

For the Catholic Church, God's Revelation is found in Sacred Tradition, understood as God's Revealed Word handed down by the Living Teaching Authority established by Christ in the Church. That includes both Written Tradition (Scripture) and Unwritten Tradition received from Christ and handed down Orally by the Apostles and their Successors. The Church founded by Christ on Peter, and only that Church, has been Empowered by Christ to 'Interpret' His Teaching Authoritatively in His Name.

Scripture is *Inspired*; *Inspiration* really means that God Himself is the Chief Author of the Scriptures. He uses a Human Agent, in so marvelous a way that the Human writes what the Holy Spirit wants him to write, does so without Error, yet the Human Writer is Free, and keeps his own Style of Language. It is only because God is *Transcendent that He can do this - insure Freedom from Error, while leaving the Human Free. To say He is Transcendent means that He is above and beyond all our Human Classifications and Categories.*

John was writing his eye-witness account of Jesus some thirty years later than the other three accounts, possibly around 95AD. There had been time for growth, reflection and observation. Many thousands of Christians had by then lost their lives for their faith in the Lord Jesus, both in Rome and in Jerusalem. John himself had been in prison and was now in exile, the last of Jesus' twelve apostles to remain alive.

Considered one of the most important Catholic theologians and Bible commentators, Cornelius à Lapide's, S.J. writings on the Bible, created a Scripture Commentary so complete and scholarly that it was practically the universal commentary in use by Catholics for over 400 years. Fr. Lapide's most excellent commentaries have been widely known for successfully combining piety and practicality. Written during the time of the Counter Reformation, it includes plenty of apologetics. His vast knowledge is only equaled by his piety and holiness.

Continuation of John 17: 18-26

Ver. 18.—*As Thou hast sent Me into the world, even so I also have sent them into the world.* This is a fresh reason for Christ commending His Apostles to the Father, to preserve and sanctify them. For as Thou hast sent Me into the world to restore and sanctify it, so do I send My Apostles through all nations to sanctify them. They need therefore great holiness, so as not to be ensnared by their allurements, or overpowered by their persecutions, and also that they may sanctify them who are utterly depraved by their vices. Sanctify them therefore, O Father, more and more every day, that they may be able to sanctify numerous others.

Ver. 19.—*And for their sakes I sanctify Myself, that they also might be sanctified through the truth.* 1st S. Augustine uses the word sanctify in its proper sense. I as the Son of God sanctify human nature which I have assumed, that by it I may sanctify the Apostles. As S. Augustine says, "When the Word was made flesh, He sanctified Himself in Himself; Himself the man, in Himself the Word, because the Word and the Man is one Christ. But He says it for the sake of His members; and for these I sanctify

together with Thee, and may cleave more closely to them through Thy ever-increasing grace and charity within them. For God, when He loves rational creatures, pours into them that most precious and most Divine gift of grace, and charity. And this He does not do to irrational beings, as the sky, the sun, the stars, though He still loves them, by creating, adorning, and governing them by His love. This is the meaning of “Thy love may be in them,” for, as S. Paul says, “the love of God is shed abroad in our hearts by the Holy Spirit which is given us” (Rom. v. 5). Rupertus explains it somewhat otherwise, “that the Holy Spirit, who is the Love wherewith Thou lovest Me, may ever firmly dwell and abide in them.” But it comes to the same thing. For the Holy Spirit cannot be separated from charity, any more than fire from heat. For to whom charity is given, the Holy Spirit is given also. And as long as charity abides in a man, so long does the Holy Spirit abide, and indeed the whole Trinity. See above, xiv. 23.

Myself, that is, them in Me, because in Me they are even Myself. That they also might be sanctified. What meaneth this, *‘that they too,’* but that they may be sanctified even as I, and in the Truth which I Myself am?”

