

Pertinent Quotes concerning the Word of God and Spirituality

18. We see clearly, then, how important it is for the People of God to be properly taught and trained to approach the sacred Scriptures in relation to the Church's living Tradition, and to recognize in them the very word of God. Fostering such an approach in the faithful is very important from the standpoint of the spiritual life.

19. Certainly theological reflection has always considered inspiration and truth as two key concepts for an ecclesial hermeneutic of the sacred Scriptures. Nonetheless, one must acknowledge the need today for a fuller and more adequate study of these realities, in order better to respond to the need to interpret the sacred texts in accordance with their nature. Here I would express my fervent hope that research in this field will progress and bear fruit both for biblical science and for the spiritual life of the faithful.

27. In our day the faithful need to be helped to see more clearly the link between Mary of Nazareth and the faith-filled hearing of God's word. I would encourage scholars as well to study the relationship between Mariology and the theology of the word. This could prove most beneficial both for the spiritual life and for theological and biblical studies.

30. Approaches to the sacred text that prescind from faith might suggest interesting elements on the level of textual structure and form, but would inevitably prove merely preliminary and structurally incomplete efforts. As the Pontifical Biblical Commission, echoing an accepted principle of modern hermeneutics, has stated: "access to a proper understanding of biblical texts is only granted to the person who has an affinity with what the text is saying on the basis of life experience". All this brings out more clearly the relationship between the spiritual life and scriptural hermeneutics. "As the reader matures in the life of the Spirit, so there grows also his or her capacity to understand the realities of which the Bible speaks". The intensity of an authentic ecclesial experience can only lead to the growth of genuine understanding in faith where the Scriptures are concerned; conversely, reading the Scriptures in faith leads to growth in ecclesial life itself. Here we can see once again the truth of the celebrated dictum of Saint Gregory the Great: "The divine words grow together with the one who reads them." Listening to the word of God introduces and increases ecclesial communion with all those who walk by faith.

56. A deeper understanding of the sacramentality of God's word can thus lead us to a more unified understanding of the mystery of revelation, which takes place through "deeds and words intimately connected"; an appreciation of this can only benefit the spiritual life of the faithful and the Church's pastoral activity.

72. Jerome's counsel to the priest Nepotian can also be applied to us: "Read the divine Scriptures frequently; indeed, the sacred book should never be out of your hands. Learn there what you must teach". Let us follow the example of this great saint who devoted his

life to the study of the Bible and who gave the Church its Latin translation, the Vulgate, as well as the example of all those saints who made an encounter with Christ the centre of their spiritual lives. Let us renew our efforts to understand deeply the word which God has given to his Church: thus we can aim for that “high standard of ordinary Christian living” proposed by Pope John Paul II at the beginning of the third Christian millennium, which finds constant nourishment in attentively hearing the word of God.

86. The word of God is at the basis of all authentic Christian spirituality. For this reason, the privileged place for the prayerful reading of sacred Scripture is the liturgy, and particularly the Eucharist, in which, as we celebrate the Body and Blood of Christ in the sacrament, the word itself is present and at work in our midst. In some sense the prayerful reading of the Bible, personal and communal, must always be related to the Eucharistic celebration. Just as the adoration of the Eucharist prepares for, accompanies and follows the liturgy of the Eucharist, so too prayerful reading, personal and communal, prepares for, accompanies and deepens what the Church celebrates when she proclaims the word in a liturgical setting. By so closely relating lectio and liturgy, we can better grasp the criteria which should guide this practice in the area of pastoral care and in the spiritual life of the People of God.

121. We must never forget that all authentic and living Christian spirituality is based on the word of God proclaimed, accepted, celebrated, and meditated upon in the Church.