

TRADITION & TRADITIONS



DIVINELY INSPIRED FOR TEACHING TRUTH AND REFUTING ERROR A Catena of Catholic Sources

~: Pope St. Clement of Rome (80) ~:

Brethren, be contentious and zealous for the things which lead to salvation! You have studied the Holy Scriptures, which are true and are of the Holy Spirit. You well know that nothing unjust or fraudulent is written in them.

Letter to the Corinthians, 45, 1–3
(PG 1:300–302; ANF 1:17)¹

~: St. Justin Martyr (155) ~:

If you spoke these words, Trypho . . . because you imagined that you could throw doubt on the passage, in order that I might say that the Scriptures contradicted each other, you have erred. I will not have the effrontery at any time either to suppose or to

¹ The following abbreviations are used: AAS = *Acta Apostolicae Sedis* [Official Acts of the Holy See]; available online: http://www.vatican.va/archive/aas/index_sp.htm. ACW = *Ancient Christian Writers: The Works of the Fathers in Translation* (Mahwah, NJ: Paulist, 1946–); ANF = *Ante-Nicene Fathers*, 10 vols., ed. Alexander Roberts and James Donaldson (Peabody, MA: Hendrickson, 2004 [reprint]); CCL = *Corpus Christianorum: Series Latina* (Turnhout: Brepols, 1953–); CSEL = *Corpus Scriptorum Ecclesiasticorum Latinorum* (Vienna, Prague, and Leipzig: Tempsky, 1865–); DS = Heinrich Denzinger, ed., *Enchiridion symbolorum definitonum et declarationum de rebus fidei et morum* [Handbook of Creeds, Definitions and Declarations concerning Matters of Faith and Morals] (Freiberg: Herder, 1911); Eng.: *The Sources of Catholic Dogma* (Fitzwilliam, NH: Loreto, 2002). EB = *Enchiridion Biblicum: Documenti della Chiesa sulla Sacra Scrittura* [Documents of the Church Concerning Sacred Scripture], ed. Alfio Filippi and Erminio Lora, 2nd ed. (Bologna: Dehoniane, 1993); GCS = *Die Griechischen Christlichen Schriftsteller der Ersten Drei Jahrhunderte* [The Greek Christian Scriptures of the First Three Centuries] (Leipzig: Hinrichs, 1897–); NPNF1 = *A Select Library of Nicene and Post-Nicene Fathers of the Christian Church*, 1st series, 14 vols., ed. Philip Schaff (Peabody, MA: Hendrickson, 1994 [reprint]); NPNF2 = *A Select Library of Nicene and Post-Nicene Fathers of the Christian Church*, 2nd series, 14 vols., ed. Philip Schaff (Peabody, MA: Hendrickson, 1994 [reprint]); PG = *Patrologiae Cursus Completus: Series Graeca*, ed. J. P. Migne, 161 vols. (Paris: Garnier and J. P. Migne, 1857–1866); PL = *Patrologiae Cursus Completus: Series Latina*, ed. J. P. Migne, 221 vols. (Paris: Garnier and J. P. Migne, 1844–1864); SD = *The Scripture Documents: An Anthology of Official Catholic Teachings*, ed. Dean P. Béchard, S.J. (Collegeville, MN: Liturgical Press, 2002).

say such a thing. If a Scripture which appears to be of such a kind be brought forward, and there be a pretext for regarding it as contradictory, since I am totally convinced that no Scripture is contradictory to another, I shall admit instead that I do not understand what is spoken of, and shall strive to persuade those who assume that the Scriptures are contradictory to be rather of the same opinion as myself.

Dialogue with Trypho, chap. 65
(PG 6:625–628; ANF 1:230)

~: St. Justin Martyr (260) ~:

Neither by nature nor by human reasoning is it possible for men to know things so great and so divine; but such knowledge can be had only as a gift, which in this case descended from above upon the holy men, who had no need of the art of words, nor of saying anything in a quarrelsome or contentious manner, but only of presenting themselves in a pure manner to the operation of the divine Spirit, so that the divine Plectrum himself, descending from heaven and using righteous men as an instrument like a harp or lyre, might reveal to us the knowledge of things divine and heavenly.

