

A Catholic Approach to Scripture

Fr Frank Bird SM
Hearts Aflame 2010

Speak to us, nourish us,
we wait for your voice
be our light shining bright
Fill us with your word Lord,
Fill us with your word.

Lecture Outline

- Lecture 1: Introduction
- Lecture 2: New Testament Questions
- Lecture 3: The Gospels
- Lecture 4: Liturgy and the 'Four Senses of Scripture'
- Lecture 5: Scripture Resources

(1) Scripture: Introduction

- 'One cannot receive the answer before one asks the question'
- Scripture - why is the Old Testament and New Testament important?
- World-View - how do we make sense of the world and 'find meaning'?
- Inspiration - what do we mean when we say the scriptures are 'inspired'?
- Canon - how did Catholics get 46 books in the Old Testament and 27 books in the New Testament?
- 'Deuterocanonical texts' - why are Catholic and Protestant Bibles different?
- Praying with the WORD - Meeting Jesus (Gospel of Mark or John)

Scripture OT & NT - important?

- Revelation
- Stories & Worldview
 - F -first encounter
 - A - anxiety
 - I - i believe
 - T - theological tension
 - H - heavenly union

Inspiration

- God is the primary author
- the scriptures are 'co-authored' by human authors who are 'true authors'
- the books of scripture teach without error the truth which God for the sake of our salvation wished to see confided to the sacred scriptures
- NT Inspiration was a process: the words and deeds of Jesus, the Apostolic preaching (oral tradition), the writing of the scriptures (written tradition)

Canon

- Canon is a greek word for 'rule' or 'measure'
- the canon of scripture is acknowledged by St Ireneaus (200) and the Synod of Laodicia in 363 refers to only 'canonical' texts to be used for worship
- the canon of scripture is officially taught and defined by the Council of Trent (1546)
- It is a 'canonical reading' of scripture that Catholics use

Deuterocanonical texts

- A Catholic bible has 7 more books included in the Old Testament
- Baruch, Judith, 1 Maccabees, 2 Maccabees, Sirach, Tobit, Wisdom
- 7 extra books are the result of Greek OT writings used and referred to by the Christian community which were not included by Judaism when they decided on their Jewish 'canon' of scripture
- Today many Protestant bibles include the 7 'extra' books in a special category in their bibles.

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Hearing and Living the Sunday Readings

Reading I

[Is 62:1-5](#)

For Zion's sake I will not be silent,
for Jerusalem's sake I will not be quiet,
until her vindication shines forth like the dawn
and her victory like a burning torch.

Nations shall behold your vindication,
and all the kings your glory;
you shall be called by a new name
pronounced by the mouth of the LORD.
You shall be a glorious crown in the hand of
the LORD, a royal diadem held by your God.
No more shall people call you "Forsaken,"
or your land "Desolate,"
but you shall be called "My Delight,"
and your land "Espoused."
For the LORD delights in you
and makes your land his spouse.

As a young man marries a virgin,
your Builder shall marry you;
and as a bridegroom rejoices in his bride
so shall your God rejoice in you.

Responsorial Psalm

[Ps 96:1-2, 2-3, 7-8, 9-10](#)

Proclaim his marvelous deeds to all the nations.

Sing to the LORD a new song;
sing to the LORD, all you lands.
Sing to the LORD; bless his name.

Announce his salvation, day after day.
Tell his glory among the nations;
among all peoples, his wondrous deeds.

Give to the LORD, you families of nations,
give to the LORD glory and praise;
give to the LORD the glory due his name!

Worship the LORD in holy attire.

Tremble before him, all the earth;
Say among the nations: The LORD is king.
He governs the peoples with equity.

Reading II

[1 Cor 12:4-11](#)

Brothers and sisters:

There are different kinds of spiritual gifts but
the same Spirit; there are different forms of
service but the same Lord; there are different
workings but the same God who produces all
of them in everyone.

To each individual the manifestation of the
Spirit is given for some benefit.

To one is given through the Spirit the
expression of wisdom;

to another, the expression of knowledge
according to the

same Spirit;

to another, faith by the same Spirit;

to another, gifts of healing by the one Spirit;

to another, mighty deeds;

to another, prophecy;

to another, discernment of spirits;

to another, varieties of tongues;

to another, interpretation of tongues.

But one and the same Spirit produces all of
these, distributing them individually to each
person as he wishes.

Gospel

[Jn 2:1-11](#)

There was a wedding at Cana in Galilee,
and the mother of Jesus was there.

