

## Article 15

# Reliable Guides: The Magisterium and the Holy Spirit

When you confront a problem or task, and you lack the knowledge and skill required to complete it, it is always smart to do your research before proceeding. For example, if your car breaks down, it would not be wise to take out a hammer and just start banging on the engine. Today's cars are a complicated mix of mechanical and computerized parts that require specialized knowledge to repair. With minor issues, you might be able to find some help on the internet, but it is important to remember that anyone can post on social media and call themselves an expert without actually being one. Things always turn out better when we use reliable and credible sources when doing any kind of research.

The same is true when it comes to understanding the Bible. Many parts of the Bible are pretty straightforward and easy to understand, but some complicated passages require certain knowledge and skills to accurately understand what is being revealed. Like car repair, seeking reliable and credible sources is essential to grasping what God wants to reveal through Scripture. Fortunately, God did not leave us to figure out the Bible's meaning without any guidance. This chapter explores the guidance God provides.

## The Magisterium

The **Magisterium**, the Church's living teaching office, is that reliable and credible guide. The Magisterium consists of all the bishops in the world, in communion with the Pope, the bishop of Rome. God has given the Magisterium the responsibility and the gifts required to interpret Sacred Scripture correctly. The Magisterium does not have authority over the Bible, though. It is "not superior to the Word of God, but is its



Images like this one, of the Pope gathered with the bishops of the Church, give us a glimpse into the fullness of the Magisterium.

---

**Magisterium** ► The Church's living teaching office, which consists of all bishops, in communion with the Pope, the bishop of Rome.

servant”<sup>1</sup> (CCC, number 86), acting under the guidance of the Holy Spirit to faithfully teach the message that God revealed to the original Apostles. This is not merely an intellectual process of study and explanation. It requires the Pope and bishops to prayerfully listen to the Holy Spirit and be open to the truths God wants us to know.

The bishops and the Pope are not alone in their efforts. In their work of guiding our interpretation of the Bible, the Magisterium works with many biblical scholars. These experts work in various fields of study including theology, history, language, and archaeology.

## TAKE IT TO GOD

Jesus, you are the Word of God  
and the perfect revelation.  
We come to know about you and  
to know you personally through the Scriptures.  
May the Holy Spirit open our ears  
and our hearts to your Word.  
May we make our life choices based on it.  
And may we cherish the Bible as one of our greatest treasures.  
Amen.

## Notable Moments

As scholars have developed new techniques for studying the Bible over the last one hundred years, the Magisterium has developed guidelines for how to best use those techniques. Here are descriptions of several notable Church documents that guide our interpretation of Scripture.

### “Inspired by the Holy Spirit” (“*Divino Afflante Spiritu*,” 1943)

Written by Pope Pius XII, this **encyclical** calls for new translations of the Bible into modern languages and permits a limited use of modern methods of studying the Bible. This includes examining the various literary techniques used by its human authors.

---

**encyclical** ► A teaching letter from the Pope to the members of the Church on topics of social justice, human rights, and peace.

***Dogmatic Constitution on Divine Revelation (Dei Verbum, 1965)***

Written during the **Second Vatican Council**, this document addresses the ways in which God reveals himself to us. It encourages scholars to recognize the different genres or types of biblical literature. “For truth is set forth and expressed differently in texts which are variously historical, prophetic, poetic, or of other forms” (number 12). The Council also supports studying the cultures in which the various books of the Bible were written. Understanding the cultural background and literary intentions of the human authors better enables us to comprehend God’s Word.

***Interpretation of the Bible in the Church (1993)***

In this document, the Vatican’s Pontifical Biblical Commission (a committee of biblical scholars) offers more specific directions and guidelines for interpreting the Bible. It examines how using historical and literary methods can help in understanding Scripture. It also provides interpreters with standards to guide them, including the importance of using other theological disciplines and **Sacred Tradition** in the work of biblical interpretation.\*



The participants in the Second Vatican Council consisted of the Pope and all Roman Catholic bishops worldwide. Why is it important that the Magisterium periodically gather together?

# HMMMMM...

What kind of knowledge and skills would help you better understand the Bible?