Exhortation to the Greeks, chap. 8
(PG 6:255–258; ANF 1:276)

~: St. Irenaeus of Lyon (190) ~:

If however we are not able to find explanations for all those passages of Scripture which are investigated, we ought not on that account seek for another God besides him who exists. This would indeed be the greatest impiety. Things of that kind we must leave to God, the one who made us, knowing full well that the Scriptures are certainly perfect, since they were spoken by the Word of God and by his Spirit.

Against the Heresies, bk. 2, chap. 28, 2
(PG 7:804–805; ANF 1:399)

~: St. Hippolytus of Rome (204) ~:

Neither does Scripture falsify anything, nor does the Holy Spirit deceive his servants, the prophets, through whom he is pleased to announce to men the will of God.

Commentary on Daniel, 4, 6
(PG 10:641–700; GCS, vol. 1, pt. 1, 1–340)

~: St. Hippolytus of Rome (230) ~:

But that those who use the arts of unbelievers for their heretical opinions and adulterate the simple faith of the divine Scriptures by the craft of the godless, are far from the faith, what need is there to say? They have not feared to lay hands upon the sacred Scriptures, saying that they have corrected them. . . . Nor is it likely that they themselves are ignorant of how very bold their offense is. For either they do not believe that the sacred Scriptures were spoken by the Holy Spirit, in which case they are unbelievers; or, if they regard themselves as being wiser than the Holy Spirit, what else are they but demoniacs?

Against the Heresy of Artemon,
In Eusebius, *History of the Church*, bk. 5, chap. 28, 15
(GCS, vol. 9, pt. 1; NPNF2 1:248)

~: Origen (230) ~:

I do not condemn [the Gospel writers] if, to serve the mystical aims they had in view, they have in some way rearranged actual historical events in an order other than that in which they occurred, so as to tell of what happened in one place as if it had happened in another, or of what happened at a certain time as if it had happened at another time, and to introduce into what was said in a certain way some variations of their own. For they proposed to speak the truth where it was possible both spiritually and materially and, where this was not possible, it was their intention to prefer the spiritual to the material. The spiritual truth was often preserved in what some might say the material falsehood.

Commentary on John, bk. 10, 4
(PG 14:314–315; ANF 9:383)

~: Origen (244) ~:

With complete and utter precision the Holy Spirit supplied the very [words of Scripture] through his subordinate authors, so that you might ever bear in mind the weighty circumstance of their writing, according to which the wisdom of God pervades every divinely inspired writing, reaching out to each single letter. Perhaps it was on account of this that the Savior said: "Not one iota nor even a serif thereof shall be lost from the Law until all is accomplished" (Matt. 5:18).

Commentary on the Psalms, Ps. 1, 4
(PG 12:1081–1082)

~: St. Cyril of Jerusalem (350) ~:

For concerning the divine and holy mysteries of the faith, not the least part may be handed on without the holy Scriptures. Do not be led astray by mere plausibility and artifices of speech. . . . The salvation in which we believe is proved not from clever reasoning but from the holy Scriptures.

Catechetical Lectures, Lect. 4, 17
(PG 33:331–1128)

~: St. Gregory of Nazianzen (362) ~:

We who extend the accuracy of the Spirit to the merest stroke and serif [of Scripture], will never admit the impious assertion that even the smallest matters were dealt with in a careless and hasty manner by those who have recorded them.

In Defense of his Flight to Pontus After his Ordination, Orat. 2, 105 (PG 35:503–506; NPNF2 7:225)

~: St. Epiphanius of Salamis (377) ~:

And it is impossible, especially for a human nature, to see God. It is not allowed the visible to see the invisible. But the invisible God, in his love of mankind and strengthening the powerless with power, will bring about by his own power a way that it may see both the invisible and the infinite, not as the infinite is, but accordingly as our nature has been enabled to do so, and to the extent of the power in which the powerless have been

empowered. And nothing of discrepancy will be found in sacred Scripture, nor will there be found any statement in opposition to any other statement.

