



THE DEPOSIT OF FAITH

“The Ball”



Prayer before Study

O ineffable Creator, true source of light and wisdom, origin of all things, be pleased to cast a beam of your radiance upon the darkness of my mind.

Take from me the double darkness of sin and ignorance in which I was born. Give me quickness of understanding, a retentive memory, the ability to grasp things correctly and fundamentally, and abundant grace of expression.

Order the beginning, direct the progress and perfect the achievement of my work. You who are true God and true Man and who live and reign forever and ever. Amen.

Deposit of faith - definition

- The summation of divine revelation
- “Christ the Lord, in whom the entire Revelation of the most high God is summed up, commanded the apostles to preach the Gospel, which he fulfilled in his own person and promulgated with his own lips. In preaching the Gospel, they were to communicate the gifts of God to all people. This Gospel was to be the source of all saving truth and moral discipline.” (CCC 75)
- The totality of what Christ taught and entrusted to the apostles for the salvation of the world, they in turn handed on by their preaching and writing, under the inspiration of the Holy Spirit, to all generations, until Christ returns in glory

Deposit of faith – handed on in two ways

- *in writing* "by those apostles and other men associated with them who, under the inspiration of the Holy Spirit, committed the message of salvation to writing (SACRED SCRIPTURE)
- *orally* "by the apostles who handed on, by the spoken word of their preaching, by the example they gave, by the institutions they established, what they themselves had received - whether from the lips of Christ, from his way of life and his works, or whether they had learned it at the prompting of the Holy Spirit (SACRED TRADITION)

