

Why I Teach Sacred Scripture

by Jim Seghers

In 1991 my life was turned around when I visited a church in Glendora California to attend a presentation by Patrick Madrid from Catholic Answers, an outstanding lay organization in San Diego engaged in the full time ministry of defending the Catholic Church. About 100 chairs had been arranged in a room that could seat about 250. About 300 Catholics showed up. The room was jammed to the rafters.

I was amazed at the hunger of these parishioners to understand the biblical basis for their faith. It was also startling to recognize that most of those well educated and financially successful Catholics had, at best, a grammar school understanding of their religion. Shocking were the tragic stories of family members and friends who had been led out of the Catholic Church by Bible believing Christians who lacked a proper biblical understanding of the one, true Church that Christ founded - the Roman Catholic Church. I went home that night on fire.

In the Bible one discovers the magnificent truth that the Catholic Church is *family of God*. In the *Blessed Trinity* God reveals his transcendent inner nature as Family. Out of his overflowing love he creates the human race in his image - as family. The *Father* longs for us to call him Abba, Daddy. *Jesus* assumes human nature as our brother to restore the life of the divine nature within us. The *Holy Spirit* dwells in our souls as the life force of this family experience.

Jesus establishes the *Church* as his earthly family guided by *father figures*: the Pope, Bishops and Priests. All families have *authority*, thus Christ gave the head of his Church the authority to infallibly interpret his word. The *commandments* are the Father's loving decrees that guards the precious life that he creates within us.

The Sacraments are the visible means, Christ's covenantal oaths, through which he weds himself to his people. In *Baptism* we are "born again" into God's family. In *Confirmation* the Holy Spirit brings us to spiritual adulthood. *Penance* heals family members from the malady of sin, while the *Sacrament of the Sick* brings healings of both body and soul to God's family. In the *Eucharist* Jesus consummates the covenant with us by becoming physically one with his bride, the Church. *Holy Orders* establishes spiritual fathers in God's family to fulfill Jesus' command, "Do this in remembrance of me." Lastly, in the *Sacrament of Matrimony*, Christ guarantees the grace of fidelity and the strength to raise godly children, thus, peopling heaven.

Mary is honored because in becoming the mother of Jesus she also became the queen mother of the redeemed. Catholics honor the other *saints* because they are our brothers and sisters who reside in paradise with Jesus. The example of these heroes increases our hope and teaches us about our family heritage.

Catholics pray for the souls in *purgatory*, because they are not yet in heaven. They are family members in need. Finally, the Catholic Church cherishes the *Bible* as its priceless family history

and as the revealed word of God. The Second Vatican Council makes its own the saying of St. Jerome: "To be ignorant of Scripture, is to be ignorant of Christ."

In studying Scripture one encounters Jesus Christ!

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