Panacea Against All Heresies, Her. 70, 7
(PG 42:349–352)

~: St. Augustine of Hippo (400) ~:

If we are perplexed by an apparent contradiction in Scripture, it is not allowable to say, “The author of this book is mistaken.” Rather, either the manuscript is faulty or the translation is wrong, or you have not understood it. . . . But in consequence of the distinctive peculiarity of the sacred writings, we are bound to receive as true whatever the canon shows to have been said by even one prophet or apostle or evangelist. Otherwise not a single page will be left for the guidance of human fallibility, if contempt for the wholesome authority of the canonical books either puts an end to that authority altogether or involves it in hopeless confusion.

Against Faustus the Manichean, bk. 11, 5
(PL 42:249; NPNF1 4:180)

~: St. Augustine of Hippo (400) ~:

These things are true; they are faithfully and truthfully written of Christ, so that whosoever believes his Gospel may be thereby instructed in the truth and misled by no lie.

Against Faustus the Manichean, bk. 26, 8
(PL 42:484; NPNF1 4:324)

~: St. Augustine of Hippo (400) ~:

It is reasonable enough to suppose that each of the evangelists believed it to have been his duty to proceed with his narrative in the same order in which God had willed to suggest to his recollection the matters he was engaged in recording. At least this might hold good in the case of those incidents with regard

to which the question of order, whether it were this or that, detracted nothing from the authority and truth of the Gospel.

The Harmony of the Gospels, bk. 2, chap. 21
(PL 34:1102; NPNF1 6:127)

~ St. Augustine of Hippo (405) ~

I have learned to hold those books alone of the Scriptures that are now called canonical in such reverence and honor that I do most firmly believe that none of their authors has erred in anything that he has written therein. If I find anything in those writings which seems to be contrary to the truth, I presume that either the codex is inaccurate, or the translator has not followed what was said, or I have not properly understood it. . . . I think that you, dear brother, must feel the same way. And I say, moreover, that I do not think you would want your books to be read as if they were the books of prophets and apostles, about whose writings, free of all error, it is not lawful to doubt.

Letter 82, chap. 1, 3 [to St. Jerome]
(PL 33:277; NPNF1 1:350)

~ St. Augustine of Hippo (415) ~

There is a danger that a man uninstructed in divine revelation, discovering something in Scripture or hearing from it something that seems to be at variance with the knowledge he has acquired, may resolutely withhold his assent in other matters where Scripture presents useful admonitions, narratives or declarations. Hence, I must say briefly that in the matter of the shape of heaven the sacred writers knew the truth, but that the Spirit of God, who spoke through them, did not wish to teach men these facts that would be of no avail for their salvation.

On the Literal Meaning of Genesis, bk. 2, chap. 9, 20
(PL 34:270–271; ACW 41:59)

~ St. Jerome (386–415) ~

The Lord's words are true; for him to say it means that it is.

Commentary on Micah 4:1
(PG 25:1188B)

The apostles are one thing, while profane writers are another; the former always tell the truth but the latter, as being mere men, sometimes err.

Letter 82, 7 [to Theophilus]
(PL 22:740; CSEL 55:114; NPNF2 6:173)

Scripture cannot lie.

Commentary on Jeremiah 6:27
(PL 24:729; CSEL 59:407)

~: St. Thomas Aquinas (1256–1259) ~:

It is unlawful to hold that any false assertion is contained either in the Gospel or in any canonical Scripture, or that the writers thereof have told untruths, because faith would be deprived of its certitude which is based on the authority of Holy Writ.

Summa Theologiae, pt. 2a–2ae, q. 110, art. 3, reply obj. 1²

~: St. Thomas Aquinas (1256–1259) ~:

We believe the prophets only in so far as they are inspired by the spirit of prophecy. But we have to give belief to those things written in the books of the prophets even though they treat of conclusions of scientific knowledge, as in Psalms (Ps. 136:5): “Who established the earth above the waters,” and whatever else there is of this sort. Therefore, the spirit of prophecy inspires the prophets even about conclusions of the sciences. . . .

