement of some fifty biblical scholars, the greater number of whom, though not all, are Catholics. In particular, the editors-in-chief have devoted twenty-five years to this work. The collaboration of scholars who are not Catholic fulfills the directive of the Second Vatican Council, not only that "correct translations be made into different languages especially from the original texts

of the sacred books," but that, "with the approval of the church authority, these translations be produced in cooperation with separated brothers" so that "all Christians may be able to use them."

The text of the books contained in *The New American Bible* is a completely new translation throughout. From the original and the oldest available texts of the sacred books, it aims to convey as directly as possible the thought and individual style of the inspired writers. The better understanding of Hebrew and Greek, and the steady development of the science of textual criticism, the fruit of patient study since the time of St. Jerome, have allowed the translators and editors in their use of all available materials to approach more closely than ever before the sense of what the sacred authors actually wrote.

Where the translation supposes the received text—Hebrew, Aramaic, or Greek, as the case may be—ordinarily contained in the best-known editions, as the original or the oldest extant form, no additional remarks are necessary. But for those who are happily able to study the original text of the scriptures at firsthand, a supplementary series of textual notes pertaining to the Old Testament was added originally in an appendix to the typical edition. (It is now obtainable in a separate booklet from The Catholic Biblical Association of America, The Catholic University of America, Washington, DC 20064.) These notes furnish a guide in those cases in which the editorial board judges that the manuscripts in the original languages, or the evidence of the ancient versions, or some similar source, furnish the correct reading of a passage, or at least a reading more true to the original than that customarily printed in the available editions.

The Massoretic text of 1 and 2 Samuel has in numerous instances been corrected by the more ancient manuscripts Samuel a, b, and c from Cave 4 of Qumran, with the aid of important evidence

## Preface to the New American Bible: The Old Testament

from the Septuagint in both its oldest form and its Lucianic recension. Fragments of the lost Book of Tobit in Aramaic and in Hebrew, recovered from Cave 4 of Qumran, are in substantial agreement with the Sinaitic Greek recension used for the translation of this book. The lost original Hebrew text of 1 Maccabees is replaced by its oldest extant form in Greek. Judith, 2 Maccabees, and parts of Esther are also translated from the Greek.

The basic text for the Psalms is not the Massoretic but one which the editors considered closer to the original inspired form, namely the Hebrew text underlying the new Latin Psalter of the Church, the *Liber Psalmorum* (1944<sup>1</sup>, 1945<sup>2</sup>). Nevertheless they retained full liberty to establish the reading of the original text on sound critical principles.

The translation of Sirach, based on the original Hebrew as far as it is preserved and corrected from the ancient versions, is often interpreted in the light of the traditional Greek text. In the Book of Baruch the basic text is the Greek of the Septuagint, with some readings derived from an underlying Hebrew form no longer extant. In the deuterocanonical sections of Daniel (3:24–91, chapter 13 and chapter 14 [these are Azariah, Susanna, and Bel and the Dragon respectively in WORDsearch]), the basic text is the Greek text of Theodotion, occasionally revised according to the Greek text of the Septuagint.

In some instances in the Book of Job, in Proverbs, Sirach, Isaiah, Jeremiah, Ezekiel, Hosea, Amos, Micah, Nahum, Habakkuk, and Zechariah there is good reason to believe that the original order of lines was accidentally disturbed in the transmission of the text. The verse numbers given in such cases are always those of the current Hebrew text, though the arrangement differs. In these instances the textual notes advise the reader of the difficulty. Cases of exceptional dislocation are called to the reader's attention by footnotes.

The Books of *Genesis to Ruth* were first published in 1952; the Wisdom Books, *Job to Sirach*, in 1955; the Prophetic Books, *Isaiah to Malachi*, in 1961; and the Historical Books, *Samuel to Maccabees*, in 1969. In the present edition of *Genesis to Ruth* there are certain new features: a general introduction to the Pentateuch, a retranslation of the text of Genesis with an introduction, cross-references, and revised textual notes, besides new and expanded exegetical notes which

take into consideration the various sources or literary traditions.

The revision of *Job to Sirach* includes changes in strophe division in Job and Proverbs and in titles of principal parts and sections of Wisdom and Ecclesiastes. Corrections in the text of Sirach are made in Sir 39:27–44:17 on the basis of the Masada text, and in 51:13–30 on the basis of the occurrence of this canticle in the Psalms scroll from Qumran Cave 11. In this typical edition, new corrections are reflected in the textual notes of Job, Proverbs, Wisdom, and Sirach. In the Psalms, the enumeration found in the Hebrew text is followed instead of the double enumeration, according to both the Hebrew and the Latin Vulgate texts, contained in the previous edition of this book.

In the Prophetic Books *Isaiah to Malachi*, only minor revisions have been made in the structure and wording of the texts, and in the textual notes.

The spelling of proper names in *The New American Bible* follows the customary forms found in most English Bibles since the Authorized Version.

The work of translating the Bible has been characterized as "the sacred and apostolic work of interpreting the word of God and of presenting it to the laity in translations as clear as the difficulty of the matter and the limitations of human knowledge permit" (A. G. Cicognani, Apostolic Delegate, in *The Catholic Biblical Quarterly*, 6, [1944], 389–90). In the appraisal of the present work, it is hoped that the words of the encyclical *Divino afflante Spiritu* will serve as a guide: "Let all the sons of the church bear in mind that the efforts of these resolute laborers in the vineyard of the Lord should be judged not only with equity and justice but also with the greatest charity; all moreover should abhor that intemperate zeal which imagines that whatever is new should for that very reason be opposed or suspected."

Conscious of their personal limitations for the task thus defined, those who have prepared this text cannot expect that it will be considered perfect; but they can hope that it may deepen in its readers "the right understanding of the divinely given Scriptures," and awaken in them "that piety by which it behooves us to be grateful to the God of all providence, who from the throne of his majesty has sent these books as so many personal letters to his own children" (*Divino afflante Spiritu*).





# The Old Testament



In the  
Beginning

# Introduction to the Pentateuch

**H**ave you ever been late to a movie? You probably spent a few minutes trying to figure out what you missed and hoped it wasn't too important to the plot. Like the first crucial minutes of a movie, the five books of the Pentateuch set the stage for much of what happens in the rest of the Bible. If you don't know the people involved and their wonderful stories, when you read later books, you might find yourself asking: What's going on? Why is he doing this? What does she mean by that?

## In Depth

The name *Pentateuch* literally means “five-part writing.” Thus, the Pentateuch is the first five books of the Old Testament: Genesis, Exodus, Leviticus, Numbers, and Deuteronomy. These books are special to Jewish and Christian believers because they are God's word, reveal who God is, and tell of the origins of God's People and their unique relationship with God—sometimes called salvation history. They are the blueprint needed for properly understanding the rest of the Bible. The Pentateuch introduces the idea of a single God who is responsible for all creation. It also tells that this God is active in the world and in the lives of its people, and that the Israelites have been called into a special relationship with this God.

One of the central elements of the special relationship between God and the Israelites described in the Pentateuch is the Sinai Covenant. A covenant establishes a new relationship between two parties and is marked by a solemn promise, where both parties agree to fulfill certain obligations. The Sinai Covenant is the most famous one between God and Israel, with Moses as the mediator, which you will read about in Exodus. In Genesis, you will read about the covenant God makes with Noah,

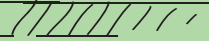
Abraham, and Jacob, which lead to the Sinai Covenant.

Reading the Pentateuch is like appreciating a fine tapestry. When you view a tapestry from the front, all the threads combine to make a beautiful, coherent image. In the same way, an overall look at the covenant, stories, and laws in the Pentateuch combines them to form a picture of the love relationship between God and the people of Israel. A close look at the back of a tapestry shows a more chaotic mix of colors and yarn. So too a closer look at the writings in the Pentateuch reveals not one story but many.

Biblical scholars speak of four primary sources for the stories and traditions in the Pentateuch. The sources reflect four different schools of thought about Israel's relationship with God. For convenience, each source is referred to as an individual author.

■ The Yahwist used Yahweh as God's name. This writer focused on the southern kingdom of Judah, used lots of stories, emphasized God's closeness to humanity, and portrayed God acting as a human person.





■ The Elohist referred to God as Elohim or Lord. The Elohist wrote about the northern kingdom of Israel and was concerned about idolatry and morality. The writings of the Elohist present God's presence as mediated, such as through a burning bush.

■ The Deuteronomist emphasized the Law as the foundation of the kingdom of Judah. The Deuteronomist emerged toward the end of the monarchy (the time of the Israelite kings), when the Covenant Law seemed to have been forgotten.

■ Finally, the Priestly writer emphasized religious rituals and the role of the priesthood. This writer portrayed God as more distant and used a more formal style. This source was written after the Babylonian Exile.

Knowing that these four sources contributed to the final form of the Pentateuch can help us understand that the Pentateuch books are not simply records of events as they occurred but rather faith accounts about the Israelites' growing relationship with God, inspired by God and told from different perspectives.

In the Pentateuch, God reveals how much God loves the human race collectively and how much God loves us personally. God wishes to be in a relationship with us today just as much as God did back then. The Pentateuch reminds us that we are all children of God.

## Other Background

- ▶ Some of the most familiar stories and people of the Old Testament are found in Genesis and Exodus. Genesis includes the stories of Creation, Adam and Eve, Noah and the Flood, Abraham and Sarah, and Joseph and his brothers. Exodus contains the stories of Moses and the burning bush, Pharaoh and the ten plagues, the parting of the Red Sea, the Exodus out of Egypt, and the Ten Commandments.
- ▶ The Jewish people also refer to the five books of the Pentateuch as the Torah, meaning "teaching" or "instruction."
- ▶ An ancient tradition named Moses as the original writer of the Pentateuch. This was no doubt due to Moses' importance in the Pentateuch itself. But evidence suggests that most of the Pentateuch was written hundreds of years after Moses' death.
- ▶ The two types of writing in the Pentateuch are narratives and laws. Genesis is all inspired narrative, Leviticus and Deuteronomy are mostly laws, and Exodus and Numbers are approximately half narratives and half laws.

**D**isplays of awesome cosmic power, tender love stories, tearful family reunions, and tales of deceit, rape, murder, and worldwide destruction. Does this sound like the script for next summer's blockbuster movie? No, it's the Book of Genesis! It is the story of how a world created for love and harmony goes astray because of human sin. Through it all, God is at work, forming a people to restore what was lost.

## In Depth

Genesis gathers together inspired stories and traditions that reveal Israel's understanding of God's nature and purpose, and the beginning of the Israelites' special relationship with God. Genesis has two main sections. The first section (1:1—11:26) contains some of the Bible's most memorable stories about Creation and the effect of sin. Chapters 1–2 tell two accounts of Creation that portray

### At a Glance

- I. **The Primeval History (1:1—11:26).**
- II. **The Patriarch Abraham (11:27—25:18).**
- III. **The Patriarchs Isaac and Jacob (25:19—36:43).**
- IV. **Joseph and His Brothers (37:1—50:26).**

### Quick Facts

**Period Covered:** The stories in the first eleven chapters are primeval history. Genesis 11:27—50:26 covers the period of the ancestors, or patriarchs and matriarchs (from 2000 to 1500 BC).

**Inspired Author:** Stories were gathered from the oral tradition of tribal peoples in the period around 1225 to 1000 BC (see Introduction to the Pentateuch).

**Themes:** the goodness of Creation, human responsibility, the effects of sin, covenant, God's bringing good out of evil

the beauty and wonder of the natural world and emphasize the goodness and harmony that God intended in Creation. Creation culminates in human beings, made in God's own image. Those human beings, symbolic of us all, live in a wonderful garden in harmony with God, Creation, and each other. But in chapter 3, sin enters the world, and as a result, Adam and Eve will experience separation, suffering, and ultimately death.

And the first sin spreads, first to the family (Cain and Abel in chapter 4), then to all society (Noah and the Flood in chapters 6–9). Even after the Flood and God's covenant with Noah, the story of the tower of Babel demonstrates that sin pits nation against nation. As you read these chapters, remember that they were written not as historical accounts or scientific explanations but as inspired stories that share a faith perspective and teach important religious truths.