**Second Vatican Council** ► The Ecumenical or General Council of the Roman Catholic Church that Pope Saint John XXIII convened as Pope in 1962 and that continued under Pope Saint Paul VI until 1965. Also called Vatican Council II.

**Sacred Tradition** ► The process of passing on the Gospel message. Sacred Tradition, which began with the oral communication of the Gospel by the Apostles, was written down in Sacred Scripture, is handed down and lived out in the life of the Church, and is interpreted by the Magisterium under the guidance of the Holy Spirit. Both Sacred Tradition and Sacred Scripture have their common source in the Revelation of Jesus Christ and must be equally honored.

## Article 16

## Exegesis: What Does It Mean?

Sebas, a foreign exchange student from Chile, is so excited to be in America. He likes his host family, his new high school, and his new friends. One day at school, just as students and faculty are arriving in the parking lot, it starts pouring rain. Everyone starts running for the school's main entrance. As Sebas approaches the doors, Mr. Bowler, one of the math teachers, shouts: "Students, hurry up and open that door! It is raining cats and dogs out here! I'm soaked!" *What? Raining cats and dogs? That doesn't make any sense. What is Mr. Bowler talking about?*

Of course, you know that when someone says it is raining cats and dogs it doesn't mean that dogs and cats are falling from the sky! It just means that it is raining hard. Expressions like this tend to be limited to a specific language, and sometimes even a particular place and time. A thousand years from now, if people read that phrase, they might have to do some research to figure out its true meaning.

This is kind of our situation when we read the Bible. The human authors who wrote down its words thousands of years ago sometimes used phrases, analogies, and even ways of thinking that are foreign to us. To truly understand the writings of the Bible, we must do some work to grasp what the human authors were trying to express. This is called **biblical exegesis**, the critical interpretation and explanation of Sacred Scripture. Used in this context, *critical* does not mean "disapproving or insulting," but rather "analytical or methodical." Good biblical exegesis requires that we pay attention to certain things so that we can better understand a text's true meaning.



Can you think of an expression you heard when you were younger, or that was translated from another language, that didn't make any sense to you?

## Pay Attention to This!

The Church provides some specific guidance on what we need to pay attention to when we interpret the Bible. The Second Vatican Council issued a document called *Dogmatic Constitution on Divine Revelation (Dei Verbum, 1965)*. In this document, they laid out a two-step process for biblical exegesis. For the first step, the document states that we “should carefully investigate what meaning the sacred [human] authors really intended” (number 12). To understand what the human author was trying to say, the document goes on to say that we should pay particular attention to the following:

- **The literary genres used by the author.** For example, was the author using poetry, religious history, prophetic oracles, debate, or symbolic stories?
- **The characteristic ways people spoke and wrote in their time.** For example, Hebrew poetry is quite different from the way we write poetry today.
- **The cultural ways people interacted with one another at the time.** For example, the roles of women and men were much more defined and separated at the time most of the Bible was written.

### MAKE IT SO

Years from now, you may not feel the pain from the physical injuries you received in your youth. But it's quite likely that many of the painful words aimed at you will still sting. Words mean something. They can build up and encourage others. They can also cause some serious emotional damage. Be mindful of how you speak to others. Do not underestimate the power your words can have to uplift or tear down.

For the second step, the document states that we must carefully investigate “what God wanted to manifest by means of their [the human authors’] words” (number 12). To understand what God wants to reveal to us, the document goes on to say that we should pay particular attention to the following:

- **“The content and unity of the whole Scripture”** (number 12). Any particular passage must be examined in light of the big picture that includes both the Old and New Testaments, keeping in mind most importantly the Passion, death, and Resurrection of Jesus Christ.
- **The living Tradition and teachings of the whole Church.** The Church continues to be guided by the Holy Spirit in its teachings and in the interpretation of Sacred Scripture.
- **The analogy of faith.** The **analogy of faith** is the unity of Church teachings within the whole of God’s Revelation. Each truth God reveals is connected and united with all of the other truths of faith. Understanding one truth helps us grasp and appreciate the others more easily.



Many parts of the Bible can only be fully understood in connection to the events in Jesus’ life, particularly the Resurrection.