In all things which exist for the sake of an end the matter is determined according to the exigency of the end. . . . But the gift of prophecy is given for the use of the Church, as is clear in the first Epistle to the Corinthians (1 Cor. 12:7): “And the manifestation of the Spirit is given to every man unto profit.” The letter adds many examples among which prophecy is numbered. Therefore, all those things the knowledge of which can be useful for salvation are the matter of prophecy, whether they are past, or future, or even eternal, or necessary, or contingent. But those things which cannot pertain to salvation are outside the matter of prophecy. Hence, Augustine says: “Although our

2 Thomas Aquinas, *Summa Theologica*, 3 vols. (New York: Benziger Brothers, 1947), 2:1666.

authors knew what shape heaven is, [the Spirit] wants to speak through them only that which is useful for salvation." . . .

Moreover, I say necessary for salvation, whether they are necessary for instruction in the faith or for the formation of morals. But many things which are proved in the sciences can be useful for this, as, for instance, that our understanding is incorruptible, and also those things which when considered in creatures lead to admiration of the divine wisdom and power. Hence, we find that mention of these is made in Holy Scripture.

Disputed Questions On Truth, q. 12, art. 2, contra., resp.³

~: Pope John XXII (1323) ~:

Since among not a few scholarly men it often happens that there is called into doubt, whether to affirm pertinaciously, that our Redeemer and Lord Jesus Christ and his apostles did not have anything individually, nor even in common, is to be censured as heretical, diverse and opposite things being opined concerning it, We, desiring to put an end to this contest, after [having taken] the counsel of our brothers [the cardinals] by this perpetual edict do declare that a pertinacious assertion of this kind, when sacred scriptures, which assert in very many places that they had not a few things, expressly contradict it, and when it supposes openly that the same sacred Scripture, through which certainly the articles of orthodox faith are proven in regards to the afore-said things, contains the ferment of falsehood, and consequently, as much as regards these things, emptying all faith in them, it renders the Catholic faith doubtful and uncertain, taking away its demonstration, is respectively to be censured erroneous and heretical.

Quum Inter Nonnullos,

Dogmatic Definition on the Poverty of Christ and the Apostles
(November 13, 1323) (EB 44)

~: Pope Clement VI (1351) ~:

[To determine whether you are obedient to the true faith of the Church] We ask: . . . In the fourteenth place, if you have

3 Thomas Aquinas, *The Disputed Questions on Truth*, 3 vols. (Chicago: Regnery, 1952–1954), 2:110–112.

believed and now believe that the New and Old Testaments in all their books, which the authority of the Roman Church has given to us, contain undoubted truth in all things, without the possibility of error.

Errors of the Armenians (September 29, 1351) (EB 46)

~: Council of Florence (1442) ~:

It [the Council] professes that one and the same God is the author of the old and the new Testaments—that is, the law and the prophets, and the Gospel—since the saints of both testaments spoke under the inspiration of the same Spirit. It accepts and venerates their books.

Session 11, Bull of Union with the Copts
(February 4, 1442) (EB 47)

~: Council of Trent (1546) ~:

The sacred and holy, ecumenical and general Council of Trent . . . has always this purpose in mind: that errors being removed, the purity itself of the Gospel be preserved in the Church. This Gospel was promised of old through the prophets in the sacred Scriptures; our Lord Jesus Christ, the Son of God, first promulgated it from his own lips; he in turn ordered that it be preached through the apostles to all creatures as the source of all saving truth and rule of conduct.

The Council clearly perceives that this truth and rule are contained in the written books and unwritten traditions which have come down to us, having been received by the apostles from the mouth of Christ himself or from the apostles by the dictation of the Holy Spirit, and have been transmitted as it were from hand to hand.

Following then the example of the orthodox Fathers, [the Council] receives and venerates with the same sense of loyalty and reverence all the books of the Old and New Testaments—for the one God is the author of both—together with all the traditions concerning faith and practice, as coming from the mouth

of Christ or being inspired by the Holy Spirit and preserved in continuous succession in the Catholic Church.

