

# WHY YOU NEED TO READ THE BIBLE

## 1. Because it is God's inspired word.

Vatican Council states:

*"All Scripture (both Old and New Testament) is inspired by God and useful for teaching, for proving, for correcting, for instruction in justice that the man of God may be perfect, equipped for every good work".*

(Dogmatic Constitution on Divine Revelation. Section 11. Also 2 Tim. 3:16&17)

In encouraging us not to neglect reading the Old Testament as well as the New, Vatican Council states:

*"God, the inspirer and author of both testaments, wisely arranged that the New Testament be hidden in the Old and the Old be made manifest in the New. . . . The books of the Old Testament with all their parts . . . acquire and show forth their full meaning in the New Testament and in turn shed light on it and explain it".*

(Decree on Divine Revelation Section 16).

## 2. Because the Bible is true and essential for today as always.

That's why Vatican Council states:

*"The books of Scripture must be acknowledged as teaching firmly, faithfully and **without error** that truth which God wanted put into the sacred writings for the sake of our salvation".* (Dogmatic Constitution on Divine Revelation. Section 11)

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## 3. Because Jesus said:

'Man shall not live by bread alone, but by every word that proceeds from the mouth of God.'

(Matthew 4:4).

## 4. Because it shows the way you can have a personal relationship with God.

Vatican Council specifically asks all Christians to read the Bible frequently in order to **know Jesus**:

*'This sacred Synod earnestly and specifically urges all the Christian faithful to learn by **frequent reading** of the divine Scriptures the excellent knowledge of Jesus Christ. For ignorance of the Scriptures is ignorance of Christ . . . And let them remember that prayer should accompany reading of sacred Scripture, so that God and man may talk together.'*

**(Dogmatic Constitution on Divine Revelation. Section 25).**

Jesus himself said:

*'And this is eternal life that they **know Thee** the only true God and Jesus Christ whom thou has sent.'* **(John 17:3).**

If you do not have a personal relationship with God, then commit your life to Jesus and ask Him to be your personal Saviour and Lord. He will transform your life and bring meaning where there was emptiness.

## 5. Because it challenges us to spread the Good News of Salvation.

Jesus said to His disciples:

*'Go into all the World and preach the Gospel to the whole creation. He who believes and is baptised will be saved but he who does not believe will be condemned.'* **(Mark 16:15-16)**

**Vatican Council states the primary duty of a priest as follows:**

*"Since no one can be saved who has not first believed, priests have as their primary duty the proclamation of the Gospel of God to all . . . For through the saving Word, the spark of faith is struck in the hearts of unbelievers and fed in the hearts of the faithful."*

**(Decree on the Ministry of Priests, Section 4).**

**Let us encourage our priests and ministers and pray that they will be filled with the Holy Spirit as they fulfil their primary duty of proclaiming the Gospel.**

This command of Jesus is not to be obeyed only by priests and ministers, but by all Christian lay people, as we allow the Holy Spirit to empower us for this task. Vatican Council affirmed this when it stated that all Christian lay people should

*"look for opportunities to announce Christ by words addressed either to non-believers with a view to leading them to faith or to believers (both Catholic and Protestant) with a view to instructing and strengthening them and motivating them toward a more fervent life".*

**(Decree on Laity, Section 6).**

Scripture quotations are from the RSV Bible (Catholic Edition).

Published 'With Ecclesiastical Permission. Dublin' in association with the 'What is an Evangelical Catholic' document. Available from: ECI, 72 Hillcourt Road, Glenageary, Co Dublin. Or: ECI, 'Mizpah', Forest Drive, Shore Road, Co. Down BT34 3AA, N. Ireland.

## **PRAYER BEFORE READING THE BIBLE**

It is important to pray before reading the Bible so that we have the right attitude to reading God's Word. A suggested prayer is:

*Heavenly Father, thank you for your Holy Word which tells me of your great love and your great salvation for me in Jesus, your Son.*

*Lord Jesus thank you for giving me eternal life.*

*Holy Spirit come and reveal more of Jesus to me day by day: come now and enlighten me as I read these Sacred Scriptures. Amen.*

## **WHICH BIBLE?**

The **New International Version** (NIV}, the **Revised Standard Version** (RSV} and the **Jerusalem Bible** are among the best versions available. In addition the **Good News for Modern Man** is a helpful version for beginners. These versions are available in all leading bookshops. For further information ask your local priest or minister.

Bible reading notes can be a great help. "**Every Day With Jesus**" is an excellent bi-monthly publication of commentaries on daily Scripture readings. Available from most Christian bookshops. The monthly "**Bible Alive**" magazine gives insightful commentary on the Gospel and Epistle readings for the Mass of each day in the month. Available in Ireland from: P.O. Box 10, Navan, Co. Meath. Available in England from Bible Alive., 6A Chapel Street, Cambridge CB4 1DY. Tel. 01223 327408 / 313414.

*Published by The Evangelical Catholic Initiative, Ireland.*