We must remember that the task of interpreting Sacred Scripture is not merely an intellectual activity. This job requires a prayerful openness to the Holy Spirit, similar to the openness the Gospel writers themselves had. “Sacred Scripture must be read and interpreted in the light of the same Spirit by whom it was written”<sup>2</sup> (CCC, number 111). ✱

# HMMMMM.

What might happen if we focus on only one of the steps of the two-step process for biblical exegesis?

**analogy of faith** ► The coherence of individual doctrines with the whole of Revelation. In other words, as each doctrine is connected with Revelation, each doctrine is also connected with all other doctrines.

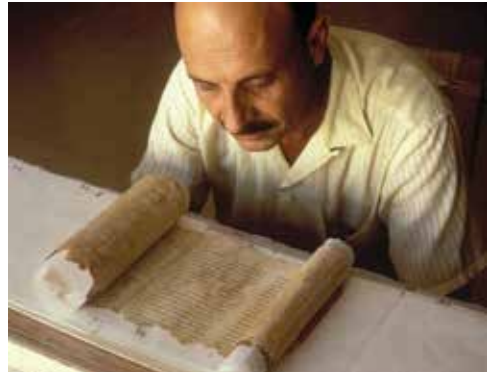
## Article 17

# Making Sense of the Bible

“That’s the truth!” “How do you know that’s true?” “The truth shall set you free.” “Do you swear to tell the truth, the whole truth, and nothing but the truth?” “That’s not true!” “True dat!”

When it comes to truth, what is your approach? Are you a person who doesn’t believe in anything unless you can see it, touch it, or prove it by science and logic? Or do you believe there are many ways to know and experience truth, including some that go beyond the physical senses? For instance, you may feel a deep love for another person and know it is true even though there is no way to explain it or sometimes even to show it?

If you are more like the first person, you may be challenged to fully understand the Bible. This is because in order to fully understand the Bible, we need to be open to two different kinds of truth: literal truth and spiritual truth. The Church calls these two ways of approaching truth in the Bible the *literal sense* and the *spiritual sense*.



Why is the study of ancient biblical scrolls important to biblical interpretation?

## Literal, Not “Literally”

The **literal sense** is a form of biblical interpretation that considers the plain meaning of the text. This does not mean reading the text “literally,” that is, as if every story was meant to be historically and scientifically accurate. Actually, it means quite the opposite. The literal sense is the meaning intended by the human author. Because the human authors often used poetry, symbolism, metaphors, and even exaggeration, understanding the literal sense requires study and interpretation.

Let’s look again at the phrase “raining cats and dogs.” Reading it literally would lead you to the conclusion that dogs and cats were falling from the sky. However, the literal sense of this phrase is the meaning intended by the author: it’s raining hard. Accurately understanding the literal sense lays the foundation for all other senses of Sacred Scripture. Once you understand it, you can move on to the spiritual sense.

---

**literal sense** ► A form of biblical interpretation that considers the explicit meaning of the text. It lays the foundation for all other senses of Sacred Scripture.





When it comes to naming Jesus' profession, he is often called a carpenter. The actual Greek word used in the Bible for Jesus' profession is *tektōn*. This ancient Greek word meant something closer to "craftsman." This would have included work with wood, but also things like iron and stone masonry. This makes sense given that most of the homes and buildings at Jesus' time were made of stone. And maybe why Jesus said to Peter, "You are Peter, and upon this rock I will build my church" (Matthew 16:18).



## So What?

After figuring out what the human author intended to say, we come to the next step in which we ask: "So what? What does this have to do with our lives?" This is an important question to ask when reading the Bible. God speaks through the words of the human authors, and often the literal sense makes clear what we are to believe and how we are to live. However, Scripture has many layers of meaning. Examining the spiritual sense of the text allows us to understand further aspects of God's Revelation and perhaps understand them even more deeply. The **spiritual sense** is interpretation that builds on the literal sense, considering what the realities and events of Scripture signify and mean for salvation. The spiritual sense can be broken into three categories or sub-senses: the allegorical sense, the moral sense, and the anagogical sense.

- **Allegorical sense.** An allegory is a literary device in which characters, events, and other elements represent abstract or spiritual truths. When we examine the allegorical sense of a biblical text, we look at how it points in some way to the mystery of Christ. For example, consider the biblical account of the Israelites' finding freedom from slavery by passing through the waters of the Red Sea. Allegorically, this represents the freedom we find from the slavery of sin by passing through the waters of Christ's Baptism.