First Decree: Acceptance of the Canonical Scriptures and Apostolic Traditions (April 8, 1546) (EB 57; SD, 3–4)

~: First Vatican Council (1870) ~:

Now this supernatural revelation, according to the belief of the universal Church, as declared by the sacred Council of Trent, “is contained in written books and unwritten traditions, which were received by the apostles from the lips of Christ himself, or came to the apostles by the dictation of the Holy Spirit, and were passed on as it were from hand to hand until they reached us.”

The complete books of the Old and the New Testament with all their parts, as they are listed in the decree of the said Council and as they are found in the old Latin Vulgate edition, are to be received as sacred and canonical. These books the Church holds to be sacred and canonical not because she subsequently approved them by her authority after they had been composed by unaided human skill, nor simply because they contain revelation without error, but because, being written under the inspiration of the Holy Spirit, they have God as their author, and were as such committed to the Church.

Dei Filius [The Son of God],
Dogmatic Constitution on the Catholic Faith, chap. 2, 5–7
(EB 77; SD, 16–17)

~: Pope Leo XIII (1893) ~:

But it is absolutely wrong and forbidden, either to narrow inspiration to certain parts only of holy Scripture, or to admit that the sacred writer has erred. For the system of those who, in order to rid themselves of these difficulties, do not hesitate to concede that divine inspiration regards the things of faith and morals, and nothing beyond, because (as they wrongly think) in a question of the truth or falsehood of a passage we should consider not so much what God has said as the reason and purpose which he had in mind in saying it—this system cannot be tolerated.

For all the books which the Church receives as sacred and canonical are written wholly and entirely, with all their parts, at the dictation of the Holy Spirit; and so far is it from being possible that any error can co-exist with inspiration, that inspiration not only is essentially incompatible with error, but excludes and rejects it as absolutely and necessarily as it is impossible that God himself, the supreme Truth, can utter that which is not true.

This is the ancient and unchanging faith of the Church, solemnly defined in the Councils of Florence and of Trent, and finally confirmed and more expressly formulated by the Council of the Vatican. . . .

Hence, because the Holy Spirit employed men as his instruments, we cannot therefore say that it was these inspired instruments who, perchance, have fallen into error, and not the primary author. For, by supernatural power, he so moved and impelled them to write—he was so present to them—that the things which he ordered, and those only, they, first, rightly understood, then willed faithfully to write down, and finally expressed in apt words and with infallible truth. Otherwise, it could not be said that he was the author of the entire Scripture. Such has always been the persuasion of the Fathers. “Therefore,” says St. Augustine, “since they wrote the things which he showed and uttered to them, it cannot be pretended that he is not the writer; for his members executed what their head dictated.”⁴ And St. Gregory the Great thus pronounces: “Most superfluous it is to inquire who wrote these things—we loyally believe the Holy Spirit to be the author of the book. He wrote it who dictated it for writing; he wrote it who inspired its execution.”⁵

It follows that those who maintain that an error is possible in any genuine passage of the sacred writings, either pervert the Catholic notion of inspiration, or make God the author of such error. And so emphatically were all the Fathers and Doctors [of the Church] agreed that the divine writings, as left by the hagiographers, are free from all error, that they labored earnestly, with no less skill than reverence, to reconcile with each other those numerous passages which seem at variance—the very passages

4 Augustine, *The Harmony of the Gospels*, bk. 1, chap. 35 (CSEL 43:60; NPNF1 6:100–101).

5 Gregory the Great, *Morals on the Book of Job*, pref. 1, 2 (CCL 143:8).

which in great measure have been taken up by the “higher criticism”—for they were unanimous in laying it down, that those writings, in their entirety and in all their parts were equally from the afflatus of Almighty God, and that God, speaking by the sacred writers, could not set down anything but what was true.

