

Lent 2007

“there exists a close connection and communication between sacred tradition and Sacred Scripture. For Sacred Scripture is the word of God inasmuch as it is consigned to writing under the inspiration of the divine Spirit, while sacred tradition takes the word of God entrusted by Christ the Lord and the Holy Spirit to the Apostles, and hands it on to their successors in its full purity, so that led by the light of the Spirit of truth, they may in proclaiming it preserve this word of God faithfully, explain it, and make it more widely known.”

(Dei Verbum, 18 November 1965)

The above quotation is an extract from the Dogmatic Constitution on Divine Revelation . It is one of the documents promulgated by Pope Paul VI following the Second Vatican Council. In it the Council Fathers recall that Jesus Christ, the Son of God, is the eternal Word. He perfected revelation by fulfilling it through His words and deeds in life and especially through His death and glorious resurrection.

The sacred deposit of the word of God that has been committed to the Church finds its source in both sacred tradition and Sacred Scripture. Sacred tradition consists of the teaching of the Apostles and their successors who through the prompting of the Holy Spirit fulfil the commission given by Christ to preach that Gospel which is the source of saving truth and moral teaching. Sacred Scripture, of both the Old and New Testament, also serves the mission by committing God’s message of salvation to writing under divine inspiration.

The Council Fathers encouraged the frequent reading of Sacred Scripture and particularly the New Testament. They especially emphasised the importance of the Gospels because they are the principal witness for the life and teaching of the incarnate Word, our Lord Jesus Christ.

It was therefore fitting that during the season of Lent and in preparation for Easter parishioners were invited to read and reflect upon the Gospel according to Mark. With the aid of questions to guide them, parishioners gathered in groups both at home and in Church to discuss prepared chapters of the Gospel. This occurred over a number of weeks and spanned the entire period of Lent.

In a prayerful atmosphere parishioners of different ages were able to offer perspectives on Mark’s account of the life and ministry of Jesus. Together they were encouraged to discuss those episodes that particularly impacted them and examine how the message of salvation can be effectively transmitted in contemporary society. The climax of the Gospel story with the Passion and Resurrection of Jesus served as an appropriate introduction to Holy Week and the joy of the Easter season.

An additional resource provided by the priests of the parish during Lent was the booklet entitled Walk with Me: A Lenten Journey of Prayer for 2007. Compiled by the Most Reverend Vincent Nichols, Archbishop of Birmingham, this series offered daily reflections on the Sunday Gospel in an effort to explore the themes connected with the Lenten activities of prayer, fasting and almsgiving. In this way the booklet sought to support the reader in living more simply, thereby encouraging a life of greater commitment to God and neighbour.