

Slide 1

- "The Church has always venerated the divine Scriptures as she venerated the Body of the Lord" CCC 141
- "I AM the bread of life; whoever comes to me will never hunger, and whoever believes in me will never thirst." Jn 6:35 NAB

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Slide 2

Sacred Scriptures

An Investigation of How Catholics  
View Sacred Scriptures  
Jason Collins, M.A.

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Slide 3

- Outline
- The Bible- what's in it?
  - The Bible- come on... what's really in it?
  - Why does this new Catholic Bible have more books than my old Bible at home?
  - How Catholics read the Bible
  - Why don't Catholics rattle off Scripture quotes?

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Slide 4

**The Bible- what's in it**

- The Bible is divided into two main sections. The first is what is commonly known as the Old Testament, but should rightly be called the Jewish Scriptures. While the second is the New Testament, or the Christian Scriptures
- The words of Old and New have fallen out of favor amongst Biblical scholars because they seem to suggest that Judaism is no longer relevant. CCC 123

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Slide 5

**The Bible- what's in it**

- We can further divide the Scriptures-
  - Jewish Scriptures
    - Torah (also known as the Pentateuch)
    - History
    - Prophets
    - Wisdom

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Slide 6

**The Bible- what's in it**

- We can further divide the Scriptures-
  - Christian Scriptures
    - Gospels
    - Acts
    - Letters
    - Revelation

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Slide 7

**The Bible- what's in it**

- The Torah (also know by its Greek name: Pentateuch)
  - Genesis
  - Exodus
  - Leviticus
  - Numbers
  - Deuteronomy

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Slide 8

**The Bible- what's in it**

<b>The Historical books-</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Joshua</li><li>• Judges</li><li>• Ruth</li><li>• 1<sup>st</sup> &amp; 2<sup>nd</sup> Samuel</li><li>• 1<sup>st</sup> &amp; 2<sup>nd</sup> Kings</li><li>• 1<sup>st</sup> &amp; 2<sup>nd</sup> Chronicles</li></ul>	<b>The Historical books-</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Ezra</li><li>• Nehemiah</li><li>• Tobit</li><li>• Judith</li><li>• Esther</li><li>• 1<sup>st</sup> &amp; 2<sup>nd</sup> Maccabees</li></ul>
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Slide 9

**The Bible- what's in it**

**The Wisdom Books**

- Job
- Psalms
- Proverbs
- Ecclesiastes
- Song of Songs
- Wisdom
- Sirach

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Slide 10

**The Bible- what's in it**

<b>The Prophetic Books</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Isaiah</li><li>• Jeremiah</li><li>• Lamentations</li><li>• Baruch</li><li>• Ezekiel</li><li>• Daniel</li><li>• Hosea</li><li>• Joel</li><li>• Amos</li></ul>	<b>The Prophetic Books</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Obadiah</li><li>• Jonah</li><li>• Micah</li><li>• Nahum</li><li>• Habakkuk</li><li>• Zephaniah</li><li>• Haggai</li><li>• Zechariah</li><li>• Malachi</li></ul>
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Slide 11

**The Bible- come on... what's really in it?**



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Slide 12

**The Bible- come on... what's really in it?**



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Slide 13



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Slide 14



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Slide 15



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Slide 16

The Bible- come on... what's really in it?



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Slide 17

The Bible- come on... what's really in it?

- Leviticus- lots of rules and regulations

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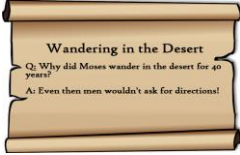
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Slide 18

The Bible- come on... what's really in it?

- The Book of Numbers- (38 years summed up)



Wandering in the Desert

Q: Why did Moses wander in the desert for 40 years?

A: Even then men wouldn't ask for directions!

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Slide 19

The Bible- come on... what's really in it?

- The Book of Deuteronomy- let's hear it all again! Just from a different point of view!
- The Book of Joshua- the conquering of the Promised Land
- The Book of Judges- 12 military leaders, not magistrates, who are brought up from among the people to lead
- The Book of Ruth- a tale of conversion about the great-grandmother of David

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Slide 20

The Bible- come on... what's really in it?

- 1<sup>st</sup> & 2<sup>nd</sup> Samuel- The last of the judges, King Saul, King David and his reign

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Slide 21

The Bible- come on... what's really in it?