Providentissimus Deus [The God of All Providence],
 Encyclical Letter on the Study of Scripture
 (November 18, 1893), 21–22 (*SD*, 55–56)

≈ Pope Benedict XV (1920) ≈

No one can pretend that certain recent writers really adhere to these limitations [on the “the absolute immunity of Scripture from error”]. For while conceding that inspiration extends to every phrase—and, indeed, to every single word of Scripture—yet, by endeavoring to distinguish between what they style the primary or religious and the secondary or profane element in the Bible, they claim that the effect of inspiration—namely, absolute truth and immunity from error—are to be restricted to that primary or religious element. Their notion is that only what concerns religion is intended and taught by God in Scripture, and that all the rest—things concerning “profane knowledge,” the garments in which divine truth is presented—God merely permits, and even leaves to the individual author’s greater or less knowledge.

Small wonder, then, that in their view a considerable number of things occur in the Bible touching physical science, history and the like, which cannot be reconciled with modern progress in science!

Some even maintain that these views do not conflict with what our predecessor [Pope Leo XIII] laid down since, so they claim, he said that the sacred writers spoke in accordance with the external, and thus deceptive, appearance of things in nature. But the Pontiff’s own words show that this is a rash and false deduction. For sound philosophy teaches that the senses can never be deceived as regards their own proper and immediate object. Therefore, from the merely external appearance of things—of which, of course, we have always to take account as Leo XIII, following in the footsteps of St. Augustine and St. Thomas,

most wisely remarks—we can never conclude that there is any error in Sacred Scripture. . . .

Those, too, who hold that the historical portions of Scripture do not rest on the absolute truth of the facts but merely upon what they are pleased to term their relative truth, namely, what people then commonly thought, are—no less than are the aforementioned critics—out of harmony with the Church’s teaching, which is endorsed by the testimony of St. Jerome and other Fathers.

Yet they are not afraid to deduce such views from the words of Leo XIII on the ground that he allowed that the principles he had laid down touching the things of nature could be applied to historical things as well. Hence they maintain that precisely as the sacred writers spoke of physical things according to appearance, so, too, while ignorant of the facts, they narrated them in accordance with general opinion or even on baseless evidence; neither do they tell us the sources whence they derived their knowledge, nor do they make other peoples’ narrative their own. Such views are clearly false, and constitute a calumny on our predecessor. After all, what analogy is there between physics and history? For whereas physics is concerned with “sensible appearances” and must consequently square with phenomena, history on the contrary, must square with the facts, since history is the written account of events as they actually occurred. If we were to accept such views, how could we maintain the truth insisted on throughout Leo XIII’s encyclical—namely, that the sacred narrative is absolutely free from error?

Spiritus Paraclitus [The Holy Spirit, the Comforter],
Encyclical Letter Commemorating the Fifteenth Centenary
of the Death of St. Jerome
(September 15, 1920), 19–22 (*SD*, 88–89)

~: Pope Pius XII (1943) ~:

The first and greatest care of Leo XIII was to set forth the teaching on the truth of the sacred Books and to defend it from attack.⁶ Hence with grave words did he proclaim that there

6 Pope Leo XIII, *Providentissimus Deus* [The God of All Providence], Encyclical Letter on the Study of Scripture (November 18, 1893), 21–22 (*SD*, 55–56).

is no error whatsoever if the sacred writer, speaking of things of the physical order “went by what sensibly appeared” as the Angelic Doctor says,⁷ speaking either “in figurative language, or in terms which were commonly used at the time, and which in many instances are in daily use at this day, even among the most eminent men of science.” For “the sacred writers, or to speak more accurately—the words are St. Augustine’s⁸—‘the Holy Spirit, who spoke by them, did not intend to teach men these things (that is to say, the essential nature of the things of the universe), things in no way profitable to salvation.’”

This principle “will apply to cognate sciences, and especially to history,” that is, by refuting, “in a somewhat similar way the fallacies of the adversaries and defending the historical truth of sacred Scripture from their attacks.” Nor is the sacred writer to be taxed with error, if “copyists have made mistakes in the text of the Bible” or “if the real meaning of a passage remains ambiguous.”