---

**spiritual sense** ► A form of biblical interpretation that builds on the literal sense to consider what the realities and events of Sacred Scripture signify and mean for salvation.



- **Moral sense.** When looking at a biblical passage from the moral sense, we ask what the text has to teach us about living a good, just, and moral life. We find answers to questions like these: How should we treat one another? What are good values to live by? How should we react when someone mistreats us?

For example, from the cross, Jesus said, “Father, forgive them [the people who crucified him], they know not what they do” (Luke 23:34). Looking at the moral sense of this passage leads us to ask: “What does Jesus’ forgiveness of the people who crucified him teach us? How should we treat people who have committed sins against us?” When applying the moral sense, remember that most people in the Bible were not perfect people—not even some of its greatest heroes. Just because David committed adultery does not mean it is okay for us to do so.

- **Anagogical sense.** Anagogical comes from a Greek word meaning “leading.” This way of examining the Bible addresses the text’s eternal significance. How are the people, events, and other elements in a passage leading us toward our heavenly home? For example, Jesus said: “Whoever wishes to come after me must deny himself, take up his cross, and follow me. For whoever wishes to save his life will lose it, but whoever loses his life for my sake and that of the gospel will save it” (Mark 8:34–35). Applying the anagogical sense to this passage points to the importance of selfless service in preparing us for eternal salvation.

Considering these three senses when reading a biblical passage allows us to answer the question “So what?” and to thus discover the truths God wants us to understand.\*



“Father, forgive them, they know not what they do” (Luke 23:34).

**HMMMMM...**

Pick a passage from the Bible and describe it using the literal sense of the text. Then determine all three elements of the spiritual sense of that same text.

## Article 19

# Biblical Archaeology: Digging for Answers

If you've ever been to a science museum or museum of natural history to see an exhibit on an ancient civilization, mummies, dinosaurs, and other unique and interesting displays, then you know and can appreciate the importance of **archaeology**.

Archaeology is the study of human activity and history by means of excavating and analyzing the artifacts and other physical materials. These artifacts include prehistoric tools, household items, writings, objects used in religious worship, and even the humans themselves. Archaeology is an essential tool in helping us understand the culture and history of past human societies. By digging, sifting through, and analyzing countless piles of earth, we are able to “travel” back in time to learn about our ancestors and their way of life.



Tzipori (Sepphoris) archaeological site in Israel.

If you ever get the chance to travel to the Holy Land, you will certainly have the opportunity to see a number of archaeological “digs,” or excavation sites. Israel is a popular place for archaeological work because the world’s three major religions—Christianity, Judaism, and Islam—all find their origins there.

## A Town and a Tomb

Our understanding of the Bible has greatly benefited from the work of archaeology. As a matter of fact, some biblical scholars are also archaeologists. Their discoveries have led to a greater appreciation of how people lived in biblical times.

---

**archaeology** ► The study of human activity and history by means of excavating and analyzing the artifacts and other physical materials.

For example, archaeologists recently uncovered the city of Sepphoris, rebuilt by Rome at about the same time Jesus was born. It was a wealthy city at the center of trade for the area. Tradesmen like Jesus and his foster father, Joseph, were probably in great demand there. Because it was located just a few miles from Nazareth, it is quite possible that as a young man, Jesus took this hour-long walk to get work. The knowledge gained about the culture and history of Sepphoris offers us a glimpse into the world in which Jesus lived.

Another example is a discovery made in the late 1960s. Archaeologists found the remains of a man named Jehohanan in a burial site just north of Jerusalem. They estimated that he died sometime in the early to mid-first century—the same time as Jesus. Even more remarkable is something else he had in common with Jesus: he also was killed by crucifixion. The nail that had gone through his foot remained imbedded in the bone. What the archaeologists found so interesting was the placement of the nail. In most of the paintings and statues of Jesus, we usually see the nails going through his hands and the front of his feet. This was not the case for Jehohanan. The nail went through the side of his heel bone.



A stone ossuary found in a Jewish tomb near Jerusalem. The Hebrew inscription on the ossuary reads, “Jehohanan the son of Hgqwl,” and dates to the first century AD.