2d, and correctly, “I offer Myself to Thee as a Holy Victim,” *i.e.*, within a few hours I shall offer It upon the Cross, so that they may by It “be sanctified in the truth,” that is, that by Thy word which is truth, and no shadow, they may be sanctified, be truly Thine, and devote themselves, for Thee, to Apostolic labours; in order to convert all nations to Thee, and thus by the sufferings they endure, even martyrdom itself, they may offer themselves to Thee, just as I do Myself. So S. Chrysostom, S. Cyril (at great length), Rupertus, S. Thomas, Jansenius, Maldonatus, Toletus, Ribera, and others.

Ver. 20.—Neither pray I for these alone, but for them also which shall believe on Me through their words. Up to this point Christ prayed for the Apostles, and for those who were immediately converted by them. Now He prays for the whole Church, and for all future generations of Christians, for He is their Father and Patriarch, King and Prince, Pontiff and Hierarch. All these (says Toletus) did Christ as man behold in the Divine Essence, as distinctly and perfectly as though they were present, or perhaps it was by infused knowledge. For it was this latter that pertained to Christ as man, inasmuch as He was merely a wayfarer (viator); whereas the sight of the Divine Essence would be His, not as journeying, but as beatified. So Suarez. With that knowledge then He beheld us one by one, and all the faithful who would hereafter be born, and for each and all He asked and obtained from God the grace which was fitting for each. And it is by the force of this prayer, that the faithful, each in their own day, obtain all their blessings from God. He prayed then for all the Martyrs, all the Doctors of the Church, for all Virgins. He brought them all severally to the birth as His own Benjamin's, and therefore every Christian should offer unbounded thanks to Christ for those His labour pains, and repay love for love, blood for blood, death for death.

Ver. 21.—That they may be all one. By one faith, hope, charity, and concord. Learn hence how united Christians should be amongst themselves, and how far removed are they who disseminate discord and strife, from the mind of Christ.

As Thou, Father, art in Me, and I in Thee, that they also may be one in Us. For God is love, and he that abideth in love abideth in God, and God in him. 1 John iv. 16. By faith then and love we are united to God and Christ, and afterwards mutually to each other as to members of Christ's Mystical Body, the Church. The word “as” does not mean identity, as the Arians held, but merely resemblance. For the Father and the Son are one by the same numerical Essence and Godhead, we are one by having the same quality; namely, love and concord. But by this we are so united to God as to possess

