

The Inspiration of Scripture (29th Sunday in Ordinary Time, Year C)

2 Timothy 3:14-4:2—The Inspiration of Scripture

¹⁴ But as for you, continue in what you have learned and have firmly believed, knowing from whom you learned it ¹⁵ and how *from childhood you have been acquainted with the sacred writings which are able to instruct you for salvation through faith in Christ Jesus.* ¹⁶ *All scripture is inspired by God and profitable for teaching, for reproof, for correction, and for training in righteousness,* ¹⁷ *that the man of God may be complete, equipped for every good work.* (2 Tim 3:14-4:2)

1. Jewish Scriptures: the “sacred writings” (Greek *ta hiera grammata*) (3:15)

*For we have not an innumerable multitude of books among us, disagreeing and contradicting one another, but only twenty-two books, which contain the records of past times; which are justly believed to be divine... [Lists book of Jewish Scripture] [N]o one has been so bold as either to add anything to them, or take anything from them, or to make any change in them; but it becomes natural to all Jews, immediately and from their very birth, to esteem those books to contain divine doctrines, and to persist in them, and, if occasion be, willingly to die for them. (Josephus, *Against Apion* 1.38, 41-42; trans. W. Whiston)*

2. Scripture: all “scripture” (Gk *graphē*) is “inspired by God” (Gk *theopneustos*) (3:16)

3. Profitable: is “profitable” or “useful” for the following (3:16)

- a. Teaching: “teaching”
- b. Admonishment: for “reproof” or “rebuke”
- c. Correction: for “correction” or “improvement”
- d. Pedagogy of Holiness: for “training” (Greek *paideia*) in righteousness

4. Equipment: “complete” and “equipped” for good works (3:17)

Living Tradition

Vatican II: The divinely revealed realities, which are contained and presented in the text of sacred Scripture, have been written down under *the inspiration of the Holy Spirit*. For Holy Mother Church relying on the faith of the apostolic age, accepts as sacred and canonical the books of the Old and the New Testaments, whole and entire, with all their parts, on the grounds that, written under the *inspiration of the Holy Spirit* (cf. Jn. 20:31; 2 Tim. 3:16; 2 Pet. 1:19–21; 3:15–16), *they have God as their author*, and have been handed on as such to the Church herself...

Since, therefore, all that the inspired authors, or sacred writers, affirm should be regarded as affirmed by the Holy Spirit, we must acknowledge that the books of Scripture, firmly, faithfully and without error, teach that truth which God, for the sake of our salvation, wished to see confided to the sacred Scriptures. Thus “all Scripture is

*inspired by God, and profitable for teaching, for reproof, for correction and for training in righteousness, so that the man of God may be complete, equipped for every good work” (2 Tim. 3:16–17, Gk. text).” (Dogmatic Constitution on Divine Revelation, *Dei Verbum* 11; trans. A. Flannery)*

Questions for Discussion and Reflection (29th Sunday in Ordinary Time, Year C)

1. What does Paul mean when he says that all Scripture is “inspired” or “God-breathed” (Greek *theopneustos*) (2 Tim 3:16)? How does the Church interpret this statement?

For Further Reading

1. George T. Montague, S.M. *First and Second Timothy, Titus*. Grand Rapids, Mich.: Baker Academic, 2008.
2. Peter Gorday, *Colossians, 1-2 Thessalonians, 1-2 Timothy, Titus, Philemon*. Downers Grove, Ill.: IVP, 2000.
3. Austin Flannery, ed. *Vatican Council II: The Conciliar and Post-Conciliar Documents* (Northport, N.Y.: Costello, 1992).