

Item #89 (Scripture and Tradition)

It is of essential importance in any website dedicated to a Catholic view of Holy Scripture to be reminded of the importance of the context that Scripture enjoys in the Catholic Church. The Gospel taught and lived by Jesus Christ was continued by apostolic preaching and apostolic tradition. *The Catechism of the Catholic Church*, Nos. 77-78-79 says: 77. *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 “teaching authority”. Indeed, the apostolic preaching, which is expressed in a special way in the inspired books, was to be preserved in a continuous line of succession until the end of time.* 78. *This living transmission, accomplished in the Holy Spirit, is called Tradition, since it is distinct from Sacred Scripture, though closely connected with it. Through Tradition, the Church, in her doctrine, life, and worship perpetuates and transmits to every generation all that she herself is, all that she believes. The sayings of the Holy Fathers are a witness to the life-giving presence of this Tradition, showing how its riches are poured out in the practice and life of the Church, in her belief and in her prayer.* 79. *The Father’s self-communication made through his Word in the Holy Spirit remains present and active in the Church. God, who spoke in the past, continues to converse with the Spouse of his beloved Son. And the Holy Spirit, through whom the living voice of the Gospel rings out in the Church--and through her to the world--leads believers to the full truth, and makes the Word of Christ dwell in them in all its richness.*

The relationship between Tradition and Sacred Scripture can be expressed as follows (*The Catechism of the Catholic Church* continues): 80. *Sacred Tradition and Sacred Scripture, then, are bound closely together and communicate one with the other. For both of them, flowing out from the same divine well-spring, come together in some fashion to form one thing and move towards the same goal. Each of them makes present and fruitful in the Church the mystery of Christ, who promised to remain with his own “always to the close of the age”.* 81. *Sacred Scripture is the speech of God as it is put down in writing under the breath of the Holy Spirit. And Holy Tradition transmits in its entirety the Word of God which has been entrusted to the apostles by Christ the Lord and the Holy Spirit. It transmits to the successors of the apostles so that, enlightened by the Spirit of truth, they may faithfully preserve, expound, and spread it abroad by their preaching.* 82. *As a result the Church, to whom the transmission and interpretation of Revelation is entrusted, does not derive her certainty about all revealed truths from the Holy Scriptures alone. Both Scripture and Tradition must be accepted and honored with equal sentiments of devotion and reverence.*

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Scripture itself gives witness to the existence of Tradition handed on by apostolic witness: “I commend you because you remember me in everything and maintain the traditions even as I have delivered them to you” (St. Paul in 1 Corinthians 11,2).

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