## Digging Up the Words

Another important type of archeological find is the discovery of ancient written texts. Though

we do not have the original versions of any of the biblical books, we have older copies and more copies of the books of the Bible than for any other ancient text! Every ancient copy found has reinforced biblical scholars’ certainty in the reliability of biblical text. Scholars are interested in nonbiblical writings as well, as these help us to understand the customs and beliefs of other peoples during biblical times.

One of the most important finds in the past century was the discovery of the Dead Sea Scrolls. In 1947, two young shepherds were grazing their flocks near some caves close to the northwestern shore of the Dead Sea. After one

of the boys threw a stone into one of the caves, they heard something shatter. When they entered the cave, they found a few jars containing ancient scrolls, which possibly belonged to the **Essenes**, a group of pious, conservative Jews who left the Temple of Jerusalem and began a community called Qumran. Hundreds of scrolls were discovered around Qumran over the next few years. Included in these scrolls are some of the oldest copies of Old Testament books ever discovered. Other scrolls describe the Essenes, religious practices and their contemptuous relationship with the Jewish authorities. These discoveries are important because the Essenes lived at the same time as Jesus. Their writings offer insight into Jesus' world.

Another important discovery was the **Nag Hammadi manuscripts**. These are fourth-century, nonbiblical writings discovered in 1945 near the village of Nag Hammadi in Upper Egypt. These are invaluable sources of information regarding Gnostic beliefs, practices, and lifestyle. Gnosticism was an early Church heresy claiming that Christ's humanity was an illusion and that the human body is evil.

## CATHOLICS MAKING A DIFFERENCE

How many priests do you know who like to go spelunking in search of cave paintings? Fr. Henri Breuil, SJ (1877–1961), was a Jesuit priest from France and a notable archaeologist. Breuil's most significant works are his studies and artistic reproductions of prehistoric cave paintings in Europe and Africa. His findings led the way for scientific discoveries of the Paleolithic world for decades afterward. He later became known as the Pope of Prehistory.



© Ticker/Bridgman Images

**Essenes** ► A group of pious, ultraconservative Jews who left the Temple of Jerusalem and began a community by the Dead Sea, known as Qumran.

**Nag Hammadi manuscripts** ► Fourth-century writings, discovered in 1945 near the village of Nag Hammadi in Upper Egypt, that are invaluable sources of information regarding Gnostic beliefs, practices, and lifestyle. Gnosticism was an early Church heresy claiming that Christ's humanity was an illusion and the human body is evil.

## Pulling It All Together

So, how do you make sense of all those old stories in the Bible? As you have made your way through this chapter, you have discovered many ways to make sense of biblical accounts:

- First, look for the literal sense of what you are reading. What is the message the human author was trying to convey?
- Consider the literary genre in which the text was written to better understand the human author's intent.
- Investigate the culture in which the account took place to understand better the examples and symbols used by the author.
- Consider what biblical archaeologists have discovered and the implications of these discoveries for understanding the biblical accounts.
- Consider the three spiritual senses—allegorical, moral, and anagogical—to discover the religious truth God is revealing through the text.
- Look to the teachings of Church Tradition and the Magisterium for guidance on interpreting Scripture passages.
- Seek the guidance of the Holy Spirit.\*



Qumran cave 4, one of the caves in which the Dead Sea Scrolls were found at the ruins of Khirbet Qumran in the desert of Israel.

# HMMMMM...

Do some research online for recent discoveries in biblical archaeology. Write a three- to five-sentence paragraph summarizing what you find.



**Interpret**

**LEARNING EXPERIENCE 10** (Chapter 4)  
**Small-Group Exegesis**

Engage the students in an exercise in biblical interpretation. (U4, Q4, K9, K10, S9)

