

Write the Traditions in Your Hearts (32nd Sunday in Ordinary Time, Year C)

2 Thessalonians 2:16-3:5—The Lord is Faithful

[¹⁵ So then, brethren, *stand firm and hold to the traditions which you were taught by us, either by word of mouth or by letter.*] ¹⁶ Now may our Lord Jesus Christ himself, and God our Father, who loved us and gave us eternal comfort and good hope through grace, ¹⁷ *comfort your hearts and establish them in every good work and word.* ¹ Finally, brethren, pray for us, that the word of the Lord may speed on and triumph, as it did among you, ² and that we may be delivered from wicked and evil men; for not all have faith. ³ *But the Lord is faithful; he will strengthen you and guard you from evil.* ⁴ And we have confidence in the Lord about you, that you are doing and will do the things which we command. ⁵ *May the Lord direct your hearts to the love of God and to the steadfastness of Christ.* (2 Thess 2:16-3:5)

1. Traditions: “traditions” (Greek *paradosis*) (2:15)
 - a. Oral: by “word of mouth”
 - b. Written: by “letter”
2. Comfort: may the Lord “comfort your hearts” (2:17)
3. Good Works: for “every good work” (2:17)
4. Fidelity: “the Lord is faithful” (3:3)
5. Spiritual Protection: he will “guard you from evil” (3:3)
6. Love: “the love of God” (3:5)
7. Endurance: and the “steadfastness of Christ” (3:5)

Living Tradition:

Basil the Great: *I hold it apostolic to abide also by the unwritten traditions.* “I praise you,” it is said, “that you remember me in all things and keep the ordinances as I delivered them to you” [1 Cor 11:2], and “Hold fast the traditions which you have been taught whether by word or by our epistle” [2 Thess 2:15]. (Basil the Great, *On the Holy Spirit* 29.17; trans. NPNF)

Cyril of Jerusalem: In learning and professing the faith, embrace and guard that only which is now delivered to you by the church and confirmed by all the Scriptures. *For since not everyone has the education and leisure required to read and know the Scriptures, to prevent the soul from perishing from ignorance, we sum up the whole doctrine of the faith in a few lines...* For the present, just listen and memorize the creed as I recite it, and you will receive in due course the testimony from Scripture of each of its propositions. For the articles of faith have not been composed to please human desire, but the most important points collected from the Scriptures make up one complete teaching of the faith. *And just as the mustard seen in a small grain contains in embryo many future branches, so also the creed embraces in a few words all the religious knowledge in both*

*the Old and New Testament. Pay attention, therefore, brothers, and cling to the teachings which are now delivered to you, and “write them on the tablet of your heart” [Prov 7:3]. (Cyril of Jerusalem, *Catechetical Lectures* 5.12; trans. in P. Gorday, p. 113)*

Questions for Discussion and Reflection (32nd Sunday in Ordinary Time, Year C)

1. What are some “unwritten traditions” that St. Paul might be referring to (2 Thess 2:15)? And how can tradition encourage us to do “good works” and help us to practice the “steadfastness of Christ” (2 Thess 2:17; 3:5)?

For Further Reading

1. Nathan Eubank. *First and Second Thessalonians*. Catholic Commentary on Sacred Scripture. Grand Rapids, Mich.: Baker Academic, 2019.
2. Peter Gorday, *Colossians, 1-2 Thessalonians, 1-2 Timothy, Titus, Philemon*. Downers Grove, Ill.: IVP, 2000.