- 1<sup>st</sup> and 2<sup>nd</sup> Kings- Solomon and the building of the 1<sup>st</sup> Temple
- The separation of Israel into two kingdoms, Israel in the north and Judah to the south
- Conquering of Israel by the Assyrians in 720 BC
- Conquering of Judah by Babylon in 586 BC and the destruction of Jerusalem

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Slide 22

The Bible- come on... what's really in it?

- 1<sup>st</sup> and 2<sup>nd</sup> Chronicles- see four books before, but told with a slightly more religious tract
- The books of Ezra and Nehemiah- Israel returns to the kingdom and begins to rebuild the temple and the city walls

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Slide 23

The Bible- come on... what's really in it?

- The Book of Tobit- a devout Israelite living in captivity prays to God, who sends the angel Raphael to assist his son, Tobiah and also to assist another asking for intercession, Sarah. Raphael helps the two of them, reveals that he is angel, and departs. Tobiah then soon after buries his parents who have died from old age

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Slide 24

The Bible- come on... what's really in it?

- The Book of Judith has as its theme fidelity to the Mosaic law as well as placing trust in the Lord. Judith, upset that her countrymen feel as if they are doomed when an invading army appears, gets into the enemy camp, and slays the enemy general as he was passed out.

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Slide 25

The Bible- come on... what's really in it?

- The Book of Esther- she is presented before the King of Persia, who takes her as his wife. She learns of a plot to wipe out the Jews in Persia by one of the king's advisor, but convinces the King to allow the Jews to defend themselves, and the Jews kill thousands of Persians who were followers of the advisor. This starts the observance of the Jewish holiday of Purim

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Slide 26

The Bible- come on... what's really in it?

- 1<sup>st</sup> Maccabees- tells the story of a devout Jewish family who overthrows their Greek overlords after the ruler Antiochus IV ordered a statue of Zeus to be erected in the Holy of Holies and for pigs to be slaughtered in the temple. A miracle then occurs in the temple where there is only enough oil for one day, but it lasts for eight days.

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Slide 27

The Bible- come on... what's really in it?

- 2<sup>nd</sup> Maccabees- covers a smaller timeframe than 1<sup>st</sup> Maccabees. God has a much larger role in this book as well. It also contains some doctrinal issues: prayers for the dead, resurrection of the dead (12:39-46), merits of martyrs, intercession from the saints (15:11-17), and *creatio ex nihilo* (7:28)

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Slide 28

The Bible- come on... what's really in it?

- Wisdom books- the Book of Job
- Psalms
- Proverbs- traditionally attributed to Solomon
- Ecclesiastes- themes of fearing God, keeping the commandments, there is a divine plan
- Song of Songs- allegorically represents the love of God to the people, told in almost erotic form see 7:1-10 as an example

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Slide 29

The Bible- come on... what's really in it?

- The Book of Wisdom
- The Book of Sirach- covers a wide range of subjects dealing with moral matters

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Slide 30

The Bible- come on... what's really in it?

- The Prophetic books are divided between the Major and Minor Prophets
- The terms refer to the book's length
- Major- Isaiah, Jeremiah, Lamentations, Ezekiel, and Daniel
- Minor- everyone else

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Slide 31

The Bible- come on... what's really in it?

- The Book of Isaiah- has three distinct parts from pre-exile, during the exile, and post-exile. This great prophet appeared during a time of great need for Judah. Chapters 40-55 contain prophecies about the Messiah and are used in the Christian Scriptures.

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Slide 32

The Bible- come on... what's really in it?

- The Book of Jeremiah- contains history, biography and prophecy. He lived during the destruction of Jerusalem (586 BC) by the Babylonians, after warning the people about not being faithful to the Lord. He also speaks of a new covenant in 31:31-34

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Slide 33

The Bible- come on... what's really in it?

- The Book of Lamentations- five laments composed about the destruction of Jerusalem
- The Book of Baruch- concerns repentance after the destruction of Jerusalem
- The Book of Ezekiel- reflection on Israel's sins in exile, then hopes of Israel's restoration, and finally Israel receiving a new covenant
- The Book of Daniel- a tale of how faith and trust in the Lord can overcome temptation. He also refers to the Son of Man in chapter 7.

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Slide 34

The Bible- come on... what's really in it?

- The minor prophets-
- Hosea- people undesired
- Joel- Greed refuted
- Amos- Israel uprooted
- Obadiah- doom arranged
- Jonah- Nineveh changed
- Michah-prophet's might

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Slide 35

The Bible- come on... what's really in it?