The second section of Genesis (11:27—50:26) tells the story of the origins of the Israelite people. The story begins with Abraham and Sarah (originally called Abram and Sarai) and continues with Ishmael and Isaac and with Isaac and Rebekah's children, Esau and Jacob. Genesis ends with Joseph, one of Jacob's twelve sons, cleverly saving Egypt and Israel from famine. These sections introduce the covenant God makes with Abraham and the Israelite people and remind the reader that God's plans will overcome human sin and weakness.

# Genesis

1:1—2:4

## I: The Primeval History

### First Story of Creation

**1**<sup>1\*</sup>† In the beginning, when God created the heavens and the earth, <sup>2\*</sup>† the earth was a formless wasteland, and darkness covered the abyss, while a mighty wind swept over the waters.

<sup>3\*</sup> Then God said, "Let there be light," and there was light. <sup>4</sup> God saw how good the light was. God then separated the light from the darkness. <sup>5</sup>† God called the light "day," and the darkness he called "night." Thus evening came, and morning followed—the first day.

<sup>6</sup> Then God said, "Let there be a dome in the middle of the waters, to separate one body of water from the other." And so it happened: <sup>7\*</sup> God made the dome, and it separated the water above the dome from the water below it. <sup>8</sup> God called the dome "the sky." Evening came, and morning followed—the second day.

<sup>9\*</sup> Then God said, "Let the water under the sky

be gathered into a single basin, so that the dry land may appear." And so it happened: the water under the sky was gathered into its basin, and the dry land appeared. <sup>10</sup> God called the dry land "the earth," and the basin of the water he called "the sea." God saw how good it was. <sup>11\*</sup> Then God said, "Let the earth bring forth vegetation: every kind of plant that bears seed and every kind of fruit tree on earth that bears fruit with its seed in it." And so it happened: <sup>12</sup> the earth brought forth every kind of plant that bears seed and every kind of fruit tree on earth that bears fruit with its seed in it. God saw how good it was. <sup>13</sup> Evening came, and morning followed—the third day.

<sup>14\*</sup> Then God said: "Let there be lights in the dome of the sky, to separate day from night. Let them mark the fixed times, the days and the years, <sup>15</sup> and serve as luminaries in the dome of the sky, to shed light upon the earth." And so it happened: <sup>16\*</sup> God made the two great lights, the greater one to govern the day, and the lesser one to govern the night; and he made the stars. <sup>17</sup> God set them in the dome of the sky, to shed light upon the

† **1:1—2:4a** This section introduces the whole Pentateuch. It shows how God brought an orderly universe out of primordial chaos.

**1:2** *The abyss*: the primordial ocean according to the ancient Semitic cosmogony. After God's creative activity, part of this vast body forms the salt-water seas (vv 9f); part of it is the fresh water under the earth (Ps 33:7; Ez 31:4), which wells forth on the earth as springs and fountains (Gn 7:11; 8:2; Prv 3:20). Part of it, "the upper water" (Ps 148:4; Dn 3:60), is held up by the dome of the sky (Gn 1:6f) from which rain descends on the earth (Gn 7:11; 2 Kgs 7:2, 19; Ps 104:13). A *mighty wind*: literally, "a wind of God," or "a spirit of God"; cf Gn 8:1.

**1:5** In ancient Israel a day was considered to begin at sunset. Ac-

cording to the highly artificial literary structure of Gn 1:1—2:4a, God's creative activity is divided into six days to teach the sacredness of the sabbath rest on the seventh day in the Israelite religion (Gn 2:2f).

**1:1** Gn 2:1, 4; Ps 8:4; 38—39; 90:2; Wis 11:17; Sir 16:24; Jer 10:12; 2 Mc 7:28; Acts 14:15; Col 1:16f; Heb 1:2f; 3:4; 11:3; Rv 4:11.

**1:2** Jer 4:23.  
**1:3** 2 Cor 4:6.

**1:7** Prv 8:27f; 2 Pt 3:5.  
**1:9** Jb 38:8; Ps 33:7; Jer 5:22.

**1:11** Ps 104:14.  
**1:14** Jb 26:10; Ps 19:1f; Bar 3:33.

**1:16** Dt 4:19; Ps 136:7ff; Wis 13:2ff; Jer 31:35.

earth, <sup>18</sup> to govern the day and the night, and to separate the light from the darkness. God saw how good it was. <sup>19</sup> Evening came, and morning followed—the fourth day.

<sup>20</sup>\* Then God said, “Let the water teem with an abundance of living creatures, and on the earth let birds fly beneath the dome of the sky.” And so it happened: <sup>21</sup> God created the great sea monsters and all kinds of swimming creatures with which the water teems, and all kinds of winged birds. God saw how good it was, <sup>22</sup>\* and God blessed them, saying, “Be fertile, multiply, and fill the water of the seas; and let the birds

multiply on the earth.” <sup>23</sup> Evening came, and morning followed—the fifth day.

<sup>24</sup>\* Then God said, “Let the earth bring forth all kinds of living creatures: cattle, creeping things, and wild animals of all kinds.” And so it happened: <sup>25</sup> God made all kinds of wild animals, all kinds of cattle, and all kinds of creeping things of the earth. God saw how good it was. <sup>26</sup>\* † Then God said: “Let us make man in our image, after our likeness. Let them have dominion over the fish of the sea, the birds of the air, and the cattle, and over all the wild animals and all the creatures that crawl on the ground.”

† 1:26 Man is here presented as the climax of God’s creative activity; he resembles God primarily because of the dominion God gives him over the rest of creation.

<sup>27</sup> God created man in his image; in the divine image he created him; male and female he created them.

1:20 Jb 12:7–10.

1:22 Gn 8:17.

1:24 Sir 16:27f; Bar 3:32.

1:26f Gn 5:1, 3; 9:6; Ps 8:5f;

Wis 2:23; 10:2; Sir

17:1, 3f; Jas 3:7; 1 Cor

11:7; Eph 4:24; Col

3:10; Mt 19:4; Mk 10:6.

## In The Beginning

“**I**n the beginning, when God created the heavens and the earth . . .” (Gn 1:1). This simple verse is one of the foundational beliefs of Christianity. We are not a random collection of atoms. The world is not a lucky combination of cosmic circumstances. The universe did not just accidentally happen.

The beginning of wisdom is acknowledging that a higher power is at work in our lives, that the universe has purpose, and that everything was created by God. The ancient writers and editors of Genesis expressed these ideas in the Creation stories. The Church affirms these beliefs. They are expressed in a prayer called the Apostles’ Creed, which begins, “I believe in God the father almighty, creator of heaven and earth.”

Genesis expresses another foundational belief: God created everything good! Read the story in chapter 1, and see how this belief is constantly repeated: And humankind is “very good,” created in God’s own image. This is God’s message to you in the first chapter of the Bible: You carry God’s image within you. You are very good! Don’t let anyone try to convince you otherwise.

▶ Gn 1:1–2:4



## Did You Know?

### Literary Genres

**S**ome Christians believe that God actually created the world in seven twenty-four-hour days. Such a belief comes from a literal reading of the first chapter of Genesis, as though it were a scientific textbook. However, Genesis was written not as a science article but as a series of symbolic stories, sometimes called mythic stories, that convey great moral and spiritual truths. We should not try to come to any scientific conclusions about the creation of the world from reading these stories.

Mythic stories are one literary type, or genre. You just have to look in a newspaper to see examples of different literary genres: news stories, advice columns, editorials, and comics. Each genre has different rules for interpreting its meaning. The Bible also contains many types of literary genres, including hero stories, poetry, laws, legends, fictional satire, debates, and letters. To properly understand the Bible, pay attention to the literary genre—otherwise, you might believe the Bible is saying something God doesn’t intend.

▶ Gn 1:1–2:4



## Catholic Social Teaching

## Coworkers with God

GN

In the opening chapters of the Book of Genesis, we read the wonderful story of God's creation of the universe. With each new day, God creates the light and darkness, the earth and sea, the plants and animals, and ultimately humankind. On the seventh day, God observes the amazing creation and we read, "God looked at everything he had made, and he found it very good" (verse 31).

After God creates the man and woman, he commands them to "fill the earth and subdue it" (Gn 1:28). In other words, human beings are to cooperate with God in the completion and care of creation. With God's grace, we participate in laying the foundation for God's reign on earth.

Catholic social teaching tells

us that as coworkers with God in caring for and sustaining the world, we have a responsibility to protect both the dignity of the human person as well as the planet. Amazing breakthroughs are happening in our world all the time, and yet, as Christians, we are asked to consider whether such developments are in keeping with the teachings of our Church. For example, we now have the ability to clone animals and genetically alter agricultural products, but will these practices sustain our world or ultimately destroy it? Do these practices really revere and value human life and the created order?

God has given us the amazing gift of intellectual inquiry, which can lead to wonderful advance-

ments for our world, but we must always ask ourselves how we might help promote ethical approaches to research so that future generations may continue to enjoy the beauty of creation and thrive in the universe.

- As a coworker with God, how do I sustain and care for God's creation?
- How might I use my gifts of knowledge and education to really improve the world and help bring about God's reign on earth?

### ▶ Genesis, chapters 1-2 *Caring for God's Creation*



<sup>28\*</sup> God blessed them, saying: "Be fertile and multiply; fill the earth and subdue it. Have dominion over the fish of the sea, the birds of the air, and all the living things that move on the earth." <sup>29\*</sup> God also said: "See, I give you every seed-bearing plant all over the earth and every tree that has seed-bearing fruit on it to be your food; <sup>30</sup> and to all the animals of the land, all the birds of the air, and all the living creatures that crawl on the ground, I give all the green plants for food." And so it happened. <sup>31\*</sup> God looked at everything he had made, and he found it very good. Evening came, and morning followed—the sixth day.

**2** <sup>1\*</sup> Thus the heavens and the earth and all their array were completed. <sup>2\*</sup> Since on the seventh day God was finished with the work he had been doing, he rested on the seventh day

† **2:4b-25** This section is chiefly concerned with the creation of man. It is much older than the narrative of Gn 1:1—2:4a. Here God is depicted as creating man before the rest of his creatures, which are made for man's sake.

**2:7** God is portrayed as a potter molding man's body out of clay. There is a play on words in Hebrew between *adam* ("man") and *adama* ("ground"). *Being*: literally, "soul."

from all the work he had undertaken. <sup>3\*</sup> So God blessed the seventh day and made it holy, because on it he rested from all the work he had done in creation.

<sup>4</sup> Such is the story of the heavens and the earth at their creation.

### Second Story of Creation

† At the time when the LORD God made the earth and the heavens— <sup>5</sup> while as yet there was no field shrub on earth and no grass of the field had sprouted, for the LORD God had sent no rain upon the earth and there was no man to till the soil, <sup>6</sup> but a stream was welling up out of the earth and was watering all the surface of the ground— <sup>7\*</sup> † the LORD God formed man out of the clay of the ground and blew into his nostrils the breath of life, and so man became a living being.

**1:28** Gn 8:17; 9:1; Pss 8:6-9; 115:16; Wis 9:2.  
**1:29f** Gn 9:3; Ps 104:14f.  
**1:31** 1 Tm 4:4.  
**2:1** Is 45:12; Jn 1:3.  
**2:2** Ex 20:9ff; 31:17; Heb 4:4, 10.

**2:3** Ex 20:11; Dt 5:14; Neh 9:14.  
**2:7** Gn 3:19; 18:27; Tb 8:6; Jb 34:15; Pss 103:14; 104:29; Eccl 3:20; 12:7; Wis 7:1; Sir 33:10; 1 Cor 15:45.



## Cultural Connection

## God Is Our Creator

**A**ccording to Genesis, chapters 1–2, God created the universe and is the source of order in all creation. Creation is good, and its goodness is reflected in the harmony, peace, and love between the Creator and his creatures, and among the creatures themselves. In Hispanic theological traditions, this ideal relationship—symbolized by the way God and Adam and Eve relate in the Garden of Eden—is considered the foundation in which salvation history is rooted.

- How are your relationships with God, your friends, your family, and nature characterized by harmony, peace, and love?
- Reflect on how you can improve some of your strained

relationships, and ask God's help to do it.

Human beings are created in God's image and likeness and share God's attributes: freedom, love, knowledge, and the ability to create. With these gifts comes the responsibility of caring for all creation.