Him, and be in turn possessed by Him. Hear the author "*De Salutaribus documentis*," assigned to S. Augustine [probably Paulinus of Aquileia]: "If we are pleased at possessing anything in this world, it is good for us to keep in our minds God who created and is the Possessor of all things, and to have in Him all that we holily and happily desire. But since no one possesses God, save he that is possessed by Him, let us become the possession of God, and He will become our possession. For what greater happiness can there be in the world, than to have our Lord and our Redeemer counted as our own, and whose inheritance the Godhead deigns to be? For we enjoy every blessing from Him if we live from Him, and in Him. For what, I ask you, suffices a man, if the Creator Himself does not suffice him? What does he seek further, whose Redeemer ought to be his sole joy, and everything to him? By love therefore we are so united to God as to be made one Spirit, that so all earthly desires in us may be swallowed up, and our whole mind be so raised up by its affections to God, as to be, in a way, deified. Just as a drop of water poured into generous wine is absorbed in it, and as iron when heated passes into heat, though the nature of the iron still remains, and as the air illumined by the sun turns into light, so that it seems to be nothing else but the light of the sun," And S. Bernard (*Sermon lxxi. on Cant.*) says, "Who is He that cleaves perfectly to God, save He who, abiding in God, as beloved by Him, has in like measure drawn God into himself by loving Him in return? And thus when men cleave to each other on all sides, being bound up in their mutual and intimate love for each other, I should not hesitate to say that in this way God was in man and man in God." This union they feel and enjoy, who with Magdalen pass a contemplative life. For in that life the loving soul flows away from itself, and reduced, as it were to nothing, falls back, and is absorbed into the abyss of eternal love, and being utterly dead to itself, lives only to God, knowing nothing, and caring for nothing except Himself. For it loses itself in the boundless solitude and depth of the Godhead, but to lose itself thus, is far happier and far more for its own good, than to find itself. For stripping itself of everything human, and arraying itself in everything which is Divine, it is thus transformed and changed into God. O truly blessed is the soul, which has laid aside all its own. O truly blessed is the soul, which casting off every action which springs from itself in its power of memory, strips itself of all its imaginings, in its understanding feels and cherishes the brilliant rays of the Sun of righteousness, in its faculty of desire feels a certain glow of calm love, or the action of the Holy Spirit flowing with rivers of eternal sweetness, like some real fountain. For when it is set free and detached from all things else, and it exists in its own simplicity, and is cleansed as a bright mirror, the Lord is wont to enlighten it with the rays of His own Divine brightness. For when God Himself is acting, man is only passive. For when the powers of the soul are resting, and not engaged in their own proper actions, and set free from any outward impressions, God Himself speaks, and disposes, and impresses those powers of the soul just as He pleases, carrying on within a most glorious work. And therefore, O most generous, O most noble soul, keep thyself pure and free, rush not ahead for every variety of sensual pleasure, but restrain thy senses, dwell in thine own thoughts, turn thyself ardently to God, and immersed a thousand times daily in the abyss of the Godhead, be careful to swim up and down therein. Pant for that supernatural union of the spirit with God, fly back to God from whom thou derivest thy being, for He is the uncreated Light, and the Light also of eternity." Accordingly S. Bernard rightly exclaims (*De Div. Amor, cap. iv.*), "O happy, yea most happy soul,

Thou lovedst Me,' it means, it is a manifest proof that Thou lovedst Me with an infinite love from all eternity, because in begetting Me, Thou gavest Me Thy glory and Godhead. But He begat Him not from mere love, but from His own natural fecundity as God. The Father therefore first begat the Son. He then loved Him whom He had begotten, for He had begotten One who was in all respects like Himself." So Jansenius.

Before the foundation of the world. This signifies that the world was not in any single part eternal, but, both in matter and form and all its other qualities, was created by God in the beginning of time, when its foundations were laid.

Ver. 25.—*O righteous Father, the world hath not known Thee: but I have known Thee, and these have known that Thou hast sent Me.* Why does He call the Father 'Righteous?' (1.) S. Augustine (*in loc.*) says, "Because He justly deprived the world and the ungodly of the knowledge of Himself. For it is His justice that the truth of God is not revealed to some, by reason of their sins. But it is His mercy that it is manifested to others." (2.) S. Cyril (xi. 29) thinks He is so called because He condemned the devil, and deprived him of his power, wherewith he held the world captive, and kept him from attaining that immortality for which he was created. The meaning then is: O righteous Father, the world hath not known, this Thy justice, which Thou didst exercise upon the devil, for the world's sake. For had it known it, all would have flocked to Thee. (3.) Toletus thinks it was, because He preferred heavenly glory for the Apostles who followed Him, which glory He here asked for them, and from which He shut out the unbelieving world. For this conferring of glory is a righteous act. See 2 Tim. iv. 8. (4.) Ribera, more plainly, and more to the point, refers the word to what follows. Having asked for heavenly glory for the Apostles, and having refused to give these gifts to the unbelieving, as the Scribes and Pharisees who would not follow Him, He says, as it were, "It is just that the proud should be cast off, and these blessings be conferred on these Thy little ones." These proud ones have not recognised nor worshipped Thee. But I have acknowledged and loved Thee. And My disciples, after My pattern, have acknowledged Thee, and believed in Me. I have therefore given them great knowledge of Thee, and will give them greater after I have risen, and sent the Holy Spirit. Just as from the same cause He exulted in the Spirit (Matt. xi. 25).