- Nahum- locusts' flight
- Habakkuk- Silence kept
- Zephaniah- Threshold swept
- Haggai- Temple treasured
- Zechariah- Jerusalem measured
- Malachi- Unpaid tithes

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Slide 36

The Bible- come on... what's really in it?

- The Gospel of Matthew- written between 70-85 AD for Jewish converts. He has knowledge of Jewish customs and laws and portrays Jesus as a new Moses
- The Gospel of Mark- written between 65 -70 AD written for Gentile converts. Almost half is concerned with Holy Week but ironically usually has more details than Matthew and Luke

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Slide 37

The Bible- come on... what's really in it?

- The Gospel of Luke- written 75-80 AD for Gentiles. Luke places the events of Jesus in the wider world
- The Gospel of John- written 90-100 AD with a higher Christological tract then the synoptics that disagrees with them in some regards
- The Book of Acts- really part two of Luke and details the growth of the Early Church from Israel to the capital city of the Empire

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Slide 38

The Bible- come on... what's really in it?

- Pauline Epistles- Romans, 1<sup>st</sup> and 2<sup>nd</sup> Corinthians, Galatians, Ephesians, Philippians, Colossians, 1<sup>st</sup> and 2<sup>nd</sup> Thessalonians, 1<sup>st</sup> and 2<sup>nd</sup> Timothy, Titus, and Philemon

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Slide 39

The Bible- come on... what's really in it?

- Catholic Epistles- Hebrews, James, 1<sup>st</sup> and 2<sup>nd</sup> Peter, 1<sup>st</sup>, 2<sup>nd</sup> and 3<sup>rd</sup> John, Jude
- Finally, Revelation

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Slide 40

Why does this new Catholic Bible have more books than my old Bible at home?

- Tobit
- Judith
- Wisdom
- Sirach
- Baruch
- 1<sup>st</sup> & 2<sup>nd</sup> Maccabees
- Additions to Esther and Daniel

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Slide 41

Why does this new Catholic Bible have more books than my old Bible at home?

- The early Christian community had great debates on what books should be included in the canon of scriptures
- At the time of Jesus, there were two versions of the Jewish Scriptures: The Greek Septuagint and the Hebrew books
- According to tradition, the Bible was translated into Greek in Alexandria around the 200's BC

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Slide 42

Why does this new Catholic Bible have more books than my old Bible at home?

- The Septuagint, so called because 70 scholars translated it from Hebrew to Greek, was then brought back to Judah
- Any time you see LXX in Biblical commentary or comments, it is referring to the Septuagint (see Mat 17:4 in the NAB)
- The LXX included the Deutro-canonical books, those that later were rejected by Luther

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Slide 43

Why does this new Catholic Bible have more books than my old Bible at home?

- Jesus more than likely was aware of the LXX and perhaps even quoted from the deutro-canonical books
- From the Lord's prayer in Matthew-6:12, 14-15 "Forgive us our debts, as we forgive our debtors; if you forgive others their transgressions, your heavenly Father will forgive you. But if you do not forgive others, neither will your heavenly father forgive your transgressions"
- From Sirach 28:2 "Forgive your neighbor's injustice; then when you pray, your own sins will be forgiven."

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Slide 44

Why does this new Catholic Bible have more books than my old Bible at home?

- As Christianity and Judaism separated after 70 AD, the books of the Jewish Scriptures became one area of difference
- The Early Church almost universally accepted the LXX as their version of the Jewish Scriptures
- Jewish scholars and rabbis decided that since the LXX was in Greek and not Hebrew; it was not an inspired text, especially the Deutrocanonical books because they thought that they were written in Greek, not Hebrew

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Slide 45

Why does this new Catholic Bible have more books than my old Bible at home?

- Fast forward 1400 years to the Reformation
- Luther and other reformers know that these books are not included by Jews and perhaps is one reason why he left them out of his 1532 Old Testament, while two years later declaring them not equal to scripture, but good to read
- The Catholic response is to emphasize these books more following the Council of Trent 1545-60.

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Slide 46

Why does this new Catholic Bible have more books than my old Bible at home?

- However, most modern Protestant translations do place them as "apocrypha" in a section between the Jewish and Christian Scriptures
- Some of these books were found, in Hebrew, among the Dead Sea Scrolls
- It has also been suggested that 1 Maccabees was also written in Hebrew. Language scholars identified multiple Hebrew idioms translated into Greek

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Slide 47

Why does this new Catholic Bible have more books than my old Bible at home?