- Give thanks and praise to God for creation, especially for your own life and the lives of the people around you.
- Think of how you, your family, and your community can take better care of all creation. Pray that you fully develop your capacity to love, to know the truth, and to use your freedom wisely.

God established a covenant with us at the moment of our creation, and we keep this covenant by freely placing ourselves in God's hands and being responsive to God's invitation to live in communion with God and people.

- How do you use your freedom to respond to God's invitation?
- Think about the aspects of your life for which you most need God's wisdom to live in harmony and love. Put yourself in God's hands, and let God help and direct you.

### ► Genesis, chapters 1–2



<sup>8</sup>\*† Then the LORD God planted a garden in Eden, in the east, and he placed there the man whom he had formed. <sup>9</sup>\* Out of the ground the LORD God made various trees grow that were delightful to look at and good for food, with the tree of life in the middle of the garden and the tree of the knowledge of good and bad.

<sup>10</sup>† A river rises in Eden to water the garden; beyond there it divides and becomes four branches. <sup>11</sup>The name of the first is the Pishon; it is the one that winds through the whole land of Havilah, where there is gold. <sup>12</sup>The gold of that land is excellent; bdellium and lapis lazuli are also there. <sup>13</sup>\* The name of the second river is the Gihon; it is the one that winds all through the land of Cush. <sup>14</sup>The name of the third river is the Tigris; it is the one that flows east of Asshur. The fourth river is the Euphrates.

<sup>15</sup>\* The LORD God then took the man and settled him in the garden of Eden, to cultivate and care for it. <sup>16</sup>\* The LORD God gave man this order: "You are free to eat from any of the trees of the garden <sup>17</sup>\* except the tree of knowledge of good and bad. From that tree you shall not eat; the moment you eat from it you are surely doomed to die."

<sup>18</sup>\* The LORD God said: "It is not good for the man to be alone. I will make a suitable partner for him." <sup>19</sup>So the LORD God formed out of the ground various wild animals and various birds of the air, and he brought them to the man to see what he would call them; whatever the man called each of them would be its name. <sup>20</sup>The man gave names to all the cattle, all the birds of the air, and all the wild animals; but none proved to be the suitable partner for the man.

† **2:8** *Eden*: used here as the name of a region in southern Mesopotamia; the term is derived from the Sumerian word *eden*, "fertile plain." A similar-sounding Hebrew word means "delight"; the *garden in Eden* could therefore be understood as the "garden of delight," so that, through the Greek version, it is now known also as "paradise," literally, a "pleasure park."

**2:10–14** *Rises*: in flood to overflow its banks. *Beyond there*: as one travels upstream. *Branches*: literally, "heads," i.e., upper courses. Eden is near the head of the Persian Gulf, where the Tigris and the

Euphrates join with two other streams to form a single river. *The land of Cush* here and in Gn 10:8, is not Ethiopia (Nubia) as elsewhere, but the region of the Kassites east of Mesopotamia.

**2:8** Is 51:3; Ez 31:9.

**2:9** Gn 3:22; Prv 3:18; Vv 2:7; 22:2, 14.

**2:13** Sir 24:25.

**2:15** Sir 7:15.

**2:16** Ps 104:14.

**2:17** Gn 3:2f; Rom 6:23.

**2:18** Tb 8:6; Sir 36:24; 1 Cor 11:9; 1 Tm 2:13.

<sup>21</sup>\* So the LORD God cast a deep sleep on the man, and while he was asleep, he took out one of his ribs and closed up its place with flesh. <sup>22</sup>The LORD God then built up into a woman the rib that he had taken from the man. When he brought her to the man, <sup>23</sup>† the man said:

"This one, at last, is bone of my bones  
and flesh of my flesh;  
This one shall be called 'woman,'  
for out of 'her man' this one has been  
taken."

<sup>24</sup>\*† That is why a man leaves his father and mother and clings to his wife, and the two of them become one body.

<sup>25</sup>The man and his wife were both naked, yet they felt no shame.

### The Fall of Man

**3** <sup>1</sup>Now the serpent was the most cunning of all the animals that the LORD God had made.

† **2:23** There is a play on the similar-sounding Hebrew words *ishsha* ("woman") and *ishah* ("her man, her husband").

**2:24** *One body*: literally "one flesh"; classical Hebrew has no specific word for "body." The sacred writer stresses the fact that conjugal union is willed by God.

**3:5** *Like gods who know*: or "like God who knows."

## Live It!

### In God's Image

**G**od does not make mistakes; people do. Some people might be tempted to deny their racial heritage, even to change their physical appearance in order to conform to the latest fad or fit the dominant cultural image of beauty. We must remember that physical features are not accidents. God planned for them—we are all made in God's image, inside and out.

If we are to authentically love ourselves, we must love our whole selves. This includes a love for dark skin or light skin, straight hair or curly hair, wide nose or pug nose, and all the variations in between. Whatever our appearance, we are all blessed by God.

▶ Gn 1:26–27



The serpent asked the woman, "Did God really tell you not to eat from any of the trees in the garden?" <sup>2</sup>The woman answered the serpent: "We may eat of the fruit of the trees in the garden; <sup>3</sup>\* it is only about the fruit of the tree in the middle of the garden that God said, 'You shall not eat it or even touch it, lest you die.'" <sup>4</sup>\* But the serpent said to the woman: "You certainly will not die! <sup>5</sup>† No, God knows well that the moment you eat of it your eyes will be opened and you will be like gods who know what is good and what is bad." <sup>6</sup>\* The woman saw that the tree was good for food, pleasing to the eyes, and

**2:21** Sir 17:1; 1 Cor 11:8f;  
1 Tm 2:13.

**2:24** Mt 19:5; Mk 10:7; 1 Cor  
7:10f; Eph 5:31.  
**3:3** Gn 2:17; Rom 6:23.

**3:4f** Wis 2:24; Sir 25:14; Is  
14:14; Jn 8:44; 2 Cor  
11:3.

**3:6** Gn 3:22; 1 Tm 2:14.

## Pray It!

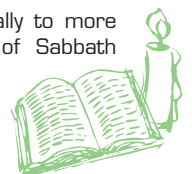
### The Sabbath

**E**ven God needed to take a rest. The writer of Genesis makes this point to remind readers to set aside a day for rest and prayer, which Jewish people call the Sabbath. Honoring the Sabbath is an act of trust in God. It means we believe that the world will not fall apart if we stop our activity. The world is in God's hands. We can hear this truth echoed in Jesus' words:

Notice how the flowers grow. They do not toil or spin. But I tell you, not even Solomon in all his splendor was dressed like one of them. If God so clothes the grass in the field that grows today and is thrown into the oven tomorrow, will he not much more provide for you, O you of little faith? (Lk 12:27–28)

Traditionally, Christians rest and pray on Sunday because it is the day on which Jesus was resurrected. In our culture today, it seems that many people are losing this practice.

- What could we gain if we recommitted ourselves to a day of rest, celebration, and prayer?
- What can you do personally to more fully honor the concept of Sabbath rest?



▶ Gn 2:1–3



### Original Sin

**B**efore the Fall, Adam and Eve had it all. God gave them freedom and established a close friendship with them. They could simply walk about the garden tending to it alongside of God. They lived in perfect harmony with each other and all of creation without fear, suffering, or death. Yet, Adam and Eve wanted more. By believing the serpent's lie, Adam and Eve sought to make themselves equal to God. They distrusted God's goodness, directly disobeyed God, and abused the freedom God had given them. The results were tragic. Adam and Eve's friendship with God turned into fear as they hid in the garden. After being expelled from the garden, tension and strife entered Adam and Eve's once harmonious relationship. The creation they once helped tend with God became hazardous and difficult to manage. Ultimately, through their sin, death became a reality for Adam and Eve. Though this account in chapter three of Genesis uses figurative language, it points to the reality that all of humanity has been affected by the sin our first parents freely chose to commit.

This original sin and its consequences have been handed down to every generation throughout all of history, with the exception of Jesus and his mother, Mary. Although we are not personally responsible for it, our nature also has been wounded by this sin. As a result, we do not have the original holiness and justice God intended for us, but are inclined to sin and subject to death. Fortunately, Jesus Christ, unlike Adam and Eve, came in total obedience to the will of God. As a result, the sin brought into the world by Adam and Eve has been overcome by the Passion, death, and Resurrection of Jesus Christ. (Read Romans 5:12–21 to learn more about the relationship between Adam and Jesus.) Through the grace of the sacrament of Baptism, we are freed from original sin and turned back toward God. And the graces we receive through Christ will surpass those that Adam and Eve ever knew before the Fall!

► **Gn 3:1–24**

*Catechism*, nos. 369–421







# Praying with the Bible


**“My dear young friends, I urge you to become familiar with the Bible, and to have it at hand so that it can be your compass pointing out the road to follow.”**

**(Message of the Holy Father Benedict XVI to the Youth of the World on the Occasion of the 21st World Youth Day)**

## **The Bible is one of the greatest sources of inspiration we can tap into.**

When we pray with the Bible, God can deeply touch and change our lives. The more we are willing to pray with the Scriptures, the more we can enter into the profound mystery of God’s relationship with all of humanity. God’s word is the compass that leads us more deeply into the immense heart of God. This is why the Church proclaims the Scriptures every time we worship together and why all are encouraged to use the Bible in our private prayer.

The pages of this insert teach specific techniques for praying with the Bible. Look these over and think about which suggestions might work for you.



By praying with the Scriptures, we discover that God’s story is our story. God’s life is intimately connected with our lives. The unfinished part of the story is our response to God’s love for us. Each of us has a part in the great story of God’s salvation of all humanity.

# Tips for Praying with the Bible

For our spiritual journey, our earthly pilgrimage, God has provided us with a guide who knows of the human experience from the inside out. God the Father has given us Jesus the Son as the Way, the way to the New Jerusalem—one of the biblical descriptions of heaven.

Jesus shows us the importance of prayer for our journey. Through prayer Jesus clearly understood the will of his Father. Through prayer Jesus gained and maintained his burning desire to do the will of God. We know from the Gospels that the Hebrew Scriptures were an important part of Jesus' prayer life. The Bible was a compass that helped point Jesus to his Father. God wishes the Bible to be the same for us. So here are some tips for using the Bible in your prayer:

## **Tip 1: Be Creative in Making Time for Prayer**

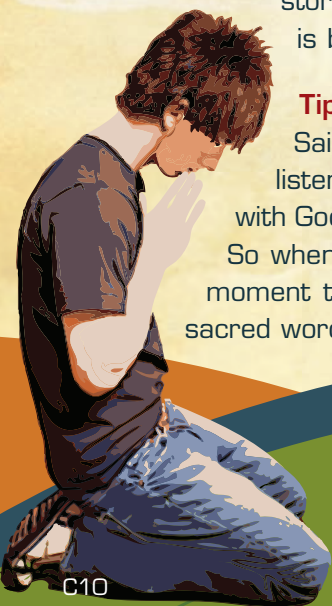
Your life is busy. Sometimes finding even fifteen minutes for prayer seems impossible, but it can be done. Allow your daily routine to call you to prayer. Mark a favorite psalm in your Bible and pray it when you get up in the morning. When you head off for school, say a short verse like "Prosper the work of our hands" (Ps 90:17, see "Memorizing Bible Passages" section). Before going to bed, spend a few minutes using *lectio divina* (see next section) to listen to God before going to sleep.

## **Tip 2: Engage Your Imagination**

When praying with the Bible, use your imagination to let the Bible stories come alive in a personal way. Put yourself in the Bible story, and ask, "What do I see? What do I smell? What do I hear?" Pretend you are one of the people in the story, and ask, "How do I feel about what is happening or what is being said?"

## **Tip 3: Listen**

Saint Ambrose once said, "We speak to [God] when we pray; we listen to him when we read the [Scriptures]." Prayer is a dialogue with God, and Scripture is one of the primary ways God speaks to us. So when you read the Bible, it is always a good idea to take a quiet moment to "listen." What might God be saying to you through these sacred words?



“What might God  
be saying to YOU  
through these sacred words?”

