

Saint Thomas the Apostle Parish
Religious Education Office
203 East Avenue
Norwalk, CT 06855
Tel: (203) 866 1189
<http://stthomasnorwalk.com>

Lesson nr. 3 and 4 – Tuesday, Oct 20, 2020.

Dear 8th Grade Students of St. Thomas The Apostle Church in Norwalk, CT:

After a brief recess, due to a Columbus Day national observance, we come back to our Religious Education Program and continue to learn about Christ Jesus, His (New) Testament and His Church.

Therefore, today I would like to discuss with you the following:

- 1) What the BIBLE is and what the BIBLE IS NOT according to Catholic Teaching?**
- 2) The Bible as a Religious Explanation of Human History and Destiny/Purpose; God's Kingdom is present, but not yet completed – Mark 1:15 and Exodus 20:17, CCC 2800, 2856, 1948**

You might (I hope you do;-) remember that at our last class I asked you to do a very specific homework, that is: To ask your mom and dad a very important question: What do you think Mom, (Dad); Did Adam and Eve (our first parents) have belly buttons or not? Let's examine your parents answers then;-)

Why do you think this question (maybe even sounding a bit childish at first) is so important and possibly could help us to understand better the real meaning of the Bible?

We have already stated that even though all of the listed below: history, geography, physics, mathematics, chemistry and so on are present in the Bible to some extent, The BIBLE is not a history book, geography book, physics or chemistry book. We need to make sure that we keep the proper understanding always: The Bible is a RELIGIOUS BOOK.

The Old Testament, and even more so the New Testament (as a combined collection – or a LIBRARY of Holy, Inspired by the Holy Spirit Books – presents to us not only a picture of the Hebrew (then Jewish) People being called by the Almighty Father to become a Nation SET APART, to become Prophets and Priests of God, but also this collection of VERY ANCIENT BOOKS – that is why we use the term BIBLE (from Greek: ta biblia ta hagia) namely Sacred Scripture shows us also the DRAMA OF HUMAN STRUGGLE thru the ages; maybe most importantly the struggle with burning questions:

- What is my Destiny?
- Does my life have a purpose?
- Is anybody out there? In that vast Universe around me?
- Why people suffer so much? Why INNOCENT PEOPLE suffer?

I think it would be beneficial to us if we once again pull out our Handout Nr. 2 from the last class, and see briefly: Why therefore in our Catholic Western Tradition we call ourselves A PERSON? (I hope you recall our discussion and study of that particular matter?)

I have no doubt that as we go deeper and cover more extensively topics presented in our Syllabus for the 8th Grade and Confirmation Preparation with you, we will be more at ease with not only NAVIGATING thru our Sacred Scripture (The BIBLE), but we will be able to articulate and defend if needed some of the positions of our faith, beliefs and Catholic Teaching.

So; let's try again this one:

B, more specifically OT..... is a R..... I (E)
..... of P.....H....., of A..... H..... and of
H..... T.....

- Jesus Christ did not come to abolish the Old Testament; He came to fulfill it.
- Homework: Why in my opinion TWO popes of the 20th century, namely: John the XXIII and John Paul II were proclaimed SAINTS by the Church? Who were they? What was so special that they did, accomplished, that the Church recognized them both as Saints? Please try to write 2 maybe 3 paragraphs on each of them.