Jesus and his disciples were also invited to
the wedding.

When the wine ran short, the mother of
Jesus said to him, "They have no wine."

And Jesus said to her, "Woman, how does
your concern affect me? My hour has not yet
come." His mother said to the servers, "Do
whatever he tells you."

Now there were six stone water jars there for
Jewish ceremonial washings, each holding
twenty to thirty gallons. Jesus told them, "Fill
the jars with water."

So they filled them to the brim. Then he told
them,

"Draw some out now and take it to the
headwaiter." So they took it. And when the
headwaiter tasted the water that had

become wine, without knowing where it

Reflection Questions

- What word, phrase or idea struck you in the readings? (circle or underline them)
- What do you think God is trying to say to you personally through these words?
- Isaiah is writing in hope knowing God will bring Israel back from exile and bring about a complete restoration. This is summarised in God giving Israel a new name. From 'Forsaken' to 'My Delight'. What thoughts and feelings are stirred up in you if you knew this message was God speaking personally to you? Do you need to move from self condemning thoughts to rejoicing thoughts? Imagine God wanting to dance and rejoice with you as if in a marriage dance. What are your feelings.....
- St Paul is concerned about people in the Corinthian community who consider only Christians who have the gift of tongues have great spiritual powers. Self righteous people have hurt others in the community. St Paul wants to heal the community and remind people there are many gifts - (and he places tongues last!). What gifts have you noticed within you? What gifts would you like to pray for and offer at the Church's service?
- Mary encouraged her son Jesus into ministry. But

prayer experience

5 minutes - Reading - use a pen to underline or circle words that strike you, take a look at the reflection questions, begin by answering a question that is more meaningful for you.

5 minutes - Writing - consider what word, idea, question strikes you more than others - and write constantly for 5 minutes about it

5 minutes - Sharing / Praying - share with a partner what you heard from God and say a prayer asking God's help to live the message that you have heard.

scripture experience - Jesus (Gospel of Mark or John)

5 minutes Reading - 5 minutes Writing - 5 minutes Sharing

Holy Spirit, inspire us as we listen to the Word of God. Help us to notice your presence in our thoughts, in the movements of our hearts, and in our sharing with each other.

Jesus help our hearts to burn within us as we listen to you. Father we give this time of prayer to you, comfort us and challenge us. May we hear you and live your word.

(2) NEW TESTAMENT QUESTIONS

(2) Scripture: New Testament Questions

- **Reliability** - could passages be deleted or added so that the message of the bible has been obscured and the documents are therefore not historically reliable?
- **Dead Sea Scrolls** - what was found in the caves?
- **NT Historical texts** - what are the earliest texts we have?
- **The Historical Critical Method** - what does the Catholic Church think about it?
- **4 Gospels** - what is different about them, and why is John so different?
- Praying with the WORD - Healing of the Bleeding Woman and Jairus' daughter (Luke 8)

Reliability

- Comparison of ancient texts and more recent texts proves a very careful and accurate process of copying
- eg Massoretic text and the scribal tradition
- Dead Sea Scrolls Isaiah text (100BC) gives us the earliest text by 1000 years

NT Historical Texts

- There are more than 5,300 Greek Manuscripts of the NT, over 10,000 Latin Manuscripts and at least 9,300 other manuscript portions. (24,000 reference points)
- No other document of antiquity begins to approach such numbers. Second place is (643)
- The earliest NT texts - complete (325 AD) codex Vaticanus and Codex Sinaiticus. Earliest fragments (130AD)
- Manuscript evidence traces back to end of 1st Century

Historical Critical Method

- The Historical Critical Method seeks to discover the meaning of the passages as the original author would have intended
- HCM seeks: author / date / historical context, textual criticism, literary criticism, redaction criticism, form criticism
- The ‘proper understanding (of the human authors) not only admits the use of this method but actually requires it’ (Interpretation of the Bible, 1993. CCC, 110)
- The Catholic Church does not elevate a particular ‘method’.