# Lectio Divina

Lectio divina is a very ancient art for praying with the Bible. It is a prayer technique for reading the Bible slowly and contemplatively, allowing God's word to shed insights on your life. It cultivates the ability to listen deeply, to hear the word of God with the ear of your heart. Lectio divina was practiced in the early Christian monasteries of the third and fourth centuries. In the sixth century, it was written into the Rule of Saint Benedict as a requirement for the spiritual life of monks.

## The Movements of Lectio Divina

In traditional lectio divina, there are five movements. These movements lead you from hearing the word of God to applying God's word to your everyday life.

**Step 1: Lectio (lex-ee-oh).** This step is the reading of and listening to the word of God. This is a reverential listening, listening in a spirit of silence and awe because it is the sacred word of God. In this step, listen for a word or phrase from the Scripture passage that is God's word for you today.

**Step 2: Meditatio (med-it-tots-ee-oh).** This step is meditation on the Scripture passage. Allow the word of God to interact with your thoughts, your hopes, your memories, and your desires. Allow the Scriptures to touch you and affect you at your deepest level of being.

**Step 3: Oratio (or-ot-see-oh).** This step is responding to God with conscious prayer. It is both a dialogue with God and an offering of a part of yourself to God. In this prayer, open your real self to be touched and changed by the word of God.

**Step 4: Contemplatio (con-tem-plot-see-oh).** This step is contemplation. In silence, rest in the unconditional love of God.

**Step 5: Actio (ax-ee-oh) (also known as operatio).** In this step, ask yourself:

- What does the word of God invite me to do?
- What does this passage of Scripture call me to do or undo, or to be?

# How to Pray Using Lectio Divina

The following steps are a guide to praying with the Bible using lectio divina. You can use this method with any passage of Scripture, but it works best when the passage isn't too long. For example, you can use lectio divina with the next Sunday's Gospel reading.

## Step 1: Lectio

Read the Scripture passage. Try reading it out loud. Try reading it several times. Let the words sink in deeply. Open your mind and heart to the meaning of the words.

## Step 2: Meditatio

Reflect on the Scripture passage. Ask yourself questions such as the following:

- What does this passage say to me?
- Who am I in this passage?
- What do I see? What do I hear?
- What do I think?
- Which character do I most relate to?
- What do I most need to learn from this?

Try taking notes on your answers to the questions. Try journaling about the insights you gain through reflection.

## Step 3: Oratio

Pray with the passage of Scripture you are reflecting on. What does the word invite you to pray about? Let the following questions guide you:

- What do I want to communicate to God?
- What am I longing for in my relationship with God?
- What do I desire in my prayer life?
- What secrets of my heart are ready to be expressed? Is there joy? grief? fear? gratitude?

Express your inner thoughts to God in prayer.

## Step 4: Contemplatio

Simply let yourself rest in the presence of God. Let go of all distracting thoughts. Settle into the tenderness of God's love.

## Step 5: Actio

Answer the following questions with utter honesty:

- How is God challenging me?
- Is there a good thing God is calling me to do?
- Is there a harmful thing God wants me to stop doing?
- What is the next step I need to take?

Decide on a course of action (large or small). Commit to following through with your plan.

# Memorizing Bible Passages

Saint Augustine provides us with an image for short, effective prayers that are based on Scripture. He describes the prayers of monks in Egyptian monasteries of the third century AD. The monks' prayers were short and to the point, and the monks continuously repeated them, as if trying to bombard God with prayer. We too can pray this way by memorizing short passages of Scripture and repeating them regularly.

To do this, find short passages of Scripture that you can memorize and pray when situations in your life call them forth. In other words, let your daily life trigger your prayer. Here are some examples of this kind of prayer:

- **"My Lord and my God"** (Jn 20:28) could be a prayer whenever you walk by a cross or crucifix.
- **"May the favor of the Lord our God be ours. / Prosper the work of our hands"** (Ps 90:17) could be a prayer before a test.
- **"Father, into your hands I commend my spirit"** (Lk 23:46) could be a prayer before you go to sleep.
- **"How great are your works, LORD!"** (Ps 92:6) could be a prayer whenever you are outdoors with God's creation.
- **"A clean heart create for me, God"** (Ps 51:12) could be a morning prayer as you set out on a new day.

You can create your own daily Scripture prayers. As you read and reflect on the Scriptures, write down short phrases that appeal to you. Then ask yourself, "What things in my everyday life do these phrases connect with?" Then when you experience these things, they will trigger your memory and you can pray the Scripture phrase.

A rich source for such prayers is the Book of Psalms. Each week at Mass, a psalm is used as a response between the first and second readings. Listen carefully to the refrain and create a short prayer out of it. Think of how this prayer connects to ordinary tasks in your life. Then each time one of these tasks occurs, say your psalm prayer.



A clean heart  
create for me, God



— Ps 51:12

## Praying with the Psalms

The Psalms are Israel's religious poetry and song. They express the people's very real and concrete experiences of God. The Psalms are filled with the same wide range of feelings and moods that we experience in our lives today. The people who wrote the Psalms poured out their hearts to God in words of joy and sorrow, regret and celebration, earnest pleading and praise. These are the prayers of people who struggled to live righteous lives.

There are many different kinds of psalms. There are psalms of lament, which express the anguish and sorrow experienced in illness, death, and personal loss. There are psalms of thanksgiving and rejoicing, which recognize God's hand when the people are rescued from evil or wickedness. There are psalms of praise to a majestic God, witnessed in all of creation.

The Book of Psalms serves as a common book of prayer for Jews and Christians. As Catholics we use psalms at Mass, the Liturgy of the Hours, and many other times when we gather for prayer. Because they address feelings and experiences common to all, they speak to us today just as strongly as they did to the people who first used them thousands of years ago.

Saint Athanasius advised us to hear the Psalms as being addressed to us, as believers in the present. So read Psalms slowly and reverently, savoring each word as if God is saying it for the first time. You will gain deeper insights if you read the Psalms in this way.

When you read the Psalms, look for their rhythm and repetition. Just as modern music and poetry use rhythm and repetition to emphasize certain things, so the Psalms use rhythm and repetition to emphasize their authors' keen insights into our relationship with God. Perhaps you will share the experience of Saint Ambrose, who once said, "When I am reading divine Scripture God walks again in the earthly Paradise."



“ When I am reading  
divine Scripture God walks  
again in the earthly Paradise. ”

# Psalm Theme Index

The Psalms are a wonderful place to turn when you are seeking ways to express your feelings in prayer. This index covers a range of emotions and moods to help you pray the Psalms in all of life's situations.

**Ambiguity:** Psalm 97:7–12

**Anger:** Psalms 9:1–6, 25:19–22, 35:1–10, 37:8–17

**Anxiety:** Psalms 69:1–8, 88:1–7, 94:16–23, 102:3–11

**Betrayal:** Psalms 41:4–13, 55:12–23, 16–23, 109:1–5

**Bullying:** Psalm 70

**Compassion of God:** Psalms 102:12–17, 113, 145:13–21, 146:5–10

**Confession of sin:** Psalms 38:12–22, 51:3–6, 119:65–72, 143:1–6

**Death:** Psalms 6:1–10; 18:1–6; 39:1–6; 49:10–20; 88:13–18; 102:23–28; 116:1–4, 12–19; 118:10–17

**Despair:** Psalms 6:1–5; 22:1–5, 14–21; 38:1–11; 40:11–17; 55:1–11; 119:25–32; 130:1–4

**Envy:** Psalm 73:1–3

**Face of God:** Psalms 27:7–14, 80:1–7, 119:129–136

**Faith:** Psalms 25:1–5, 116:1–10, 146:1–7

**Fear of God:** Psalm 76:7–12

**Folly:** Psalms 14, 53:1–3, 94:11

**Forgiveness:** Psalms 25:1–18, 32:1–5, 51:7–9, 85:1–3, 103:6–13

**Generosity:** Psalm 112:6–10

**Gossip:** Psalms 7:6–17, 50:16–23, 141:1–4

**Guilt:** Psalms 4:1–3, 25:11–18, 51:1–2, 79:8–10

**Holiness:** Psalm 77:11–15; 93; 99:1–5, 6–9

**Hope:** Psalms 9:13–20, 33:14–22, 39:7–8, 43:1–5, 62:1–8, 65:1–8, 71:3–14, 91:1–12, 119:41–45, 146:1–7

**Hypocrisy:** Psalm 36:1–6

**Joy:** Psalms 16:1–11, 35:27–28, 43:1–5, 67:1–7, 71:20–24, 98:1–9, 126:1–6, 149:1–5

**Judgment:** Psalms 50:1–6, 73:1–20, 111:6–10

**Justice:** Psalms 9:7–10, 18:31–42, 33:1–5, 37:18–28

**Law:** Psalms 19:7–10, 37:28–34, 119:89–96

**Light:** Psalms 36:7–12, 43, 119:105

**Love:** Psalms 17:6–9, 18:1–3, 25:6–10, 26:1–3, 36:5–10, 63:1–4, 98:1–6, 108:1–6, 136:1–26

**Nationalism and religion:** Psalms 72:1–11, 132:11–18

**Poverty:** Psalms 9:11–20, 22:21–26, 34:1–10, 72:12–14, 107:39–43, 146:5–10, 147:1–6

**(Psalm Theme Index continued)**

**Pride:** Psalms 20:6–9; 52; 94:1–11;  
119:97–104, 161–168

**Resurrection:** Psalms 16:9–11, 27:13–  
14, 88:8–12

**Righteousness:** Psalms 5:8–12, 7:6–17,  
11:1–5, 15, 31:1–8, 119:137–144

**Self-pity:** Psalms 69:22–29, 119:25–32

**Sickness:** Psalms 6:6–10, 38:1–11,  
39:7–10, 107:17–22

**Sin:** Psalms 32:1–5, 38:12–22, 51:1–6,  
85:1–3, 130:1–8

**Steadfast love of God:** Psalms 17:1–7,  
86:14–17, 103:14–22, 117, 136:23–26

**Success:** Psalm 18:43–50

**Thanksgiving:** Psalms 30:4–12, 75:1–3,  
92:1–9, 100:1–5, 107:1–9, 118:19–29,  
147:1–11

**Truth:** Psalms 43, 86:8–13

**Values:** Psalms 85:10–13, 101

**Waiting:** Psalms 13, 37:28–34, 39:7–10,  
119:122–128, 130:5–8

**Wisdom of God:** Psalms 51:6, 104:24



“God’s word is the compass  
that leads us more deeply into  
the immense heart of God.”



**I**n your history classes in school, you probably studied stories about the heroic men and women who helped create the United States: George Washington, Benjamin Franklin, Harriet Tubman, Susan B. Anthony, and Harry S. Truman to name a few. The stories about these famous people are an important part of our national identity. The Acts of the Apostles is a book containing stories like these. It continues the account of salvation history by telling about the beginnings of the Christian movement, primarily through stories about two of its most important missionaries, Peter and Paul.

## In Depth

The Acts of the Apostles—sometimes simply called Acts—was written by the same author as the Gospel of Luke. So Acts is really the second volume of a two-volume history. Like the Gospels, it is not a history in the sense of an eyewitness account of the beginnings of Christianity; rather, it is an interpretation of this history, explaining how Christianity spread outside of Judaism to the Gentile world under the direction of the Holy Spirit.

### At a Glance

- I. **The Preparation for the Christian Mission** (1:1—2:13).
- II. **The Mission in Jerusalem** (2:14—8:3).
- III. **The Mission in Judea and Samaria** (8:4—9:43).
- IV. **The Inauguration of the Gentile Mission** (10:1—15:35).
- V. **The Mission of Paul to the Ends of the Earth** (15:36—28:31).

### Quick Facts

**Inspired Author:** often identified as Luke, who also wrote the Gospel of Luke

**Date Written:** approximately AD 80

**Audience:** Gentile (Greek) Christians represented by Theophilus (see Acts 1:1)

Lots of great stories are in the Acts of the Apostles. We read about the descent of the Holy Spirit on the Apostles (see 2:1–41), Paul's conversion to the Christian way (see 9:1–19), and some miraculous escapes from prisons and riots (see 12:6–11, 16:16–40). We learn about the first church council in Jerusalem, where a decision was made to accept Gentiles (non-Jews) as Christians without requiring that they also become practicing Jews (see 15:1–35). Acts continuously emphasizes how faith in Christ is shared and supported through Christian community.

