



Why reducing it to the Bible impoverishes faith and how the Church has kept it alive for centuries

There are phrases that sound very pious, but hide a deep confusion. One of the most frequently repeated today is this: *“The Word of God is the Bible.”* For many Christians this seems obvious, almost unquestionable. However, **for a Catholic, this statement is incomplete and theologically incorrect.**

The Word of God is not reduced to the Bible.

The Bible is **the written Word of God**, yes. But **it is not the totality of the Word of God.**

And this distinction is not an academic detail nor a dispute among theologians: **it directly affects how we live the faith, how we understand the Church, authority, the liturgy, and our relationship with God today.**

This article seeks to help you **understand, love, and live the Word of God in all its richness**, as the Church has received it, safeguarded it, and handed it on for two thousand years.

1. Before the Bible, the Word already existed

Let us begin with what is essential.

- **God did not begin to speak when the Bible was written.**
- **God first spoke through actions, through people, through a living history.**

Biblical faith is not born from a book, but from an **encounter**.

*“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”
(Hebrews 1:1-2)*

The **Word of God is, first of all, a Person: Jesus Christ.**



Jesus **did not write any book.**

Jesus **did not command books to be written.**

Jesus **founded a Church** and entrusted His teaching to concrete men: the Apostles.

2. The Word of God is the living Christ, not just a text

Saint John expresses it with disarming clarity:

*“And the Word became flesh and dwelt among us”
(John 1:14)*

The Word is not first ink on paper.

The Word is **the eternal Word of the Father**, made flesh, with a voice, gestures, silences, miracles, death, and resurrection.

- **The Bible bears witness to the Word**, but **does not exhaust it.**
 - Confusing the witness with the fullness of the Mystery is to reduce it.
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3. Scripture and Tradition: two inseparable forms of the same Word

The Church teaches with absolute clarity —and here there is no ambiguity— that:

The Word of God is contained in Sacred Scripture and Sacred Tradition.

This is not a “Catholic opinion.”

It is solemn doctrine of the Second Vatican Council:



*“Sacred Tradition and Sacred Scripture form one sacred deposit of the Word of God, committed to the Church”
(Dei Verbum, 10)*

What is Sacred Tradition?

It is not “ancient customs” nor “human additions.”

Tradition is:

- The **living teaching of the Apostles**
- Transmitted **orally, liturgically, doctrinally**
- Before, during, and after the writing of the biblical texts

□ **The Bible was born within Tradition**, not the other way around.

4. An uncomfortable fact: the Church existed for centuries without the “Bible” as we know it

During the **first 300 years**, most Christians:

- Could not read
- Had no access to texts
- Did not have a defined “New Testament”

So how did they live the faith?

- ✓ By listening to apostolic preaching
- ✓ By participating in the liturgy
- ✓ By receiving the sacraments
- ✓ By living according to the Tradition they had received

□ **Faith did not depend on a personal book**, but on a **living Church**.



5. Who decided which books make up the Bible?

A key question.

□ **The Bible did not fall from heaven already bound.**

□ It was the Church who, guided by the Holy Spirit, **discerned the canon.**

The Councils of Hippo (393) and Carthage (397) established the biblical canon that Catholics use today.

□ Without Tradition and the Magisterium, **we would not know what is Scripture and what is not.**

6. Reducing the Word of God to the Bible: a Protestant concept

The idea that:

┆ *“The Bible is the only Word of God and the only authority”*

is the principle of **“Sola Scriptura,”** formulated in the Protestant Reformation of the 16th century.

What is the problem?

1. **The Bible never teaches “Sola Scriptura”**
2. Interpretation is left **to individual judgment**
3. Faith is fragmented into thousands of contradictory readings

□ Result: divisions, doctrinal confusion, subjective faith.

Catholic faith, by contrast, rests on an **inseparable tripod:**



- **Sacred Scripture**
 - **Sacred Tradition**
 - **The Magisterium of the Church**
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7. The Word of God continues to speak today

God is not a retired author.

□ **The Word of God is living and active** (cf. Hebrews 4:12).

It speaks today:

- In the **liturgy**, especially in the Eucharist
- In the **authentic Magisterium**
- In the **lives of the saints**
- In the Church's discernment

□ **When the Church teaches faithfully, Christ continues to speak.**

8. A practical theological and pastoral guide

How to live the Word of God in fullness (not just by reading the Bible)

1. Read the Bible *within* the Church

Not as an isolated book, but:

- With the Fathers of the Church
- With the Catechism
- With the liturgy

2. Listen to the Word at Mass

The proclaimed Word **is not private reading**, it is a **sacramental act**.



□ Christ speaks **to His gathered Church**.

3. Be formed in Tradition

- Know the councils
- Read the saints
- Study the Magisterium

This **does not reduce freedom**, it gives roots.

4. Avoid biblicism

Not every verse is interpreted literally or in isolation.

□ The Bible **is understood with the Bible**, but **from the faith of the Church**.

5. Live the Word

The Word is not only memorized:

- It is **obeyed**
- It is **celebrated**
- It is **incarnated**

9. A faith bigger than a book

Loving the Bible is essential.

Reducing faith only to the Bible is to impoverish it.

The Word of God:

- Is **the living Christ**
- Transmitted by **Tradition**
- Safeguarded by **the Church**
- Illuminated by **Scripture**

Or as Saint Augustine said with striking clarity:



“I would not believe the Gospel unless moved to do so by the authority of the Catholic Church.”

Conclusion: come back home

In a fragmented world, the Catholic faith offers something revolutionary:
a living, complete, coherent Word, embodied in a concrete Church.

Do not settle for a reduced Christianity.
Do not imprison God’s voice within a few pages.

- **Read the Bible.**
- **Listen to Tradition.**
- **Remain in the Church.**

There —and only there— **the Word of God is revealed in all its fullness.**