

# ***Growing In Faith Together 14***

## **The Gift of the Scriptures**

**2 Timothy 3:16-17** All scripture is inspired by God and useful for refuting error, for guiding people's lives and teaching them to be upright. This is how someone who is dedicated to God becomes fully equipped and ready for any good work.

### **The Power of the Word (Scripture)**

**1 Thessalonians 2:13-14** <sup>13</sup> And for this reason we too give thanks to God unceasingly, that, in receiving the word of God from hearing us, you received not a human word but, as it truly is, the word of God, which is now at work in you who believe.

**1 Corinthians 1:18** <sup>8</sup> For the word of the cross is folly to those who are perishing, but to us who are being saved it is the power of God.

**Hebrews 4:12-13** <sup>12</sup> For the word of God is living and active, sharper than any two-edged sword, piercing to the division of soul and spirit, of joints and marrow, and discerning the thoughts and intentions of the heart. <sup>13</sup> And before him no creature is hidden, but all are open and laid bare to the eyes of him with whom we have to do.

### **The Power of the Word (Tradition: Examples)**

Matthew 19:21 and St. Anthony of the Desert, St. Francis of Assisi

Romans 13:12-14 and St. Augustine

### **The Power of the Word (Tradition: Teaching)**

1. (St. Thomas on 2 Tim 3:16): "But you will say: How are not all writings divinely inspired when according to Ambrose everything true, by no matter whom said, is from the Holy Spirit?"

It must be said that God works in a twofold manner: immediately, as his own work, such as a miracle, and through the mediation of inferior causes such as natural works (Job 10:8 "Your hands have made me, etc.). These things happen by the operation of nature. And thus in man He instructs the understanding both immediately through the Sacred Scriptures and mediately through other writings."

2. (St. Thomas on Eph 6:13-17): "Thus we have weapons for fighting the demons themselves namely the sword of the Spirit which is the word of God. This happens frequently in sermons in which the word of God, penetrating the hearts of sinners, drives out the tangled mass of sins and demons"

3. (Joseph Ratzinger) "*Revelatio* refers not to the letter of Scripture, but to the understanding of the letter; and this understanding can be increased."

## The Four Aspects of Reading the Scriptures (Guigo the Carthusian)

### 1. Reading

- Find a quiet place, turn your heart and mind over to God and ask the Holy Spirit to help you.
- Read slowly, asking yourself questions: this is not like any other kind of reading.
- You might try copying out the text itself in order to help you pay attention.

### 2. Meditation

- Stop when something touches your heart. Write out a few reflections. Continue to pray and ask for enlightenment.
- Use a Bible with cross references and good footnotes. (The Bible of Jerusalem 1966 edition – still available on line- or some other help).
- Take notes on your reflections and questions; note down terms you want to study and look them up *later* (examples: “The Holy Spirit,” “The Blood,” “Covenant,” “Glory,” etc.) (The best reference for this is Xavier Léon Dufour (ed.), *Dictionary of Biblical Theology*).
- Take your time and think things over, applying them to your own life.

### 3. Prayer

- Talk to the Lord about what you are reading; remember that it is He who can give you an experience of the power of the Word.
- Ask Him to speak with you and listen quietly. If something comes to your heart, resolve to remember it or write it out at once.
- Gaze quietly at the words on the page of your Bible, and wait.

### 4. Contemplation

- Enter the *temple*. **Psalm 63:1-2** O God, you are my God, I seek you, my soul thirsts for you; my flesh faints for you, as in a dry and weary land where there is no water. <sup>2</sup> So I have looked upon you in the sanctuary, beholding your power and glory.
- The heart is purified by the word (John 15:3 You have already been cleansed by the word that I have spoken to you) and by the gift of tears.