The Acts of the Apostles gives us information about how Christians lived in the years after Jesus' Resurrection and Ascension. We learn how the believers celebrated the Eucharist together and shared their belongings (see 2:42–47). We learn how the Gospel message was preached, first to Jews in the synagogues and later to Gentiles. We learn how traveling missionaries like Paul went on long journeys and suffered many hardships to form new groups of believers across the Roman Empire. Under the guidance of the Holy Spirit, the church miraculously went from a small group of disciples in Jerusalem to a movement spreading across the entire Roman Empire, even to Rome itself.

# Acts

2:3

## I: The Preparation for the Christian Mission

### The Promise of the Spirit

**1**<sup>1\*†</sup> In the first book, Theophilus, I dealt with all that Jesus did and taught <sup>2\*</sup> until the day he was taken up, after giving instructions through the holy Spirit to the apostles whom he had chosen. <sup>3\*†</sup> He presented himself alive to them by many proofs after he had suffered, appearing to them during forty days and speaking about the kingdom of God. <sup>4\*†</sup> While meeting with them, he enjoined them not to depart from Jerusalem, but to wait for “the promise of the Father about

which you have heard me speak; <sup>5\*</sup> for John baptized with water, but in a few days you will be baptized with the holy Spirit.”

### The Ascension of Jesus

<sup>6†</sup> When they had gathered together they asked him, “Lord, are you at this time going to restore the kingdom to Israel?” <sup>7\*†</sup> He answered them, “It is not for you to know the times or seasons that the Father has established by his own authority. <sup>8\*†</sup> But you will receive power when the holy Spirit comes upon you, and you will be my witnesses in Jerusalem, throughout Judea and Samaria, and to the ends of the earth.” <sup>9\*</sup> When he had said this, as they were looking

† **1:1–26** This introductory material (1–2) connects Acts with the Gospel of Luke, shows that the apostles were instructed by the risen Jesus (3–5), points out that the parousia or second coming in glory of Jesus will occur as certainly as his ascension occurred (6–11), and lists the members of the Twelve, stressing their role as a body of divinely mandated witnesses to his life, teaching, and resurrection (12–26).

**1:3** *Appearing to them during forty days:* Luke considered especially sacred the interval in which the appearances and instructions of the risen Jesus occurred and expressed it therefore in terms of the sacred number forty (cf Dt 8:2). In his gospel, however, Luke connects the ascension of Jesus with the resurrection by describing the ascension on Easter Sunday evening (Lk 24:50–53). What should probably be understood as one event (resurrection, glorification, ascension, sending of the Spirit—the paschal mystery) has been historicized by Luke when he writes of a visible ascension of Jesus after forty days and the descent of the Spirit at Pentecost. For Luke, the ascension marks the end of the appearances of Jesus except for the extraordinary appearance to Paul. With regard to Luke’s understanding of salvation history, the ascension also marks the end of the time of Jesus (Lk 24:50–53) and signals the beginning of the time of the church.

**1:4** *The promise of the Father:* the holy Spirit, as is clear from the next verse. This gift of the Spirit was first promised in Jesus’ final instructions to his chosen witnesses in Luke’s gospel (Lk 24:49) and formed part of the continuing instructions of the risen Jesus on the

kingdom of God, of which Luke speaks in v 3.

**1:6** The question of the disciples implies that in believing Jesus to be the Christ (see the note on Lk 2:11) they had expected him to be a political leader who would restore self-rule to Israel during his historical ministry. When this had not taken place, they ask if it is to take place at this time, the period of the church.

**1:7** This verse echoes the tradition that the precise time of the parousia is not revealed to human beings; cf Mk 13:32; 1 Thes 5:1–3.

**1:8** Just as Jerusalem was the city of destiny in the Gospel of Luke (the place where salvation was accomplished), so here at the beginning of Acts, Jerusalem occupies a central position. It is the starting point for the mission of the Christian disciples to “the ends of the earth,” the place where the apostles were situated and the doctrinal focal point in the early days of the community (15:2, 6). *The ends of the earth:* for Luke, this means Rome.

**1:1** Lk 1:1–4.

**1:2** Mt 28:19–20; Lk 24:44–49; Jn 20:22; 1 Tm 3:16.

**1:3** Acts 10:41; 13:31.

**1:4** Jn 14:16, 17, 26.

**1:5** Acts 11:16; Mt 3:11; Mk 1:8; Lk 3:16; Jn 1:26;

Eph 1:13.

**1:7** Mt 24:36; 1 Thes 5:1–2.

**1:8** Acts 2:1–13; 10:39; Is 43:10; Mt 28:19; Lk 24:47–48.

**1:9** 2 Kgs 2:11; Mk 16:19; Lk 24:51.

on, he was lifted up, and a cloud took him from their sight. <sup>10\*</sup> While they were looking intently at the sky as he was going, suddenly two men dressed in white garments stood beside them. <sup>11\*</sup> They said, "Men of Galilee, why are you standing there looking at the sky? This Jesus who has been taken up from you into heaven will return in the same way as you have seen him going into heaven." <sup>12\*</sup> Then they returned to Jerusalem from the mount called Olivet, which is near Jerusalem, a sabbath day's journey away.

### The First Community in Jerusalem

<sup>13</sup> When they entered the city they went to the upper room where they were staying, Peter and John and James and Andrew, Philip and Thomas, Bartholomew and Matthew, James son of Alphaeus, Simon the Zealot, and Judas son of James. <sup>14\*</sup> All these devoted themselves with one accord to prayer, together with some women, and Mary the mother of Jesus, and his brothers.

### The Choice of Judas's Successor

<sup>15</sup> During those days Peter stood up in the midst of the brothers (there was a group of about one hundred and twenty persons in the one place). He said, <sup>16\*</sup> "My brothers, the scripture had to be fulfilled which the holy Spirit spoke beforehand through the mouth of David, concerning Judas, who was the guide for those who arrested Jesus. <sup>17</sup> He was numbered among us and was allotted a share in this ministry. <sup>18\*</sup> † He bought a parcel of land with the wages of his iniquity, and falling headlong, he burst open in the middle, and all his insides spilled out. <sup>19</sup> This became known to everyone who lived in Jerusalem, so that the parcel of land was called in their language 'Akeldama,' that is, Field of Blood. <sup>20\*</sup> For it is written in the Book of Psalms:

'Let his encampment become desolate,  
and may no one dwell in it.'

And:

'May another take his office.'

† **1:18** Luke records a popular tradition about the death of Judas that differs from the one in Mt 27:5, according to which Judas hanged himself. Here, although the text is not certain, Judas is depicted as purchasing a piece of property with the betrayal money and being killed on it in a fall.

**1:26** The need to replace Judas was probably dictated by the symbolism of the number twelve, recalling the twelve tribes of Israel. This symbolism also indicates that for Luke (see Lk 22:30) the

## Pray It!

### Send Us Your Spirit

**A**fter Jesus was taken up to heaven, the Apostles, Mary, and other women and men gathered to pray together. They knew they needed the Holy Spirit, promised by Jesus, to begin the difficult task of giving witness to the Reign of God. Today, we continue to pray:

*Jesus, send us your Spirit, and renew the face of the earth. You know our strengths and weaknesses. Transform us into messengers of your Gospel for those who yearn for you.*

*Jesus, send us your Spirit, and renew the face of the earth. You know our history, with its beautiful and painful experiences. Help us to be untiring promoters of a society based on love, justice, and peace.*

*Jesus, send us your Spirit, and renew the face of the earth. You know our longing for love and community. Make us instruments of unity and service, especially for those who are weak and those who are lonely. Amen.*



### ▶ Acts 1:1-14

<sup>21</sup> Therefore, it is necessary that one of the men who accompanied us the whole time the Lord Jesus came and went among us, <sup>22\*</sup> beginning from the baptism of John until the day on which he was taken up from us, become with us a witness to his resurrection." <sup>23</sup> So they proposed two, Joseph called Barsabbas, who was also known as Justus, and Matthias. <sup>24</sup> Then they prayed, "You, Lord, who know the hearts of all, show which one of these two you have chosen <sup>25</sup> to take the place in this apostolic ministry from which Judas turned away to go to his own place." <sup>26\*</sup> † Then they gave lots to them, and the lot fell upon Matthias, and he was counted with the eleven apostles.

Christian church is a reconstituted Israel.

**1:10** Jn 20:17.

**1:11** Lk 24:51; Eph 4:8-10;

1 Pt 3:22; Rv 1:7.

**1:12-14** Lk 6:14-16.

**1:14** Lk 23:49.

**1:16** Ps 41:10; Lk 22:47.

**1:18** Mt 27:3-10.

**1:20** Ps 69:26; 109:8; Jn

17:12.

**1:22** Acts 1:8-9; 10:39.

**1:26** Prv 16:33.

**The Coming of the Spirit**

**2**<sup>1\*</sup>† When the time for Pentecost was fulfilled, they were all in one place together. <sup>2\*</sup>† And suddenly there came from the sky a noise like a strong driving wind, and it filled the entire house in which they were. <sup>3\*</sup>† Then there appeared to them tongues as of fire, which parted and came to rest on each one of them. <sup>4\*</sup>† And they were all filled with the holy Spirit and began to speak in different tongues, as the Spirit enabled them to proclaim.

<sup>5</sup> Now there were devout Jews from every nation under heaven staying in Jerusalem. <sup>6</sup> At this sound, they gathered in a large crowd, but they were confused because each one heard them speaking in his own language. <sup>7\*</sup> They were astounded, and in amazement they asked, "Are not all these people who are speaking Galileans? <sup>8</sup> Then how does each of us hear them in his own native language? <sup>9</sup> We are Parthians, Medes, and Elamites, inhabitants of Mesopotamia, Judea and Cappadocia, Pontus and Asia, <sup>10</sup> Phrygia and Pamphylia, Egypt and the districts of Libya near Cyrene, as well as travelers from Rome, <sup>11\*</sup> both Jews and converts to Judaism, Cretans and Arabs, yet we hear them speaking in our own tongues of the mighty acts of God." <sup>12</sup> They were all astounded and bewildered, and said to one another, "What does this mean?" <sup>13\*</sup> But others said, scoffing, "They have had too much new wine."

**II: The Mission in Jerusalem**

**Peter's Speech at Pentecost**

<sup>14</sup>† Then Peter stood up with the Eleven, raised his voice, and proclaimed to them, "You who are Jews, indeed all of you staying in Jerusalem. Let this be known to you, and listen to my words. <sup>15</sup> These people are not drunk, as you suppose, for it is only nine o'clock in the morning. <sup>16</sup> No, this is what was spoken through the prophet Joel:

<sup>17\*</sup> 'It will come to pass in the last days,' God says,  
'that I will pour out a portion of my spirit upon all flesh.  
Your sons and your daughters shall prophesy,  
your young men shall see visions,  
your old men shall dream dreams.  
<sup>18</sup> Indeed, upon my servants and my handmaids I will pour out a portion of my spirit in those days,  
and they shall prophesy.  
<sup>19</sup> And I will work wonders in the heavens above and signs on the earth below:  
blood, fire, and a cloud of smoke.  
<sup>20</sup> The sun shall be turned to darkness,  
and the moon to blood,  
before the coming of the great and splendid day of the Lord,  
<sup>21\*</sup> and it shall be that everyone shall be saved who calls on the name of the Lord.'

<sup>22\*</sup> You who are Israelites, hear these words. Jesus the Nazorean was a man commended to you by God with mighty deeds, wonders, and signs, which God worked through him in your midst, as you yourselves know. <sup>23\*</sup> This man, delivered up by the set plan and foreknowledge of God, you killed, using lawless men to crucify him. <sup>24\*</sup> But God raised him up, releasing him from the throes of death, because it was impossible for him to be held by it. <sup>25\*</sup> For David says of him:

'I saw the Lord ever before me,  
with him at my right hand I shall not be disturbed.

<sup>26</sup> Therefore my heart has been glad and my tongue has exulted;  
my flesh, too, will dwell in hope,  
<sup>27\*</sup> because you will not abandon my soul to the nether world,  
nor will you suffer your holy one to see corruption.

interpreted in vv 6 and 11 as speaking in foreign languages, symbolizing the worldwide mission of the church.

