

Divine Revelation

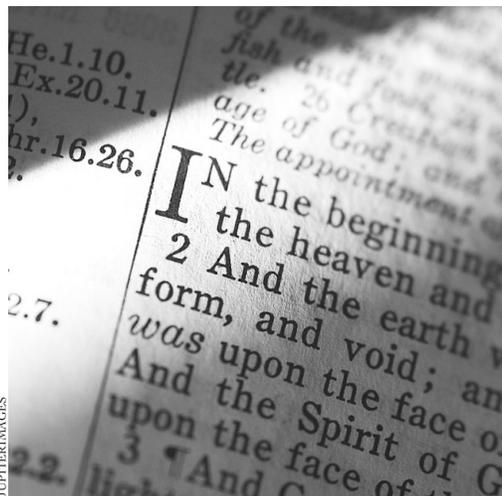
In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God. He was in the beginning with God; all things were made through him, and without him was not anything made that was made. In him was life, and the life was the light of men. The light shines in the darkness, and the darkness has not overcome it. ~ John 1:1-5

ALTHOUGH it is possible to come to knowledge of God by observing the beauty and order of the world around us, it is not possible to come into an intimate knowledge of him without further revelation. This is so for two reasons: first, the light of our natural reason is limited, and second, original and personal sin have darkened our minds, making it necessary for God to enlighten us.

We know from human experience that we all need communication to accomplish daily business, express ourselves, and establish relationships built on friendship and trust. Communication is

necessary because we do not have the power to read one another's minds. We communicate, or reveal, by word and action all that we want people to know about us. God's Revelation to Moses is described in just this way: *"Thus the Lord used to speak to Moses face to face, as a man speaks to his friend"* (Ex 33:11).

God knows us better than we know ourselves but, from our perspective, he is shrouded in mystery: *"As you do not know how the spirit comes to the bones in the womb of a woman with child, so you do not know the work of God who makes everything"* (Eccl 11:5). We stand in desperate need of revelation from God in order to know who he is and what he wants. By revealing himself, God draws near to us and makes us capable of responding to him, of knowing him, and of loving him far beyond our natural capabilities. This is called divine Revelation, and it unfolds for us the love of God and his plan for the whole human race (see Eph 3:3-5; 2 Pt 1:4). It reveals to us God's inner life in the Trinity (see Jn 14:9; 1 Cor 2:9-16) and the truths about the Son of God becoming man in or-



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ated under God's personal inspiration. What God revealed by word of mouth has been transmitted through an oral Tradition begun with the People of Israel and continued in the Church. Certain aspects of this oral Tradition have been carefully recorded in what is called Sacred Scripture.

God has delivered his Revelation gradually in a series of relationships (also called covenants): first, with Adam and Eve, and then with the whole of humanity through Noah, then Abraham, Moses, and the prophets. In the fullness of time, God has revealed himself in his Son, Jesus Christ. In Jesus, the whole of divine Revelation — everything God wants to say to his people — is summed up and personified. As the Scriptures say: *"In many and various ways God spoke of old to our fathers by the prophets; but in these last days he has spoken to us by a Son"* (Heb 1:1-2). Jesus Christ is God's final Word to his people. He is God's definitive Word made flesh, and there will be no further public revelation after him.

(CCC 35-38, 50-67, 74)

der to save us (see Gal 4:4-5). Divine Revelation also makes clear the means by which we must work out our salvation by explaining the graces we receive in the Church through the celebration of the sacraments (see 1 Cor 10:16; Ti 3:4-7) and living a life of Christian charity (see Eph 5:2). Revelation also reminds us that we are now God's sons and daughters (see Rom 8:15-17). We could never have arrived at these truths on our own.

Divine Revelation is synonymous with God's Word. All that God has revealed to us is his Word and this Word has been transmitted to us in oral and written form through human authors who oper-