Finally it is absolutely wrong and forbidden “either to narrow inspiration to certain passages of holy Scripture, or to admit that the sacred writer has erred,” since divine inspiration “not only is essentially incompatible with error but excludes and rejects it as absolutely and necessarily as it is impossible that God himself, the supreme Truth, can utter that which is not true. This is the ancient and constant faith of the Church.”

This teaching, which our predecessor Leo XIII set forth with such solemnity, we also proclaim with our authority and we urge all to adhere to it religiously.

Divino Afflante Spiritu [Inspired by the Divine Spirit],
Encyclical Letter Promoting Biblical Studies
(September 30, 1943), 3–4 (SD, 116–117)

~ Pope Pius XII (1950) ~

For some go so far as to pervert the sense of the [First] Vatican Council’s definition that God is the author of holy Scripture, and they put forward again the opinion, already often condemned, which asserts that immunity from error extends only

7 Aquinas, *Summa Theologiae*, pt. 1a, q. 70, reply obj. 3.

8 Augustine, *On The Literal Meaning of Genesis*, bk. 2, chap. 9, 20 (PL 34:270–271; ACW 41:59).

to those parts of the Bible that treat of God or of moral and religious matters. They even wrongly speak of a human sense of the Scriptures, beneath which a divine sense, which they say is the only infallible meaning, lies hidden. In interpreting Scripture, they will take no account of the analogy of faith and the Tradition of the Church. Thus they judge the doctrine of the Fathers and of the teaching Church by the norm of holy Scripture, interpreted by the purely human reason of exegetes, instead of explaining holy Scripture according to the mind of the Church which Christ our Lord has appointed guardian and interpreter of the whole deposit of divinely revealed truth.

Humani Generis [The Human Race],
Encyclical Letter on Certain False Opinions Threatening to
Undermine the Foundations of Catholic Doctrine
(August 12, 1950), 22 (SD, 141)

~: Second Vatican Council (1965) ~:

Those divinely revealed realities which are contained and presented in Sacred Scripture have been committed to writing under the inspiration of the Holy Spirit. For holy mother Church, relying on the belief of the apostles,⁹ holds that the books of both the Old and New Testaments in their entirety, with all their parts, are sacred and canonical because written under the inspiration of the Holy Spirit, they have God as their author and have been handed on as such to the Church herself.¹⁰

In composing the sacred books, God chose men and while employed by him¹¹ they made use of their powers and abilities, so that with him acting in them and through them,¹² they, as true

⁹ See John 20:31; 2 Tim. 3:16; 2 Pet. 1:19–20; 3:15–16.

¹⁰ First Vatican Council, *Dei Filius* [The Son of God], Dogmatic Constitution on the Catholic Faith, chap. 2 (EB 77); Pontifical Biblical Commission, *On the Parousia or the Second Coming of Our Lord in the Letters of St. Paul the Apostle* (June 18, 1915) (EB 420; SD, 207–208); Sacred Congregation of the Holy Office, *Letter Iam pluribus* (December 22, 1923) (EB 499).

¹¹ Pope Pius XII, *Divino Afflante Spiritu* [Inspired by the Divine Spirit], Encyclical Letter Promoting Biblical Studies (September 30, 1943) (EB 556).

¹² For references in the Latin Vulgate edition to God acting “in” (*in*) or “through” (*per*) human agents, see 2 Kings [Samuel] 23:3; Matt. 1:22; Heb. 1:1; 4:7; see also First Vatican Council, Schema on Catholic Doctrine, note 9, in Gerhard Schneemann and Theodore Grandérath, eds., *Acta et decreta Sacrorum Conciliorum recentiorum Collectio Lacensis* [Collection of the Acts and Decrees of Recent Sacred Councils], 7 vols. (Freiburg: Herder, 1870–1892), 7:522.

authors, consigned to writing everything and only those things which he wanted.¹³