**2:14–36** The first of six discourses in Acts (along with 3:12–26; 4:8–12; 5:29–32; 10:34–43; 13:16–41) dealing with the resurrection of Jesus and its messianic import. Five of these are attributed to Peter, the final one to Paul. Modern scholars term these discourses in Acts the "kerygma," the Greek word for proclamation (cf 1 Cor 15:11).

† **2:1–41** Luke's pentecostal narrative consists of an introduction (1–13), a speech ascribed to Peter declaring the resurrection of Jesus and its messianic significance (14–36), and a favorable response from the audience (37–41). It is likely that the narrative telescopes events that took place over a period of time and on a less dramatic scale. The Twelve were not originally in a position to proclaim publicly the messianic office of Jesus without incurring immediate reprisal from those religious authorities in Jerusalem who had brought about Jesus' death precisely to stem the rising tide in his favor.

**2:2** *There came from the sky a noise like a strong driving wind:* wind and spirit are associated in Jn 3:8. The sound of a great rush of wind would herald a new action of God in the history of salvation.

**2:3** *Tongues as of fire:* see Ex 19:18 where fire symbolizes the presence of God to initiate the covenant on Sinai. Here the holy Spirit acts upon the apostles, preparing them to proclaim the new covenant with its unique gift of the Spirit (38).

**2:4** *To speak in different tongues:* ecstatic prayer in praise of God,

**2:1** Lv 23:15–21; Dt 16:9–11.

**2:2–3** Jn 3:8.

**2:3** Lk 3:16.

**2:4** Acts 1:5; 4:31; 8:15, 17; 10:44; 11:15–16; 15:8; 19:6; Ps 104:30; Jn 20:33.

**2:7** Acts 1:11.

**2:11** Acts 10:46.

**2:13** 1 Cor 14:23.

**2:17** Is 2:2; 44:3; Jl 3:1–5.

**2:21** Rom 10:13.

**2:22** Acts 10:38; Lk 24:19.

**2:23** 1 Thes 2:15.

**2:24** Acts 13:34.

**2:25–28** Ps 16:8–11.

**2:27** Acts 13:35.



## Confirmation

**A**fter Jesus' Ascension, the Apostles eagerly awaited the promised arrival of the Holy Spirit. What an arrival it was! The loud noise and tongues of fire were only the beginning of the amazing work the Holy Spirit initiated that day. Filled with the Holy Spirit, the Apostles suddenly had abilities and courage they never had before. The Holy Spirit began to guide and empower each of them, leading the Apostles to proclaim Christ's Resurrection to all who had ears to hear.

Following Pentecost, the Apostles began to baptize and lay hands on each new convert so that they too could receive the gift of the Holy Spirit. The laying on of hands and the prayer for the Holy Spirit was a part of one's initiation into the Church and continues to be celebrated in the sacrament of Confirmation today. The Church teaches that through the sacrament of Confirmation, one is given a special outpouring of the Holy Spirit and is thereby given special strength (see "The Gifts of the Holy Spirit," near Is 11:1–2) to spread the Gospel.

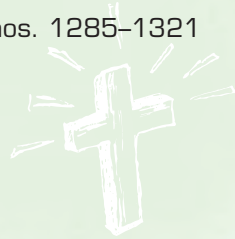
Confirmation is ordinarily administered by a bishop as a sign of the

connection between the Apostles' experience of receiving the Holy Spirit and the recipient's initiation into the Church. During the rite, the bishop extends his hands over the candidates and prays for the coming of the Holy Spirit. Then each candidate is presented to the bishop by her or his sponsor, who is a representative from the Catholic community. The bishop uses chrism (sacred oil) and traces the sign of the cross on the candidate's forehead with the words, "Be sealed with the gift of the Holy Spirit." The candidate responds "Amen" (*Rite of Confirmation*, no. 27). Then the bishop and candidate exchange an offering of Christ's peace to each other. The rite ends with a final blessing, asking God to keep the Spirit active in the hearts of all believers so they will never be ashamed to proclaim Christ to the world.

Together the sacraments of Baptism, Confirmation, and the Eucharist are a person's initiation into the Church.

### ▶ Acts 2:1–13

*Catechism*, nos. 1285–1321





### Pentecost

**A**nother promise kept. On Pentecost, fifty days after his Resurrection, Jesus fulfilled his promise to his disciples by sending the Holy Spirit, or the Advocate (see Jn 14:26). Before returning to his father, Jesus told his followers that the Holy Spirit would guide them in truth and give them power from heaven. The dramatic descent of the Holy Spirit on Pentecost brought about more than the disciples could have ever imagined. The Spirit enabled them to speak in languages that everyone could understand and transformed their fears so they were able to proclaim God's salvation in Jesus Christ with courage, confidence, and zeal. And that was just on day one!

The descent of the Holy Spirit on Pentecost also brought about several interesting events in the history of the world. First, Pentecost marks the day the Trinity was made fully known. Second, it marks the day the Reign of God was first made available to all who believed in Jesus Christ. And finally, in a sense, the world entered into what is called the time of the Church or final days when God's Reign is, in part, here on earth.

By ushering in the time of the Church, Pentecost is considered the birthday of the Christian Church. The Catholic Church traditionally celebrates the feast of Pentecost on the second Sun-

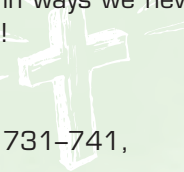
day after Ascension Thursday, which is approximately fifty days after Easter (the term *pente* means "fifty"). It continues to be an important feast to celebrate the unity of all Christians.

Since Pentecost, the Holy Spirit has been guiding the Church in carrying out its mission to lead people to salvation through Jesus Christ for over two thousand years. At Mass it is the Holy Spirit who prepares those gathered to receive Christ, transforms the bread and wine into the Body and Blood of Jesus Christ, and transforms the community in the process. It is through the prompting of the Holy Spirit that the Church and its members are formed in a life of prayer. The Holy Spirit also guides the Church so that it can teach about faith and morals without error.

The Holy Spirit that worked wonders through the disciples and continues to guide the Church today can also work wonders through each of us. Through the power of the Holy Spirit, we too can find the courage, confidence, and zeal to boldly share our faith and follow God's will. All we need to do is ask, knowing that Jesus always keeps his promises, often in ways we never could have dreamed!

► **Acts 2:1–13**

*Catechism*, nos. 731–741,  
1108–1112





## Catholic Social Teaching

### Christian Community

In the famous passage of Acts of the Apostles 2:42–47, the ideal Christian community is portrayed as open to the Holy Spirit. The people shared everything in common, including prayer, meals, and possessions. No one went in need. Sound impossible?

One of the principles of Catholic social teaching, *Call to Family, Community, and Participation*, invites us to be mindful of the fact that families are at the heart of the community. Programs and policies of our society should demonstrate support and respect for the family. The U.S. bishops call us to be concerned for those who are at risk and vulnerable, not

only in our own country but also in the global community. They speak about the importance of supporting policies that address the needs of families, specifically the rights of children, who often are the most vulnerable, to adequate food, shelter, healthcare, quality education, and a safe environment in which to flourish.

Our faith teaches us to respect the dignity of the human person. This passage from Acts of the Apostles reminds us that the early Christian community tried very hard to live as a community that cared for one another and made sure that everyone felt respected and had their basic needs met.

We are also called to be participants in helping to promote this reality in the world today. It is not always easy, but we can find ways to do what we can to share in that vision.

- What do you think society would be like today if everyone lived as the early Christian community tried to live?

#### ▶ Acts 2:42–47

*Call to Family, Community, and Participation*



28 You have made known to me the paths of life;  
you will fill me with joy in your presence.'

29 My brothers, one can confidently say to you about the patriarch David that he died and was buried, and his tomb is in our midst to this day. 30\* But since he was a prophet and knew that God had sworn an oath to him that he would set one of his descendants upon his throne, 31\* he foresaw and spoke of the resurrection of the Messiah, that neither was he abandoned to the netherworld nor did his flesh see corruption. 32 God raised this Jesus; of this we are all witnesses. 33\* † Exalted at the right hand of God, he received the promise of the holy Spirit from the Father and poured it forth, as you [both] see and hear. 34\* For David did not go up into heaven, but he himself said:

'The Lord said to my Lord,

"Sit at my right hand

35 until I make your enemies your footstool.'"'

36\* Therefore let the whole house of Israel know for certain that God has made him both Lord and Messiah, this Jesus whom you crucified."

37\* Now when they heard this, they were cut to the heart, and they asked Peter and the other apostles, "What are we to do, my brothers?" 38\* † Peter [said] to them, "Repent and be baptized, every one of you, in the name of Jesus Christ for the forgiveness of your sins; and you will receive the gift of the holy Spirit. 39\* For the promise is made to you and to your children and to all those far off, whomever the Lord our God will call." 40\* He testified with many other arguments, and was exhorting them, "Save yourselves from this corrupt generation." 41\* Those who accepted his message were baptized, and about three thousand persons were added that day.

2:33 *At the right hand of God:* or "by the right hand of God."

2:38 *Repent and be baptized:* repentance is a positive concept, a change of mind and heart toward God reflected in the actual goodness of one's life. It is in accord with the apostolic teaching derived from Jesus (42) and ultimately recorded in the four gospels. Luke presents baptism in Acts as the expected response to the apostolic preaching about Jesus and associates it with the conferring of the Spirit (1:5; 10:44–48; 11:16).

2:30 2Sm 7:12; Ps 132:11.

2:31 Acts 13:35; Ps 16:10.

2:33 Acts 1:4–5.

2:34–35 Ps 110:1.

2:36 Acts 9:22; Rom 10:9;

Phil 2:11.

2:37 Lk 3:10.

2:38 Acts 3:19; 16:31;

Lk 3:3.

2:39 Is 57:19; Jl 3:5; Eph 2:17.

2:40 Dt 32:5; Ps 78:8; Lk 9:41; Phil 2:15.

2:41 Acts 2:47; 4:4; 5:14; 6:7; 11:21, 24; 21:20.

# Live It!

## Share Christ

As is true in our own cities today, it was not uncommon to encounter beggars on the streets in Jerusalem during the first century. And probably, like today, some people averted their eyes and walked by while others stopped to offer a few coins.

When Peter and John encounter a beggar in Acts of the Apostles 3:3, they don't have a whole lot of money to share with him, but they stop just the same. Looking him in the eye, Peter offers the lame man the one thing of value he does have: the powerful gift of healing found in the name of Jesus Christ.

You may not have the gift of healing or lots of extra money to give to those in need. But Peter and John remind us that knowing Jesus is the greatest treasure one can acquire in life, and that this treasure has been given to us freely. Don't forget to share it with others!

▶ Acts 3:1–10



## Communal Life

<sup>42</sup>\*† They devoted themselves to the teaching of the apostles and to the communal life, to the breaking of the bread and to the prayers.\*  
<sup>43</sup>\* Awe came upon everyone, and many wonders and signs were done through the apostles. <sup>44</sup>\* All who believed were together and had all things in common; <sup>45</sup>they would sell their property and

<sup>2:42–47</sup> The first of three summary passages (along with 4:32–37 and 5:12–16) that outline, somewhat idyllically, the chief characteristics of the Jerusalem community: adherence to the teachings of the Twelve and the centering of its religious life in the eucharistic liturgy (42); a system of distribution of goods that led wealthier Christians to sell their possessions when the needs of the community's poor required it (44 and the note on 4:32–37); and continued attendance at the temple, since in this initial stage there was little or no thought of any dividing line between Christianity and Judaism (46).

<sup>3:1–4:31</sup> This section presents a series of related events: the dramatic cure of a lame beggar (3:1–10) produces a large audience for the kerygmatic discourse of Peter (3:11–26). The Sadducees, taking exception to the doctrine of resurrection, have Peter, John, and apparently the beggar as well, arrested (4:1–4) and brought to trial before the Sanhedrin. The issue concerns the authority by which Peter and John publicly teach religious doctrine in the temple (4:5–7). Peter replies with a brief summary of the kerygma, implying that his authority is prophetic (4:8–12). The court warns the apostles to abandon their practice of invoking prophetic authority in the name

possessions and divide them among all according to each one's need. <sup>46</sup>Every day they devoted themselves to meeting together in the temple area and to breaking bread in their homes. They ate their meals with exultation and sincerity of heart, <sup>47</sup>praising God and enjoying favor with all the people. And every day the Lord added to their number those who were being saved.

