

RCIA Corner

How should we interpret the Bible?

Greg Westwood

One of the things our particular denomination stressed was the idea that ‘where the Bible speaks, we speak; where the Bible is silent, we are silent.’ It became increasingly clear to us, however, that far from being true, this was not even coherent, since the maxim itself is nowhere found or implied in Scripture. Rather, in 1 Timothy 3:15, the Bible itself teaches that the Church is ‘the household of God, which is the church of the living God, the pillar and bulwark of the truth.’



I began to think that if it is through the Church that heaven’s rulers and authorities are taught, then maybe the Church might have some things to teach me as well. I had read many times St. Peter’s saying that ‘no prophecy of the scripture is of any private interpretation’ (2 Peter 1:20 KJV) but now it was beginning to hit home. I began to think that, by ‘private interpretation,’ St. Peter must have meant any interpretation that was not delivered through the Church, and that finding two or three, or a hundred, thousand, or million who agreed with a given interpretation didn’t make it any less private.

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Reflection Questions

1. What method do you usually use to interpret difficult passages in the Bible?
2. Why do you think so many people who believe in the Scriptures come to different conclusions as to what those Scriptures mean?
3. How might reading the Bible in the way the Catechism described in Paragraph 113 make you think differently about it?

(The Christian must) read the Scripture within “the living Tradition of the whole Church”. According to a saying of the Fathers, Sacred Scripture is written principally in the Church’s heart rather than in documents and records, for the Church carries in her Tradition the living memorial of God’s Word, and it is the Holy Spirit who gives her the spiritual interpretation of the Scripture (“... according to the spiritual meaning which the Spirit grants to the Church.”

**Catechism of the Catholic Church
Paragraph 113**



Helping others to discover the truth and beauty of the Catholic Church and to make the journey home.

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Suggested Further Reading