Therefore, since everything asserted by the inspired authors or sacred writers must be held to be asserted by the Holy Spirit, it follows that the books of Scripture must be acknowledged as teaching firmly, faithfully, and without error that truth which God wanted put into sacred writings¹⁴ for the sake of salvation. Therefore “all Scripture is divinely inspired and has its use for teaching the truth and refuting error, for reformation of manners and discipline in right living, so that the man who belongs to God may be efficient and equipped for good work of every kind.”¹⁵

Dei Verbum [The Word of God],
Dogmatic Constitution on Divine Revelation
(November 18, 1965), 11 (SD, 24)

≈ Vatican Congregation for the Doctrine of the Faith (1998) ≈

The first paragraph [of the Profession of Faith¹⁶] states: “With firm faith, I also believe everything contained in the Word of God, whether written or handed down in Tradition, which the Church, either by a solemn judgment or by the ordinary and universal magisterium, sets forth to be believed as divinely revealed.” The object taught in this paragraph is constituted by all those doctrines of divine and catholic faith which the Church proposes as divinely and formally revealed and, as such, as ir-reformable.¹⁷

These doctrines are contained in the Word of God, written or handed down, and defined with a solemn judgment as divinely revealed truths either by the Roman Pontiff when he speaks “ex cathedra,” or

13 Pope Leo XIII, *Providentissimus Deus* [The God of All Providence], Encyclical Letter on the Study of Scripture (November 18, 1893); EB 125.

14 Compare Augustine, *On the Literal Meaning of Genesis*, bk. 2, chap. 9, 20 (PL 34:270–271; ACW 41:59); Augustine, *Letter* 82, 3 (PL 33:277; CSEL 34:2; NPNF1 1:350); St. Thomas Aquinas, *On Truth*, q. 12 art. 2, contra.; Council of Trent, Decree Concerning the Canonical Scriptures; Leo XIII, *Providentissimus Deus* (EB 121, 124, 126–127); Pius XII, *Divino Afflante Spiritu* (EB 539).

15 2 Tim. 3:16–17 (Greek text).

16 Congregation for the Doctrine of the Faith, *Profession of Faith and Oath of Fidelity* (January 9, 1989), AAS 81 (1989), 105.

17 DS 3074.

by the College of Bishops gathered in council, or infallibly proposed for belief by the ordinary and universal magisterium. . . .

To the truths of the first paragraph belong the articles of faith of the Creed, the various christological dogmas¹⁸ and Marian dogmas;¹⁹ the doctrine of the institution of the sacraments by Christ and their efficacy with regard to grace;²⁰ the doctrine of the real and substantial presence of Christ in the Eucharist²¹ and the sacrificial nature of the eucharistic celebration;²² the foundation of the Church by the will of Christ;²³ the doctrine on the primacy and infallibility of the Roman Pontiff;²⁴ the doctrine on the existence of original sin; the doctrine on the immortality of the spiritual soul and on the immediate recompense after death;²⁵ the absence of error in the inspired sacred texts [*absentia erroris in scriptis sacris inspiratis*];²⁶ the doctrine on the grave immorality of direct and voluntary killing of an innocent human being.²⁷

Doctrinal Commentary on the Concluding Formula of the
Professio Fidei, 5, 11²⁸
(AAS 90 [1998], 546, 549)

18 DS 301–302.

19 DS 2803, 3903.

20 DS 1601, 1606.

21 DS 1636.

22 DS 1740, 1743.

23 DS 3050.

24 DS 3059–3075.

25 DS 1000–1002.

26 DS 3293; Second Vatican Council, *Dei Verbum*, 11.

27 Pope John Paul II, *Evangelium Vitae*, Encyclical Letter on the Value and Inviolability of Human Life (March 25, 1995), 57 (AAS 87 [1995], 46).

28 Also published in *L'Osservatore Romano*, English edition (July 15, 1998): 3–4. Compare Pope John Paul II, *Ad Tuendam Fidem* [To Protect the Faith], Apostolic Letter *Moto Proprio* by which certain norms are inserted into the Code of Canon Law and into the Code of Canon Law of the Eastern Churches (May 8, 1998) (AAS 90 [1998], 457–461).