Ver. 26.—*And I have declared unto them Thy Name, and will declare It* (after My Resurrection and the sending of the Holy Spirit): *that the love wherewith Thou hast loved Me may be in them, and I in them.* That is, that Thou mayest continue towards them the love wherewith Thou lovest Me, and Mine also for My sake. And indeed manifest it in greater measure, and daily benefit them more and more, pouring Thy graces and blessings upon them: so that they may daily make great progress in sanctity and in their Apostolic work. And that in this way I may continually abide in them

wondrous lifting up of the soul to God, in which it is impossible to explain how it feels towards Him. And two other effects follow, a sense of security, so that the soul fears not any suffering for God's sake, and is fully confident that it will never be separated from Him; and perfect rest, when there is nothing which can inspire fear; and this is called 'the peace which passeth all understanding.' This is the Paradise of God, to which we can ascend, even when living among men in the body." He then sets forth, from S. Thomas, three means of obtaining this union with God and Christ, viz., Boldness, severity, and gentleness of mind. Boldness, to drive away all negligence, and to dispose a man to perform all good works confidently, vigilantly, and methodically. Severity against concupiscence, which brings with it an ardent love of hardness, profiting, and poverty. Gentleness, to expel all rancour, anger, envy, austerity, bitterness, and hardness against one's neighbour. For the soul must first be purged from the dregs of earthly affections, before it is able to ascend simply and purely to God. For as it is the property of fire to ascend, so do souls, when set free from the burden of evil affections, rise up to God, who is their proper resting-place.

And that the world (the faithful in the world) may know that Thou hast sent Me. But how? (1.) In the Beatific Vision, says S. Augustine (*in loc.*) But then we are here treating of knowledge in this world by faith. (2.) Others say that we shall know by the glory which Christ says above He had received of the Father, and given to the faithful. Whence S. Ambrose (as referred to ver. 22) explains it thus: "The faithful will know that Thou hast sent Me into the world in the flesh, by reason of the Sonship, which I have bestowed on them, in adopting them to be the sons of God. And they will from this know also that Thou hast loved them as Thou hast loved Me: them as my adopted sons, *Meas Thy Son by nature.*" (3.) S. Cyril (xi. 27) and S. Hilary (*de Trin. lib. viii.*) explain it thus of the Eucharist. They will know thereby two things—first, that I am Thy Son, sent by Thee into the world. For they could not be united to us, unless I had the Godhead in that Flesh, which I gave them in the Eucharist; and secondly, that Thou lovedst them, as thou lovedst Me, because Thou gavest to them the Godhead which thou didst *unite* with My flesh, viz. by giving them My flesh in the Eucharist. (4.) Ribera explains it more simply. The world acknowledges it from the holiness and the mutual charity of the Apostles, by which they were "made perfect in one." For, as S. Chrysostom rightly says, "The Lord judges that concord is more powerful to persuade than miracles." And "Thou hast loved them by making them Apostles, as Thou hast loved Me," begetting Me as Thy Son and in sending Me as Thy ambassador into the world. He thus raises their minds to endure all hardships for Christ's sake.

Ver. 24.—Father I will that they also whom Thou hast given Me may be with Me where I am; that they may behold My glory, which Thou hast given Me: because Thou lovedst Me before the foundation of the world. He sets forth, says S. Chrysostom, "the rewards which await them after death, to show the love of Christ the more towards them, and to make them more resolute," and as S. Cyril says, "He wishes to teach that none will see His glory but those for whom He prayed, and who by Him are united to the Father. For He says, "those whom Thou hast given Me." And I earnestly desire that they may behold the glory, not only of my manhood exalted to the right Hand of the Father (as SS. Augustine and Cyril explain), but also of My Godhead. "For in this right does our blessedness essentially consist. But when He says, 'Because

whom God vouchsafes to influence so that by unity of spirit with God it loves God only, and not its own private good, and loves itself only as in God; while God loves or approves in it only that which He ought to approve, that is to say Himself, which in truth ought alone to be loved both by the Creator and the creature. For the name and feeling of love belongs and is due to Thee alone, O thou beloved Lord, Thou true love." And he concludes thus with the words from S. John, "This is the will of Thy Son in us. This His prayer to Thee His Father, I will that as I and Thou art one, so they also may be one in Us. This is the end, this the consummation, this is perfection, this is peace, this is joy in the Holy Ghost, this is silence in heaven."