- It has always been the Catholic point of view that Jesus and those contemporary to Him knew them, used them in worship, and considered them as inspired texts. Thus, they are included in the Catholic Jewish Scriptures
- This view is shared by the Orthodox as well, who continue to use the actual LXX in their services

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Slide 48

**How Catholics Read the Bible**

- First we have to blow the dust off
- By now, I'm sure that you have heard about the Liturgy of the Word and the three year cycle
- By just going to Mass regular, you will hear most of the Gospels and a portion of the important parts of the rest of the Bible
- Since right before Vatican II; Catholics have been encouraged to read, pray, and discuss the Bible

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Slide 49

**How Catholics Read the Bible**

- Now a-days, most parish have multiple outlets for people to study the Bible, from almost college level courses, to directed study, to just groups of people deciding to read the Bible and trying to fit it into every day life
- We have multiple ones here at St. Francis

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Slide 50

**How Catholics Read the Bible**

- First, we accept the Bible as the *inspired* word of God
- “God is the author of Sacred Scripture because he inspired its human authors; he acts in them and by means of them. He thus gives assurance that their writings teach without error his saving truth” CCC 134 citing DV 11
- Catholics are not bible literalists, for example the Church does not teach that creation only took six days
- Catholics do not read the Bible as a science text, a history book, or biography, but as a book of faith

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Slide 51

**How Catholics Read the Bible**

- Second, we read the Bible with a sense of tradition and an awareness of the time the passages were written
- In scholar-speak, we call this the historical-critical method
- The historical-critical method- try to understand the world behind the text as the author was composing the work
- “In order to discover the sacred authors’ intention, the reader must take into account the conditions of their time and culture, the literary genres in use at that time, and the modes of feeling, speaking, and narrating then current” CCC 110

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Slide 52

**How Catholics Read the Bible**

- Third, we look at the Bible (specifically books within it) as a whole
- Scholar-speak we call this narrative criticism, that is trying to understand the work as a story
- For example, in John's gospel Jesus performs only seven miracles (signs) and they build up to the resurrection, why?
- More on this one under our next section

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Slide 53

**How Catholics Read the Bible**

- Fourth, and perhaps most important, is that we pray with the Bible
- Lectio divina-
  1. Read- slowly and several times
  2. Meditate-move towards meditating
  3. Pray- how did the text inspire you
  4. Contemplate- be in the presence of God

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Slide 54

**How Catholics Read the Bible**

- Prayer- Ignatian contemplation
  1. Beginning prayer- ask God to open your mind to the passage
  2. Read slowly, place yourself in the text, participate in the passage both active and passive
  3. Ending prayer- reflect on your experience and thank God for the time together

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Slide 55

**How Catholics Read the Bible**

- I do not want to convey that your Bible at home is not as worthy as a Catholic translation
- For some of you, it probably has a special place in your heart
- When I would write a paper in college, I would very often have three or four translations of the Bible in front of me: the NAB, the RSV, the NKJV, the Vulgate

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Slide 56

**Why don't Catholics rattle off Scripture quotes?**

- We read the text as a whole
- To take a singular verse takes it out of its context
- This context can be the verses around it, the stories around it, the book its from and possibly the entire Bible
- Remember the story of the temptation of Jesus? Even the devil can quote scripture but not have any understanding of its meaning

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Slide 57

**Why don't Catholics rattle off Scripture quotes?**

- We also believe that the Bible is a complex work of inspired text
- There is a 2000-3000 year history of the Bible
- This is where the other part of the deposit of faith enters: Tradition

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Slide 58

Why don't Catholics rattle off Scripture quotes?

- Hence there exists a close connection and communication between sacred tradition and Sacred Scripture. For both of them, flowing from the same divine wellspring, in a certain way merge into a unity and tend toward the same end. For Sacred Scripture is the word of God inasmuch as it is consigned to writing under the inspiration of the divine Spirit, while sacred tradition takes the word of God entrusted by Christ the Lord and the Holy Spirit to the Apostles, and hands it on to their successors in its full purity, so that led by the light of the Spirit of truth, they may in proclaiming it preserve this word of God faithfully, explain it, and make it more widely known. Consequently it is not from Sacred Scripture alone that the Church draws her certainty about everything which has been revealed. Therefore both sacred tradition and Sacred Scripture are to be accepted and venerated with the same sense of loyalty and reverence. Dei Verbum 9

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Slide 59



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Slide 60

Conclusion

- I AM the good shepherd. A good shepherd lays down his life for the sheep. Jn 10:11

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