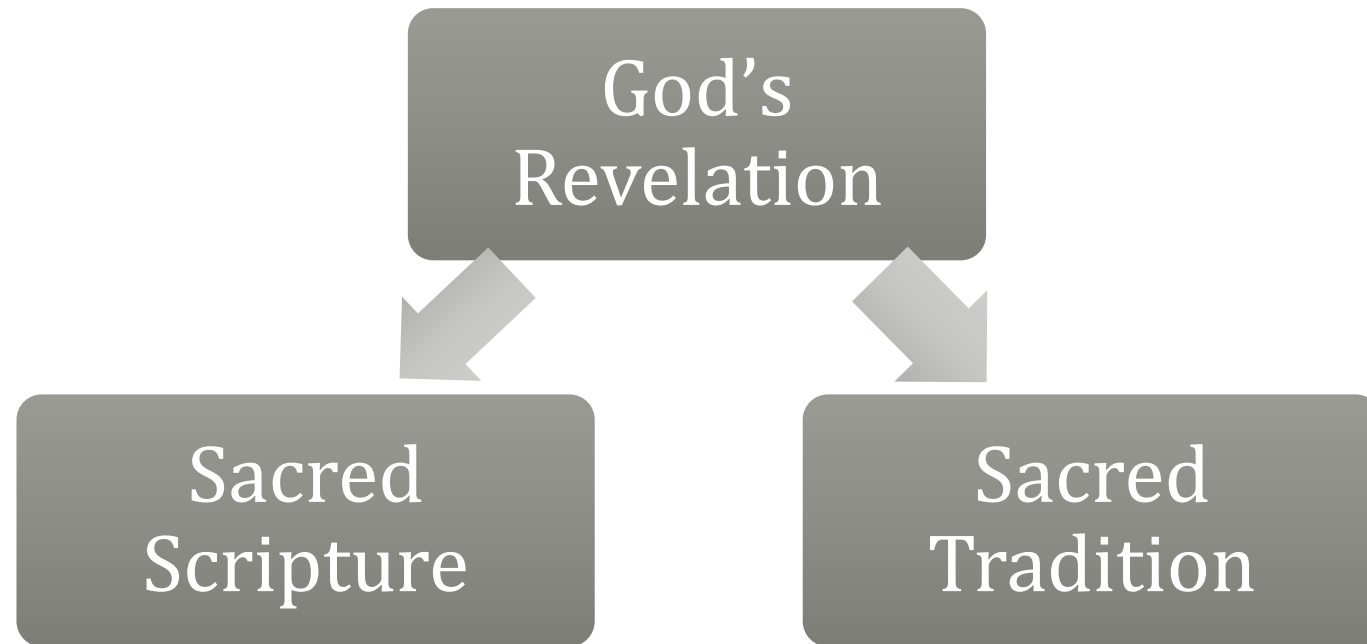
Two streams – one source

- Divine Revelation comes to us in two distinct modes of transmission:
 - *through the writings of the Holy Scriptures*
 - *and through the Sacred Tradition of the Church.*
- These two together form one body of revelation, the “deposit of faith,” and have one common source, “for both of them, flowing out from the same divine well-spring, come together to form one thing (Divine Revelation) and move towards the same goal” (Our salvation) (CCC 80).

Sacred Tradition

- When we say Tradition in this sense, we do not mean the various theological, disciplinary, liturgical or devotional habits or conventions that have developed over the centuries
 - *These 'ecclesial traditions' are the particular forms, adapted to different places and times, in which the great Tradition is expressed.*
 - *They can be retained, modified or even abandoned under the guidance of the Church.*
- Sacred Tradition refers to the teachings and example of Jesus handed on to the Apostles and transmitted under the guidance of the Spirit.
 - *Note that the first generation of Christians did not have written Scriptures. The writing of the Scriptures itself demonstrates the process of Tradition.*
 - *Tradition in this sense may also include other extra-biblical writings and teachings of the Church Fathers, the Councils, etc., which document the transmission of apostolic teaching.*

The Deposit of Faith



In Summary

■ The Deposit of Faith is:

- *The summation of Divine Revelation, whether in written or oral form*
- *The totality of everything that Jesus taught and entrusted to the apostles for the salvation of the world*
- *The sum total of the Good News, proclaimed and brought about in the Person of Jesus Christ*
- *The totality of the Scriptures together with Sacred Tradition passed down from the time of the apostles*

■ The Church's task:

- *Proclaim the Deposit of Faith to all the world and to every generation without in any way altering it.*

Apostolic Succession

- In order that the full and living Gospel might always be preserved in the Church, the apostles left bishops as their successors. They gave them their own position of teaching authority.
 - *Indeed, the apostolic preaching, which is expressed in a special way in the inspired books (Scripture), was to be preserved in a continuous line of succession until the end of time*
- The same authority, responsibility and mission Christ gave the original apostles was handed on by those apostles to their successors, the bishops, down through the centuries, until the present day. We call this the apostolic succession.
- Theirs is the responsibility of passing on the Deposit of Faith

The magisterium

- The task of giving an authentic interpretation of the revelation of God, whether in its written form or in the form of Tradition, has been entrusted to the living teaching office of the Church alone (the Magisterium, from the Latin for “teacher”).
 - *Its authority in this matter is exercised in the name of Jesus Christ. This means that the task of interpretation has been entrusted to the bishops in communion with the successor of Peter, the Bishop of Rome.*
- Yet this Magisterium is not superior to the revelation of God, but is its servant. It teaches only what has been handed on to it. At the divine command and with the help of the Holy Spirit, it listens to this devotedly, guards it with dedication and expounds it faithfully. All that it proposes for belief as being divinely revealed is drawn from this single deposit of faith

Unchanging teaching

- The task of the Church is to faithfully hand on the deposit of faith
 - *She cannot add to it*
 - *She cannot subtract from it*
 - *She cannot change it in any way*
 - *She cannot make it up*
 - *She has the authority (and the mission) only to pass it on*
- She may deepen her understanding of it or define it more clearly over time, use new language or images to communicate it, incorporate various cultural traditions to proclaim it, or change the liturgical expression of it and the manner in which it is conveyed
 - *But she cannot change divine revelation*
 - *In other words, the Church can use different language or liturgical actions to teach the same thing, but she cannot teach a different thing*

Unchanging teaching

- So, should the Church “get with the times” and change her teaching on certain things?
 - *No. The Church has no authority to change her teaching, because it comes not from her but from the Lord*
 - *Her task is only and always to faithfully proclaim it and hand it on*
 - *The Church must proclaim to “the times” the unchanging Good News of Jesus Christ. It is the world that must change, not the Church’s teaching.*