That the world may believe that Thou hast sent Me. Not merely through its unity and agreement in doctrine, as Euthymius supposes, but through its union with God and Christ. That is, even by this mark alone will the world believe Christ to be the Son of God, because it will behold Christians both united to God and Christ as well as by mutual love to each other. For it will see that such an union could not be effected except by Christ and God. And therefore it will be attracted by this, so as, though now unbelieving, to cast off its unbelief and to believe. The "world" is here used in a good sense, as in John iii. 17 and 2 Cor. v. 19. Jansen less correctly considers the "world" here to mean the reprobate; in this sense, "That it will be forced by the evidence of the miracles and the holiness of My disciples to confess Me to be God. As S. James says, 'the devils believe and tremble.'"

Ver. 22.—And the glory Thou gavest Me I have given them, that they may be one, even as we are one. By the "glory," understand:

1. The glory of the Divine Sonship. For Christ has this as God by nature, and as man by the hypostatical Union. And this He gives to the holy faithful ones, to have it not by nature, but by adoption, and to be the sons of God, not by nature, as Christ, but as adopted. So Jansenius, and before him, S. Ambrose, v. 4.
2. Maldonatus understands by the word "the love," that whereby the Father glorified Him at His baptism, and elsewhere by showing Him forth as His Beloved Son.
3. Leontius and Ribera understand it to be the Eucharist, for in this the Godhead and Manhood of Christ are given to us. And this is the highest glory, for we being many are one Body, for we are all partakers of the one Body and the one Cup. (1 Cor. x.) And in like manner S. Cyril, xi. 26, and S. Hilary (*de Trinit. viii.*), explain it of the Godhead of the Word united to the flesh, for Christ received this as man from the Father, when the Word was made flesh. And this Christ gave to us when He made His flesh to be our food, and He is united really and truly to us by this wonderful sacrament. Toletus takes the same view, who thus explains it, I have already made them one by the glory I received from Thee. Give, O Father, thy Holy Spirit, that they may also become one. This glory is the Godhead of the Son,

which He says He has received as man through the Hypostatic Union. And this Godhead united to His flesh Christ gave to us in the sacrament which He had just instituted.

Symbolically. S. Chrysostom and Euthymius understand by 'glory' both the miraculous power which Christ gave His disciples, and also the unity of concord, of which it was said, "that they may be one." For these two were an effectual argument for confirming the truth of the Faith, namely miracles, and the wonderful agreement in the *belief* of them.

Anagogically. S. Augustine (*in loc.*) says, "This is the glorifying of the body. The immortality and glory which after three days I will give to My Flesh and Manhood at My Resurrection, 'I have given,' *i.e.*, I will give most assuredly, to the faithful at the general resurrection."

Ver. 23.—*I in them, and Thou in Me, that they may be made perfect in one, and that the world may know that Thou hast sent Me, and has loved them as Thou hast loved Me.* That their union may be consummated and perfected, as the union of many members in one Body and Head. For, as many members make up one body, so do the many faithful bind together the one mystical Body of Christ, which is His Church. Again, all the members are united and made complete in one head, so are all Christians in One Christ and God. Toletus appositely explains it of the Holy Eucharist; "I am in them," he says, "by My flesh given them as their true and real food, but Thou art in Me, because Thy Godhead is united to My flesh. If therefore the Godhead is in My flesh, and My flesh is in the believers, it comes to pass that the Godhead also is in believers through the medium of the Body of Christ. Believers therefore have in themselves both the Body of Christ, and by means of It the Godhead. They become one, and have through Christ a kind of unity by reason of their flesh, and so are consummated in one, that is, become perfectly one, as not only being united amongst themselves, and with God, as to their souls, which is effected by the Holy Spirit, but also as to their very bodies."