1. **Prepare** by ensuring that all the students have read articles 15–17 and 19 in the student book prior to this learning experience and that they will have access to their student books and Bibles (print or digital) during class. Photocopy or download and print the handout “Making Sense of Old Stories in the Bible” (TX005929), on pages 67–68, one for each student. Download the PowerPoint presentation “Learning Experience 10: Interpreting the Bible” (TX006068). In addition, gather exegetical materials for student use. These may include print or electronic copies of biblical dictionaries or other reference aides, such as the *Saint Mary's Press® Essential Bible Dictionary or the Saint Mary's Press® Essential Guide to Biblical Life and Times*, and access to websites such as the Biblical Archaeology Society and Vatican websites. If you think the students would be best able to engage in biblical exegesis in your school's library or computer lab, reserve that space for part or all of this class.
2. **Begin** by sharing with the students this chapter's enduring understanding: *The Holy Spirit, the teachings of the Magisterium, and the tools and methods of biblical exegesis enable us to understand and interpret Scripture.* Share also that in today's class, the students will review the process of biblical interpretation, as explained in the student book, and work in small groups to practice this process.
3. **Show** the PowerPoint presentation. If you wish, direct the students to take notes.
4. **Distribute** the handout. Explain that the students will now be working in small groups to practice the process of biblical interpretation.
5. **Arrange** the students into small groups of no more than three. Assign each small group one of the passages listed at the top of the handout (it is okay if more than one small group works with the same passage). To the extent possible, encourage the groups to engage in the entire process collaboratively, rather than assigning each member of the group one or more of the seven steps.
6. **Allow** at least 30 minutes for the students to work. Circulate among the students to offer assistance, as needed.

**TEACHER NOTE**

Using your best judgment with regard to your students' abilities and the pace at which they work, you may wish to allow them a second class period to continue working on the biblical interpretation process. Or, you may instruct them to finish the process, and the handout, for homework, and be prepared to present their findings in class the next day.

Chapter 4: Interpreting the Bible 85

Article 15  
**Reliable Guides: The Magisterium and the Holy Spirit**

When you confront a problem or task, and you lack the knowledge and skill required to complete it, it is always smart to do your research before proceeding. For example, if your car breaks down, it would not be wise to take out a hammer and just start banging on the engine. Today's cars are a complicated mix of mechanical and computerized parts that require specialized knowledge to repair. With minor issues, you might be able to find some help on the internet, but it is important to remember that anyone can post on social media and call themselves an expert without actually being one. Things always turn out better when we use reliable and credible sources when doing any kind of research.

The same is true when it comes to understanding the Bible. Many parts of the Bible are pretty straightforward and easy to understand, but some complicated passages require certain knowledge and skills to accurately understand what is being revealed. Life can require seeking reliable and credible sources in order to grasp what God wants to reveal through Scripture. Fortunately, God did not leave us to figure out the Bible's meaning without any guidance. This chapter explores the guidance God provides.

**The Magisterium**  
The Magisterium, the Church's living teaching office, is that reliable and credible guide. The Magisterium consists of all the bishops in the world, in communion with the Pope, the bishop of Rome. God has given the Magisterium the responsibility and the gifts required to interpret Sacred Scripture correctly. The Magisterium does not have authority over the Bible, though. It is "not superior to the Word of God, but in its

Magisterium: The Church's living teaching office, which consists of all bishops, in communion with the Pope, the bishop of Rome.



Articles 15–17 and 19

Revelation and the Old Testament

Name \_\_\_\_\_

**Making Sense of Old Stories in the Bible**

Circle the passage your group has been assigned:

- Genesis 22:1-17
- Luke 10:28-37
- 1 Samuel 2:1-10
- 1 Corinthians 12:12-31

Read your assigned passage. Then work with your group to interpret the passage, making notes regarding each of the steps of biblical interpretation. Your teacher will provide further directions regarding sharing your findings with your classmates.

Step of Biblical Interpretation	Notes
Literal sense: What is the basic message the human author is trying to convey?	
Literary genre (form)	
Society, culture, and historical context	

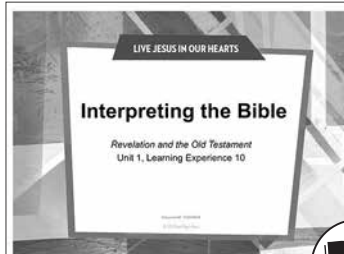
© 2018 Saint Mary's Press  
Live Jesus in Our Hearts Series

TX005929

LIVE JESUS IN OUR HEARTS

**Interpreting the Bible**

Revelation and the Old Testament  
Unit 1, Learning Experience 10



TX006068

7. **Reconvene** the large group. Have each small group report its findings about its assigned passage in a brief oral presentation to the rest of the class. If more than one group worked on the same passage, those groups could report jointly. Invite comments, discussion, and clarification, as needed.