(3) SCRIPTURE - THE GOSPELS

Four Gospels

- Mark is the first gospel (60AD). Matthew and Luke used Mark and a source of 'sayings' (Q source) to write their gospels
- Mark, Matthew and Luke are referred to as the 'synoptic' gospels because they view Jesus with the same 'optic' - eye
- John is written last and is a highly 'theological' gospel
- The Church uses Matthew (Year A), Mark (Year B), and Luke (Year C). John is used around Lent / Easter

Mark

- Date 60-75 AD
- Author - a companion of Peter and with Barnabas and Paul
- Community - Rome
- Content - from Q source and material from Peter and Paul
- Theology - arranged in 2 clear parts, 1-8 Galilee Ministry. 8-16 Suffering, Jerusalem and Resurrection

Matthew

- Date 80-90AD
- Author - Matthew the Tax Collector, some argue an unknown non-eyewitness with Matthew material
- Community - Antioch (one of the earliest major christian centres).
- Content - Mark + Q + M
- Theology - 5 long sermons between Infancy Narrative and Passion Narrative. Jesus as the new Moses

Luke

- Date 85 AD
- Author - traveling companion of Paul
- Community - the Churches of Paul's mission
- Content - 'an ordered account' (Lk 1,1) with unique stories of Jesus' mercy and compassion
- Theology - links Israel, Jesus, the Church + Acts to the whole world

John

- Date 80-100
- Author - John Son of Zebedee, or a writer in the tradition of the 'beloved disciple' whom Jesus loves
- Community - Ephesus
- Content. John is full of special features. Poetic / Misunderstanding / Two-fold meaning
- Theology. Book of Signs (1-12) & Book of Glory (13-20)

prayer experience - pharisee & the tax collector (Luke 18)

5 minutes Reading - 5 minutes Writing - 5 minutes Sharing

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movements of our hearts, and in our sharing with each other.
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challenge us. May we hear you and live your word.**

(4) SCRIPTURE - LITURGY AND THE FOUR SENSES

(3) Scripture: Liturgy and the Four Senses of Scripture

- Liturgy Readings - Why do we have Old Testament Readings, Psalms, and 2 New Testament Readings in Catholic Liturgy?
- Interpretation - How do I interpret and make sense of scripture? Is there a particularly 'Catholic' way?

Liturgy

- Jewish Synagogues used a passage from the Torah and sometimes a prophet or other writings on the Sabbath
- The early Christian community continued this custom with the addition of a Gospel and a letter from one of the Apostles
- The Old Testament and Gospel readings are linked by 'typology'
- "The NT is hidden in the OT and the OT is only fully revealed in the NT"

4 Senses of Scripture

- An ancient tradition of scriptural interpretation between the literal and spiritual 'senses'
- (1) literal - the facts and historical meaning
- (2) allegorical - what you are to believe in Christ
- (3) moral - what you are to do
- (4) anagogical - what you are to hope for

prayer experience -

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(5) SCRIPTURE - RESOURCES

Resources

- **Ordo - a calendar of the Church's liturgical readings for each day of the year**
- **a catholic study bible - with good footnotes to inform you of important pieces of information**
- **a Catholic Sunday Lectionary**
- **Bible Study resources / devotionals**
- **Journals (see www.eyouth.com.au)**
- **Little Books / little Rock scripture group (see www.erdu.com.au)**

web

- www.livingtheword.wordpress.com - helping young adults hear, share and live the sunday readings
- www.liturgy.slu.edu - very popular site for personal prayer and group study
- www.americancatholic.org - scripture from scratch series (basic articles)
- www.salvationhistory.com - online bible study (catholic discipleship programme)
- www.ntgateway.com - a large network of articles and links for study and research

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Happy New Year January 4, 2010

Filed under: [Uncategorized](#) — Frank Bird @ 3:30 pm

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2nd Sunday Yr C January 1, 2010

Filed under: [Uncategorized](#) — Frank Bird @ 4:17 am

[Download for January 17 \(pdf\) 2nd Sunday Yr C](#)

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reflection question: Mary encouraged her son Jesus into ministry. But Jesus reminds 'this woman' his 'hour' is something deeply personal and between him and the Father. Have you reached a point in life when your 'hour' is near to commit to a public witness of your faith, to ministry, single life, marriage, religious life, priesthood? Will you listen to the Father?



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helpful scripture links

Bible Study

- personal - God speaks personally through the Word
- liturgical - the community has seasons and challenges to enter
- formational - allow questions and struggles to lead you to deeper study, the catechism, social action...
- “Information without application is fascination. Information with application is transformation”
- faith is not just ‘informative’ but ‘causative’ - find a companion.

prayer experience - Sunday Readings 2nd Sunday Yr C

5 minutes Reading - 5 minutes Writing - 5 minutes Sharing

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movements of our hearts, and in our sharing with each other.
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