## Cure of a Crippled Beggar

**3**<sup>1</sup>† Now Peter and John were going up to the temple area for the three o'clock hour of prayer.† <sup>2</sup>\* And a man crippled from birth was carried and placed at the gate of the temple called "the Beautiful Gate" every day to beg for alms from the people who entered the temple. <sup>3</sup>When he saw Peter and John about to go into the temple, he asked for alms. <sup>4</sup>But Peter looked intently at him, as did John, and said, "Look at us." <sup>5</sup>He paid attention to them, expecting to receive something from them. <sup>6</sup>\*† Peter said, "I have neither silver nor gold, but what I do have I give you: in the name of Jesus Christ the Nazorean, [rise and] walk." <sup>7</sup>Then Peter took him by the right hand and raised him up, and immediately his feet and ankles grew strong. <sup>8</sup>\* He leaped up, stood, and walked around, and went into the temple with them, walking and jumping and praising God. <sup>9</sup>When all the people saw him walking and praising God, <sup>10</sup>they recognized him as the one who used to sit begging at the Beautiful Gate of the temple, and they were filled with amazement and astonishment at what had happened to him.

## Peter's Speech

<sup>11</sup>\* As he clung to Peter and John, all the people hurried in amazement toward them in the portico called "Solomon's Portico." <sup>12</sup>\* When Peter saw this, he addressed the people, "You Israelites, why are you amazed at this, and why do

of Jesus (4:13–18). When Peter and John reply that the prophetic role cannot be abandoned to satisfy human objections, the court nevertheless releases them, afraid to do otherwise since the beggar, lame from birth and over forty years old, is a well-known figure in Jerusalem and the facts of his cure are common property (4:19–22).

The narrative concludes with a prayer of the Christian community imploring divine aid against threats of persecution (4:23–31).

<sup>3:1</sup> For the three o'clock hour of prayer: literally, "at the ninth hour of prayer." With the day beginning at 6 a.m., the ninth hour would be 3 p.m.

<sup>3:6–10</sup> The miracle has a dramatic cast; it symbolizes the saving power of Christ and leads the beggar to enter the temple, where he hears Peter's proclamation of salvation through Jesus.

<sup>2:42–47</sup> Acts 4:32–35.

<sup>2:42</sup> Acts 1:14; 6:4.

<sup>2:43</sup> Acts 5:12–16.

<sup>2:44</sup> Acts 4:32; 34–35.

<sup>3:2–8</sup> Acts 14:8–10.

<sup>3:6</sup> Acts 4:10.

<sup>3:8</sup> Is 35:6; Lk 7:22.

<sup>3:11</sup> Acts 5:12; Jn 10:23.

<sup>3:12</sup> Acts 14:15.



you look so intently at us as if we had made him walk by our own power or piety? <sup>13\*</sup>† The God of Abraham, [the God] of Isaac, and [the God] of Jacob, the God of our ancestors, has glorified his servant Jesus whom you handed over and denied in Pilate's presence, when he had decided to release him. <sup>14\*</sup>† You denied the Holy and Righteous One and asked that a murderer be released to you. <sup>15\*</sup>† The author of life you put to death, but God raised him from the dead; of this we are witnesses. <sup>16</sup> And by faith in his name, this man, whom you see and know, his name has made strong, and the faith that comes through it has given him this perfect health, in the presence of all of you. <sup>17\*</sup>† Now I know, brothers, that you acted out of ignorance, just as your leaders did; <sup>18\*</sup>† but God has thus brought to fulfillment what he had announced beforehand through the mouth of all the prophets, that his Messiah would suffer. <sup>19\*</sup> Repent, therefore, and be converted, that your sins may be wiped away, <sup>20</sup>† and that the Lord may grant you times of refreshment and send you the Messiah already appointed for you, Jesus, <sup>21</sup>† whom heaven must receive until the times of universal restoration of which God spoke through the mouth of his holy prophets from of old. <sup>22\*</sup>† For Moses said:

‘A prophet like me will the Lord, your God,  
raise up for you  
from among your own kinsmen;  
to him you shall listen in all that he may say  
to you.

<sup>†</sup> **3:13** *Has glorified*: through the resurrection and ascension of Jesus, God reversed the judgment against him on the occasion of his trial. *Servant*: the Greek word can also be rendered as “son” or even “child” here and also in 3:26; 4:25 (applied to David); 4:27; and 4:30. Scholars are of the opinion, however, that the original concept reflected in the words identified Jesus with the suffering Servant of the Lord of Is 52:13—53:12.

**3:14** *The Holy and Righteous One*: so designating Jesus emphasizes his special relationship to the Father (see Lk 1:35; 4:34) and emphasizes his sinlessness and religious dignity that are placed in sharp contrast with the guilt of those who rejected him in favor of Barabbas.

**3:15** *The author of life*: other possible translations of the Greek title are “leader of life” or “pioneer of life.” The title clearly points to Jesus as the source and originator of salvation.

**3:17** *Ignorance*: a Lucan motif, explaining away the actions not only of the people but also of their leaders in crucifying Jesus. On this basis the presbyters in Acts could continue to appeal to the Jews in Jerusalem to believe in Jesus, even while affirming their involvement in his death because they were unaware of his messianic dignity. See also 13:27 and Lk 23:34.

**3:18** *Through the mouth of all the prophets*: Christian prophetic insight into the Old Testament saw the crucifixion and death of Jesus as the main import of messianic prophecy. The Jews themselves did not anticipate a suffering Messiah; they usually understood the Servant Song in Is 52:13—53:12 to signify their own suffering as a people. In his typical fashion (cf Lk 18:31; 24:25, 27, 44), Luke does not specify the particular Old Testament prophecies that were fulfilled by Jesus. See also the note on Lk 24:26.

**3:20** *The Lord . . . and send you the Messiah already appointed for you, Jesus*: an allusion to the parousia or second coming of Christ, judged to be imminent in the apostolic age. This reference to its near-

<sup>23\*</sup> Everyone who does not listen to that prophet will be cut off from the people.’

<sup>24</sup> Moreover, all the prophets who spoke, from Samuel and those afterwards, also announced these days. <sup>25\*</sup> You are the children of the prophets and of the covenant that God made with your ancestors when he said to Abraham, ‘In your offspring all the families of the earth shall be blessed.’ <sup>26\*</sup> For you first, God raised up his servant and sent him to bless you by turning each of you from your evil ways.”

**4** <sup>1</sup>† While they were still speaking to the people, the priests, the captain of the temple guard, and the Sadducees confronted them, <sup>2\*</sup> disturbed that they were teaching the people and proclaiming in Jesus the resurrection of the dead. <sup>3</sup> They laid hands on them and put them in custody until the next day, since it was already evening. <sup>4</sup> But many of those who heard the word came to believe and [the] number of men grew to [about] five thousand.

#### Before the Sanhedrin

<sup>5</sup> On the next day, their leaders, elders, and scribes were assembled in Jerusalem, <sup>6</sup> with Annas the high priest, Caiaphas, John, Alexander, and all who were of the high-priestly class. <sup>7</sup> They brought them into their presence and questioned them, “By what power or by what name have you done this?” <sup>8\*</sup> Then Peter, filled with the holy Spirit, answered them, “Leaders of the people

ness is the only explicit one in Acts. Some scholars believe that this verse preserves a very early christology, in which the title “Messiah” (Greek “Christ”) is applied to him as of his parousia, his second coming (contrast 2:36). This view of a future messiahship of Jesus is not found elsewhere in the New Testament.

**3:21** *The times of universal restoration*: like “the times of refreshment” (20), an apocalyptic designation of the messianic age, fitting in with the christology of v 20 that associates the messiahship of Jesus with his future coming.

**3:22** A loose citation of Dt 18:15, which teaches that the Israelites are to learn the will of Yahweh from no one but their prophets. At the time of Jesus, some Jews expected a unique prophet to come in fulfillment of this text. Early Christianity applied this tradition and text to Jesus and used them especially in defense of the divergence of Christian teaching from traditional Judaism.

**4:1** *The priests, the captain of the temple guard, and the Sadducees*: the priests performed the temple liturgy; the temple guard was composed of Levites, whose captain ranked next after the high priest. The Sadducees, a party within Judaism at this time, rejected those doctrines, including bodily resurrection, which they believed alien to the ancient Mosaic religion. The Sadducees were drawn from priestly families and from the lay aristocracy.

**3:13** Ex 3:6, 15; Is 52:13; Lk

23:14–25.

**3:14** Mt 27:20–21; Mk

15:11; Lk 23:18; Jn

18:40.

**3:15** Acts 4:10; 5:31 / Acts

1:8; 2:32.

**3:17** Acts 13:27; Lk 23:34;

1 Cor 2:8; 1 Tm 1:13.

**3:18** Lk 18:31.

**3:19** Acts 2:38.

**3:22** Acts 7:37; Dt 18:15, 18.

**3:23** Lv 23:29; Dt 18:19.

**3:25** Gn 12:3; 18:18; 22:18;

Sir 44:19–21; Gal

3:8–9.

**3:26** Acts 13:46; Rom 1:16.

**4:2** Acts 23:6–8; 24:21.

**4:8** Mt 10:20.

and elders: <sup>9</sup>If we are being examined today about a good deed done to a cripple, namely, by what means he was saved, <sup>10</sup>then all of you and all the people of Israel should know that it was in the name of Jesus Christ the Nazorean whom you crucified, whom God raised from the dead; in his name this man stands before you healed. <sup>11</sup>\*† He is ‘the stone rejected by you, the builders,

which has become the cornerstone.’ <sup>12</sup>\*† There is no salvation through anyone else, nor is there any other name under heaven given to the human race by which we are to be saved.”

<sup>13</sup>Observing the boldness of Peter and John and perceiving them to be uneducated, ordinary men, they were amazed, and they recognized them as the companions of Jesus. <sup>14</sup>Then when they saw the man who had been cured standing there with them, they could say nothing in reply. <sup>15</sup>So they ordered them to leave the Sanhedrin, and conferred with one another, saying, <sup>16</sup>“What are we to do with these men? Everyone living in Jerusalem knows that a remarkable sign was done through them, and we cannot deny it. <sup>17</sup>\* But so that it may not be spread any further among the people, let us give them a stern warning never again to speak to anyone in this name.”

<sup>18</sup>So they called them back and ordered them not to speak or teach at all in the name of Jesus. <sup>19</sup>\* Peter and John, however, said to them in reply, “Whether it is right in the sight of God for us to obey you rather than God, you be the judges. <sup>20</sup>It is impossible for us not to speak about what we have seen and heard.” <sup>21</sup>After threatening them further, they released them, finding no way to punish them, on account of the people who were all praising God for what had happened. <sup>22</sup>For the man on whom this sign of healing had been done was over forty years old.

**Prayer of the Community**

<sup>23</sup>After their release they went back to their own people and reported what the chief priests and elders had told them. <sup>24</sup>And when they heard it, they raised their voices to God with one accord and said, “Sovereign Lord, maker of heaven and earth and the sea and all that is in them, <sup>25</sup>\* you said by the holy Spirit through the mouth of our father David, your servant:

‘Why did the Gentiles rage  
and the peoples entertain folly?

<sup>26</sup> The kings of the earth took their stand  
and the princes gathered together  
against the Lord and against his  
anointed.’

**Pray It!**

**I Believe! The Apostles’ Creed**

**I**n Acts of the Apostles 4:5–12, Peter stands up before the Jewish rulers and elders of the Temple and boldly proclaims his faith in Jesus as healer and Messiah. Every Sunday at Mass, Catholic Christians also profess their faith when they pray the Nicene Creed. (A creed is a type of prayer that expresses faith beliefs.) Did you know there is also a shorter creed called the Apostles’ Creed? The Apostles’ Creed is based on the teachings and beliefs of the earliest Christians.