### TEACHER NOTE

To offer your students a creative outlet with regard to these passages, consider directing the small groups, as a final step in interpretation, to present their assigned passage's meaning to their classmates in the form of a skit. The skit may reenact the passage in its original context or "update" the passage's meaning to a modern-day setting.

8. **Conclude** by affirming the students' work as budding biblical exegetes. Assure them that although the work of biblical exegesis may be daunting at times, the Holy Spirit is present with us in our efforts, guiding us with courage, understanding, and holy wisdom. The students will have more opportunities to practice this process throughout this course.

### TEACHER NOTE

Students can participate in self-assessments using several different types of Quizlet reviews for each chapter. These assist students in reviewing each chapter and receiving immediate feedback on the knowledge they have acquired. If you choose to administer the chapter 4 quiz (TX006081), do so now, before moving on to "Concluding the Unit." (See [www.smp.org/livejesus\\_oldtestament](http://www.smp.org/livejesus_oldtestament) to access both of these resources.)

Revelation and the Old Testament

Name \_\_\_\_\_

**Chapter 4 Quiz**

Write the letter that corresponds to the best answer in the blank space provided.

1. What is the Magisterium?
  - a. the Church's ruling teaching office
  - a. a website and website guide for interpreting Scripture
  - c. all the bishops of the world in communion with the Pope, the bishop of Rome
  - d. all of the above
2. What does the Magisterium do?
  - a. write under the guidance of the Holy Spirit
  - b. talk with authority over the Bible
  - c. talk in order to let the rest of us what to think
  - d. None of the above
3. What is the critical interpretation and explanation of Sacred Scripture called?
  - a. the analogy of faith
  - b. exegesis
  - c. hermeneutic
  - d. archaeology
4. What is the two-step process for biblical exegesis as laid out by the Church document *Dei Verbum*: *Consideration on Divine Revelation* (the Vatican II Bible)?
  - a. First investigating what the human authors intended, and then investigating what God wants to reveal
  - b. First praying alone with the biblical passage, and then praying with others
  - c. First investigating what God wants to reveal, and then investigating what the human authors intended
  - d. First hearing the passage heavily, and then reading it scientifically
5. What is meant by the literal sense of a Scripture passage?
  - a. its historical meaning
  - b. its plain meaning
  - c. its metaphorical meaning
  - d. its scientific meaning

© 2018 Saint Mary's Press  
Live Jesus in Our Hearts Series Document # TX006081



TX006081



*Revelation and the Old Testament*

Name \_\_\_\_\_

**Making Sense of Old Stories in the Bible**

Circle the passage your group has been assigned:

- Exodus 20:1–17
- Luke 10:29–37
- 1 Samuel 3:1–10
- 1 Corinthians 12:12–31

Read your assigned passage. Then work with your group to interpret the passage, making notes regarding each of the steps of biblical interpretation. Your teacher will provide further directions regarding sharing your findings with your classmates.

<b>Step of Biblical Interpretation</b>	<b>Notes</b>
Literal sense: What is the basic message the human author is trying to convey?	
Literary genre (form)	
Society, culture, and historical context	



Findings of biblical archaeologists	
One or more of the spiritual senses: allegorical, moral, and/or anagogical	
Teachings of Church Tradition and the Magisterium	
Prayer/guidance of the Holy Spirit	



*Revelation and the Old Testament***Making Sense of Old Stories in the Bible Answer Key**

Suggested responses for some parts of the biblical interpretation process appear below. Students' actual responses may vary greatly depending on their skill level and the results of their research.