Hence S. Dionysius (*De. Divin. Nom. cap. iv.*) teaches that Divine Love revolves in a circle, because it comes from God the Father to the Son, and thence to the Holy Spirit, through Whom it returns to the Father and the Son. For the Holy Spirit is the reasonable love of the Father and the Son. Again, it moves in a circle, because it comes from God into the creatures (especially into men and angels), and converts them to the love and enjoyment of God. For as God is the efficient cause of love, so also is He its end. For love transfers him who loves into the beloved object itself. For the soul is really more in that which it loves than in that which it animates. "Therefore S. Paul (Dionysius says), that mighty man, when already led captive by Divine Love, and endued with its strength, which lifts up a man from his own state, says with inspired lips, 'I live, yet not I, but Christ liveth in Me' (*Gal. ii. 20*). And as a true lover, lifted above his own sphere, he lives to God, not his own life, but the life of Him who loves him, as in truth a life which is greatly to be loved." And afterwards he defines love as "a power impelling to action, and attracting upwards to itself, &c., which originates from goodness, and flows from that source of goodness to the things

which exist, and thence flows back to goodness. And in this, Divine Love especially shows that It has neither beginning nor end. For it is a perpetual circle, which, springing from a good source (from that which is good) in good deeds, and by turning, back from all which is wrong towards that which is good, sets itself free, and, though abiding in the same spot, is ever advancing, and yet stationary, and comes round on itself."

He then proves it by the authority of his teacher, S. Hierotheus, who says, By love, whether Divine or angelic or spiritual, or so to speak animal or natural, we must understand a force which unites and blends together, which impels those which are superior to consult the good of those who are inferior, which leads those on a level to join in intercourse with each other, and inferiors to look up to superiors. Hence, too, the Egyptians represented God as a circle, but to show rather that He was eternal, without beginning or ending, and accordingly boundless. Whence the saying, "God is a circle, whose centre is everywhere, and whose circumference is nowhere." The Persians also called Jupiter the circle of heaven; and the Saracens too represent God under the same image.

Tropologically. Holy souls strive after perfect union with Christ, forgetting, as it were, everything beside, to keep Him ever before their eyes, to strive in all things to please Him, continually to hold mental converse with Him. And accordingly they withdraw themselves as far as they can from external objects, and hold colloquy with Christ in their hearts. Bartholomew de Martyribus, Archbishop of Braga, in his "Golden Compendium of Spiritual Doctrine," cap. xv., which Louis of Grenada published after his death, and professes that by reading it he profited greatly, as I also say myself, gives three tokens of such inward union:- "(1.) The first is, If the intellect no longer gives utterance to any thoughts save such as the light of faith inspires, and the will, trained by long practice, gives forth no acts of love, except towards God, or with reference to Him. (2.) That as soon as it ceases from any outward employment, in which it is engaged, the understanding and the will are readily turned towards God, just as a stone, when an obstacle is removed, speedily settles down on its point of rest. (3.) If, when prayer is over, it entirely forgets all external objects, as though it had never seen or been engaged in them, and is so disposed towards outward things as though it were now for the first time entering into the world, and feared to engage in external matters, as if naturally shrinking from them, unless charity compelled,—such a soul, set free from all outward things, easily withdraws within itself, where only it sees God, and itself in God; and frequently devotes itself to fervid and unitive acts of love. But this fervent love produces, as holy men say, six effects. (1.) Illumination, that is a relishing and experimental knowledge of God, and of its own nothingness. (2.) Warmth. (3.) Sweetness or delight. (4.) An ardent desire to obtain divine blessings. (5.) Satiety, for the mind is so satiated with that coming of God to it, that it wishes or desires nothing further. (6.) Rapture, or a