Take a moment to pray the Apostles’ Creed:

*I believe in God, the Father almighty, creator of heaven and earth. I believe in Jesus Christ, his only Son, our Lord. He was conceived by the power of the Holy Spirit and born of the Virgin Mary. He suffered under Pontius Pilate, was crucified, died, and was buried. He descended into hell. On the third day he rose again. He ascended into heaven and is seated at the right hand of the Father. He will come again to judge the living and the dead. I believe in the Holy Spirit, the holy catholic Church, the communion of saints, the forgiveness of sins, the resurrection of the body, and the life everlasting. Amen.*

Then reflect or journal on the following questions:

- Which statements of the creed do you have questions about?
- How hard would it be for you to express your faith beliefs to people who don’t believe in Jesus?
- To what actions does a faith like this call us?



**▶ Acts 4:5–12**

A  
C  
T  
S

† **4:11** Early Christianity applied this citation from Ps 118:22 to Jesus; cf Mk 12:10; 1 Pt 2:7.

**4:12** In the Roman world of Luke’s day, salvation was often attributed to the emperor who was hailed as “savior” and “god.” Luke, in the words of Peter, denies that deliverance comes through anyone other than Jesus.

**4:11** Ps 118:22; Is 28:16; Mt 21:42; Mk 12:10; Lk 20:17; Rom 9:33; 1 Pt 2:7.

**4:12** Mt 1:21; 1 Cor 3:11.

**4:17** Acts 5:28.

**4:19** Acts 5:29–32.

**4:25–26** Ps 2:1–2.

# Where Do I Find It?

- ▶ **Events, People,  
and Teachings** 1744
- ▶ **Catholic Connections** 1747
- ▶ **Sacrament  
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- ▶ **Article Subject Index** 1750
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# Events, People, and Teachings

## Old Testament Stories

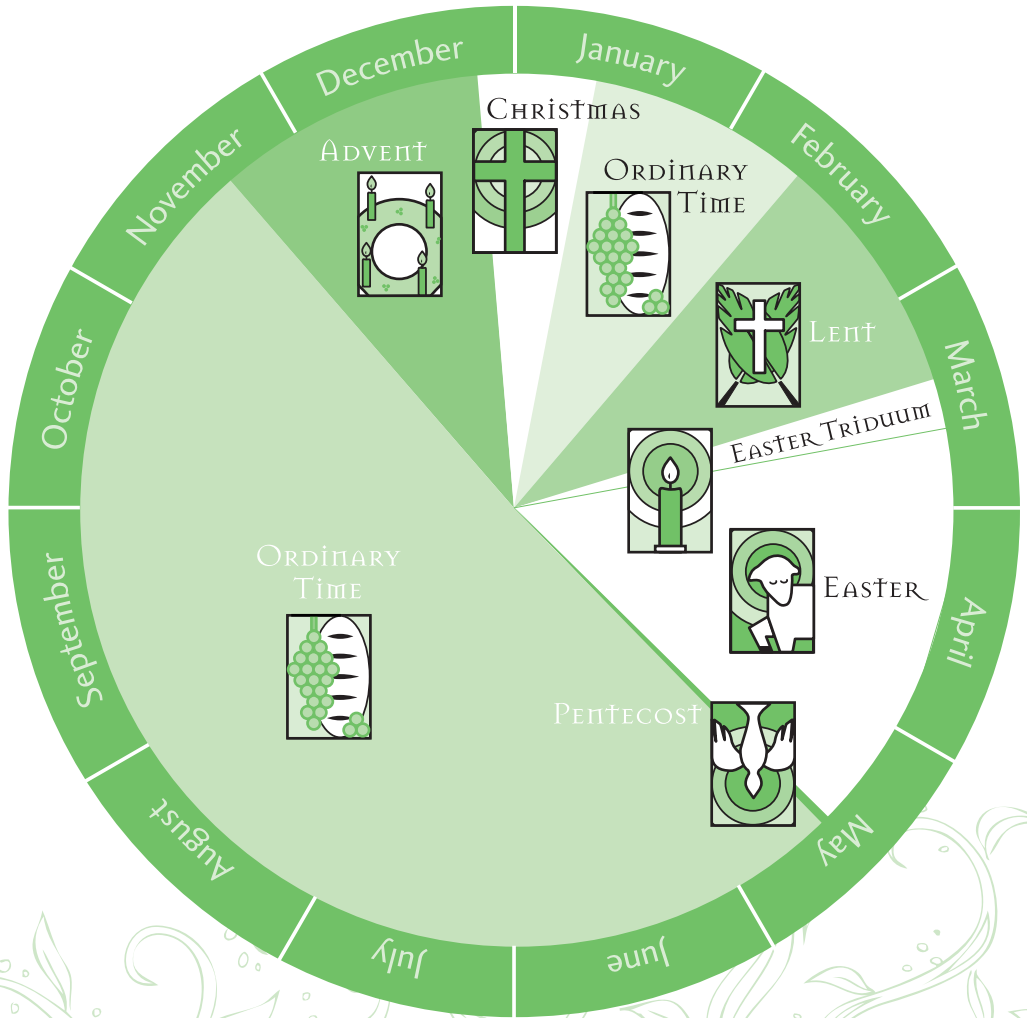
*These stories are listed in the order in which they first appear in the Bible.*

Creation, *Gn, chs 1–2*  
original sin and its punishment, *Gn, ch 3*  
Cain and Abel, *Gn 4:1–16*  
Noah and the Great Flood, *Gn, chs 6–9*  
God's covenant with Abraham, *Gn 17:1–18:15*  
God's command to sacrifice Isaac, *Gn 22:1–19*  
Isaac's blessing of Jacob, *Gn 27:1–29*  
Jacob's dream, *Gn 28:10–22*  
Joseph and his brothers, *Gn, chs 37–46*  
birth and youth of Moses, *Ex 2:1–10*  
Moses at the burning bush, *Ex 3:1–12*  
plagues on Egypt, *Ex, chs 7–12*  
Passover and the Exodus, *Ex, chs 12–14*  
Ten Commandments, *Ex 20:1–17*  
destruction of Jericho, *Jos 5:13–6:27*  
Gideon and the sign of the fleece, *Jgs 6:36–40*  
Samson, *Jgs, chs 13–16*  
Samuel's birth and calling, *1 Sm, chs 1–3*  
David and Goliath, *1 Sm, ch 17*  
David and Bathsheba, *2 Sm, ch 11*  
Solomon's wisdom, *1 Kgs, ch 3*  
Elijah's triumph over the priests of Baal, *1 Kgs 18:20–40*  
miracles of Elisha, *2 Kgs 4:1–6:23*  
end of the Babylonian captivity, *Ezra, ch 1*  
battles of Judas Maccabeus, *1 Mc, chs 3–5*  
Ezekiel and the valley of dry bones, *Ez 37:1–14*  
Daniel, *Dn, chs 1–6*  
Jonah and the Ninevites, *Jon, chs 1–3*

## New Testament Stories

*These stories are listed in the order in which they first appear in the Bible.*

birth of Jesus, *Mt 1:18–2:12; Lk, chs 1–2*  
baptism of Jesus, *Mt 3:13–17; Mk 1:9–11; Lk 3:21–22*  
temptation of Jesus, *Mt 4:1–11; Mk 1:12–13; Lk 4:1–13*  
Peter's declaration about Jesus, *Mt 16:13–20; Mk 8:27–30; Lk 9:18–20*  
Transfiguration of Jesus, *Mt 17:1–13; Mk 9:2–13; Lk 9:28–36*  
Jesus' triumphal entry into Jerusalem, *Mt 21:1–11; Mk 11:1–11; Lk 19:28–40; Jn 12:12–19*  
Jesus in the Temple, *Mt 21:12–17; Mk 11:15–19; Lk 19:45–48; Jn 2:13–16*  
Judas's betrayal of Jesus, *Mt 26:14–16, 47–56; Mk 14:10–11, 43–52; Lk 22:1–53; Jn 13:21–30; 18:1–5*  
Last Supper, *Mt 26:17–30; Mk 14:12–25; Lk 22:7–38; 1 Cor 11:23–26*  
Jesus at Gethsemane, *Mt 26:36–56; Mk 14:32–52; Lk 22:39–53*  
Peter's denial of Christ, *Mt 26:69–75; Mk 14:66–72; Lk 22:54–62; Jn 18:15–18, 25–27*  
Crucifixion, *Mt 27:32–56; Mk 15:21–41; Lk 23:26–49; Jn 19:16–37*  
Resurrection and appearances, *Mt, ch 28; Mk, ch 16; Lk, ch 24; Jn, chs 20–21; Acts 1:1–11*  
Jesus washing his disciples' feet, *Jn 13:1–17*  
Holy Spirit at Pentecost, *Acts 2:1–42*  
stoning of Stephen, *Acts, chs 6–7*  
conversion of Saul, *Acts 9:1–31*  
Peter's escape from prison, *Acts 12:1–19*  
Paul and Silas's escape from prison, *Acts 16:16–40*  
Paul's journey to Rome for his trial, *Acts, chs 27–28*



# Sunday Readings

## Reading the Bible with the Church

This reading plan lists the Sunday readings for the liturgical year. The Scripture passages listed in the following table reflect those found in the official Catholic Lectionary for Mass, which uses the New American Bible translation.

### Advent and Christmas

	Year A 2010, 2013, 2016	Year B 2011, 2014, 2017	Year C 2009, 2012, 2015
<b>The First Sunday of Advent</b>	Is 2:1–5 Rom 13:11–14 Mt 24:37–44	Is 63:16–17; 64:1–8 1 Cor 1:3–9 Mk 13:33–37	Jer 33:14–16 1 Thes 3:12–4:2 Lk 21:25–28,34–36
<b>The Second Sunday of Advent</b>	Is 11:1–10 Rom 15:4–9 Mt 3:1–12	Is 40:1–5,9–11 2 Pt 3:8–14 Mk 1:1–8	Bar 5:1–9 Phil 1:4–6,8–11 Lk 3:1–6
<b>The Third Sunday of Advent</b>	Is 35:1–6,10 Jas 5:7–10 Mt 11:2–11	Is 61:1–2,10–11 1 Thes 5:16–24 Jn 1:6–8,19–28	Zep 3:14–18 Phil 4:4–7 Lk 3:10–18
<b>The Fourth Sunday of Advent</b>	Is 7:10–14 Rom 1:1–7 Mt 1:18–24	2 Sm 7:1–5,8–11,14,16 Rom 16:25–27 Lk 1:26–38	Mi 5:2–4 Hb 10:5–10 Lk 1:39–45
<b>Midnight Mass (25 December, every year, readings are the same for all cycles)</b>	Is 9:2–7 Ti 2:11–14 Lk 2:1–14	Is 9:2–7 Ti 2:11–14 Lk 2:1–14	Is 9:2–7 Ti 2:11–14 Lk 2:1–14
<b>Feast of the Holy Family</b>	Sir 3:2–7,12–14 Col 3:12–21 Mt 2:13–15,19–23	Sir 3:2–7,12–14 Col 3:12–21 Lk 2:22–40	Sir 3:2–7,12–14 Col 3:12–21 Lk 2:41–52
<b>Solemnity of Mary, Mother of God (1 January, every year, readings are the same for all cycles)</b>	Nm 6:22–27 Gal 4:4–7 Lk 2:16–21	Nm 6:22–27 Gal 4:4–7 Lk 2:16–21	Nm 6:22–27 Gal 4:4–7 Lk 2:16–21
<b>Epiphany (readings are the same for all cycles)</b>	Is 60:1–6 Eph 3:2–3,5–6 Mt 2:1–12	Is 60:1–6 Eph 3:2–3,5–6 Mt 2:1–12	Is 60:1–6 Eph 3:2–3,5–6 Mt 2:1–12
<b>Baptism of the Lord</b>	Is 42:1–4,6–7 Acts 10:34–38 Mt 3:13–17	Is 42:1–4,6–7 Acts 10:34–38 Mk 1:7–11	Is 42:1–4,6–7 Acts 10:34–38 Lk 3:15–16,21–22

### Lent and Easter

	Year A 2011, 2014, 2017	Year B 2012, 2015, 2018	Year C 2010, 2013, 2016
<b>Ash Wednesday (readings are the same for all cycles)</b>	Jl 2:12–18 2 Cor 5:20–6:2 Mt 6:1–6,16–18	Jl 2:12–18 2 Cor 5:20–6:2 Mt 6:1–6,16–18	Jl 2:12–18 2 Cor 5:20–6:2 Mt 6:1–6,16–18