<b>Step of Biblical Interpretation</b>	<b>Notes for Exodus 20:1–17</b>	<b>Notes for 1 Samuel 3:1–10</b>	<b>Notes for Luke 10:29-37</b>	<b>Notes for 1 Corinthians 12:12–31</b>
<b>Literal sense: What is the basic message the human author is trying to convey?</b>	The human author is conveying God's expectations for human behavior as detailed in the Ten Commandments.	God calls the prophet Samuel when he is very young. It takes a while for Samuel to realize that it is God who is calling him.	The human author is recounting a parable that Jesus told in response to a question posed by a scholar of the Jewish Law: "Who is my neighbor?" (verse 29).	All baptized people form one Body of Christ that is rich in diversity, gifts, and talents.
<b>Literary genre (form)</b>	laws	Any or all of the following are correct: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• short story</li> <li>• historical account</li> <li>• call narrative</li> </ul>	parable	An extended metaphor comparing the Body of Christ (i.e. the Church) to a human body. The metaphor forms part of a letter that Saint Paul wrote to the Church in ancient Corinth.
<b>Society, culture, and historical context</b>	The students may conduct research on any or all of the following terminology/aspects of the socio-historical context that are referenced in this passage: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• polytheism</li> <li>• slavery</li> <li>• adultery</li> <li>• bearing false witness</li> <li>• covering</li> </ul>	The students may conduct research on any or all of the following terminology/aspects of the socio-historical context that are referenced in this passage: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• the "lamp of God"</li> <li>• the temple (in Shiloh, not in Jerusalem)</li> <li>• the Ark of God (Ark of the Covenant)</li> <li>• prophets (e.g., Samuel)</li> <li>• priests (e.g., Eli)</li> </ul>	The students may conduct research on any or all of the following terminology/aspects of the socio-historical context that are referenced in this passage: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Jerusalem, Jericho, and the road between them</li> <li>• Samaritan/Samaritans</li> <li>• Priests and Levites</li> </ul>	The students may conduct research on any or all of the following terminology/aspects of the socio-historical context that are referenced in this passage: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Jews and Greeks (including possible tensions between these two groups)</li> <li>• Apostles, prophets, and teachers</li> <li>• spiritual gifts</li> <li>• the struggles of the Church in ancient Corinth that may have prompted Saint Paul to write this letter</li> </ul>



Making Sense of Old Stories in the Bible Answer Key

Step of Biblical Interpretation	Notes for Exodus 20:1–17	Notes for 1 Samuel 3:1–10	Notes for Luke 10:29–37	Notes for 1 Corinthians 12:12–31
Findings of biblical archaeologists	A scroll of the Ten Commandments was among the findings in the Dead Sea Scrolls.	The tomb of the prophet Samuel is located in the West Bank, in the Palestinian territories just outside of Jerusalem. It is a place of pilgrimage for Jews, Christians, and Muslims.	Numerous archaeological investigations have uncovered information and artifacts related to ancient Samaria. In addition, a site on the Jerusalem-Jericho road that served as a way station for travelers in biblical times has been dubbed “the Inn of the Good Samaritan.” The site now houses a museum.	Numerous archaeological investigations have been conducted in ancient Corinth. The excavated ruins of the ancient city are adjacent to the modern-day city.
One or more of the spiritual senses: allegorical, moral, and/or anagogical	Moral sense: These laws, although ancient, should continue to guide our words and actions.	Allegorical: This passage connects with, and foreshadows, many passages in both the Old Testament and the New Testament in which God calls someone who may not be initially ready or willing to hear and respond to that call. These include the prophets Isaiah and Jeremiah and the some of the disciples called by Jesus.	Moral: This parable teaches us that we must set aside our prejudices and preconceptions and engage in loving service toward all people.	Anagogical: The passage prepares us for our heavenly home by leading us toward a greater sense of unity and respect for all of God’s people. It emphasizes the common dignity of our Baptism.
Teachings of Church Tradition and the Magisterium	Student responses will vary but may make reference to “Inspired by the Holy Spirit” (“Divino Afflante Spiritu,” 1943), Dogmatic Constitution on Divine Revelation (Dei Verbum, 1965), or other documents issued by the Magisterium.	Student responses will vary but may make reference to “Inspired by the Holy Spirit,” Divine Revelation, or other documents issued by the Magisterium.	Student responses will vary but may make reference to “Inspired by the Holy Spirit,” Divine Revelation, or other documents issued by the Magisterium.	Student responses will vary but may make reference to “Inspired by the Holy Spirit,” Divine Revelation, or other documents issued by the Magisterium.
Prayer/guidance of the Holy Spirit	Student responses will vary.	Student responses will vary.	Student responses will vary.	Student responses will vary.

