**Symbolon: The Catholic Faith Explained**

**Part 1: Knowing The Faith**

*Episode 2: Divine Revelation*

**Part 1**

***Focus 1***

* Inside the dome of the very center of St. Peter’s Basilica in Rome we find the words spoken by Jesus to Peter. *“You are Peter and upon this rock I will build my Church and I will give you the keys to the Kingdom of Heaven.”* (Matt. 16:18-19)
* ***As Catholics we recognize the special authority that Jesus gave to Peter to serve the Church in its mission to pass on all that Jesus revealed and we believe that Jesus wanted that authority to be handed on throughout the centuries to Peter’s successors, the Popes.***
* *Do we really need an authoritative teacher to guide and show us the way to God?*
* *Can we just be spiritual and find our own path to God?*
* *Can we just go to the scriptures for all that we need to know about our life?*
* *Is it important that we know how God reveals Himself to us in Divine Revelation?*

***Focus 2***

* *“I will give you the Keys of the Kingdom.”* What do these words mean?
* The King had a prime minister who was responsible for the day to day affairs of his kingdom.
* ***“And I will place on his shoulder the key of the House of David; He shall open and none shall shut; And he shall shut, and none shall open; And I will fasten him like a peg in a sure place; and he will become a throne of honor to his Father’s house.”*** *(Isaiah 22:22)*
* Jesus was establishing Peter as His principle leader. The one who will be in charge of the affairs of His Kingdom. This prime minister’s role is passed on to Peter’s successors; the Popes.
* One of the Pope’s chief responsibility is to guard and proclaim all that God has revealed.

***Focus 3***

* The whole reason that God came was so that He could reveal Himself in order that we might have a personal relationship with him. That is the point of Divine Revelation.
* God revealed Himself fully in the person of Jesus Christ.
* In Matthew 16:15 Jesus asks, *“Who do you say that I am*?” Peter state that Jesus is the Messiah or the Christ. **Jesus acknowledges what Peter has said is a statement of faith; An assent or yes to faith on what the Holy Spirit has revealed to Peter.**
* There can be two people who are both spiritual as well as religious. Both individuals have a sincere desire to have a close and intimate relationship with God.
* These two people may read the same passage in the bible and have two completely different understandings of what a passage in scripture may mean.
* This lack of authority in the Protestant Reformation has resulted in over thirty thousand Christian denominations with each denomination having a different interpretation of the Scripture.

**Part II**

***Focus 1***

* Revelation means “*unveiling*”. In the analogy that Dr. Sri uses the bride lifts her veil reveals her face to her husband at the end of the ceremony. Like a bride unveiling herself to her husband God lovingly unveils himself to us.
* God’s revelation is about disclosing His very self to us. It is in disclosing Himself to us that He can enter into a profound, intimate and personal relationship with you and all of humanity.
* Jesus Christ is the fullness of Revelation. God revealed Himself to man over a long period of time in the Old Testament with the Covenants and the prophets. Both the Covenants and the prophets were all leading to the fullness of God’s Revelation in the person of Jesus Christ*.*
* The fullness of Revelation is the ***Deposit of Faith***. Apostles handed on both their knowledge of revelation and authority to the bishops.
* ***“Brethren, stand firm and hold to the traditions which you were taught by us, Either by word of mouth or by letter.”*** *(2 Thessalonians 2:15)*
* St. Paull is instructing the early Christian community to embrace both scriptures and tradition; Written and oral tradition are riches that help us encounter the mysteries of Christ.
* The oral traditions were handed down and were entrusted to the church so that as Catholics we can say that we have the whole word of God as our sole rule of faith.

***Focus 2***

* **Deposit of faith has two elements.**

1. **Sacred Tradition** (Handed on orally)
2. **Sacred Scripture** (Committed to writing)

* This whole Deposit of Faith is handed on by the bishops from generation to generation. The bishops in union with the pope are what we call the Magisterium or the teaching authority of the Church whose job it is to safeguard the Deposit of Faith.

**Apostle Paul**

* When the apostle Paul went into a city or community he would teach and preach to the people of the community. He handed on the Gospel orally. Paul would instruct the people on how to worship and celebrate the Eucharist. This handling on of the gospel orally is sacred tradition.
* Paul would also appoint leaders in these Christian communities who were successors of the Apostles who would serve as bishops. The local Church leaders would continue to orally hand on the teaching of Christ and the Apostles.
* Paul also handed on the Gospel in written form through his letters to the early Christian communities.
* When these early Christian communities received these letters from Paul not only did, they receive them as the authoritative apostolic teaching of Paul but soon determined that these writings of Paul were inspired by the Holy Spirit. They were sacred scriptures that became part of the New Testament.
* ***The Apostle Paul was handing on the Word of God orally through Sacred Tradition and through written letters which became part of the Sacred Scripture of the New Testament.***

***Focus 3***

* **Sola Scriptura:** The Bible was never meant to be read alone by itself apart from the Church and authority. Sola Scriptura is the belief that the Bible is the only infallible authority with no authoritative interpreter or interpretive community.
* Sola Scriptura is unbiblical. Nowhere in the Bible does it state that the Bible is the only source of divine revelation. In 2 Thessalonians Paul instructs the Christian community to hold fast to the traditions that he has handed on to them.
* Sola Scriptura is unhistorical: Infallible authority of the Apostles preceded the infallible authority of the New Testament
* Sola Scriptura is unworkable: If every Christian is to interpret the Bible for themselves controversies and divisions result for people will not agree on the meaning of the scriptures.

***Apostle Peter***

* ***“The word of God abides forever. The word is the Good News which has been preached to you.”*** *(1 Peter 1:25) What* St. Peter is saying is that the Word of God cannot be limited to Scripture alone.
* The Word of God in Tradition is just as important as the Word of God that is written because both are vehicles of this transmission of the word of God.

***Focus 4***

* *What is Sacred Tradition?*
* ***Sacred Tradition: “By the Apostles who handed on, by the spoken word of their preaching, By the example they gave, by the institutions that they established, what they themselves received – whether from the lips of Christ , from his way of life and His holy works, or whether they had learned it at the prompting of the Holy Spirit. CCC 76***
* ***I commend you because you remember me in everything and maintain the traditions even as I have delivered them to you.”*** *(1 Corinthians 11:2)*
* ***For I received from the Lord what I also handed on to you, that the Lord Jesus on the night when he was betrayed took bread, and when he had given thanks, He broke it and said this is my body which is for you, do this in remembrance of me. And in the same way, with the cup after supper, ‘This cup is the covenant in my blood, whenever you drink it, do this as a memorial of me. Whenever you eat this bread, then, and drink this cup you are proclaiming the Lord’s death until he comes again. Therefore, anyone who eats the bread or drinks the cup unworthily is answerable for the body and blood of the Lord.”*** *(1 Corinthians 11:23-27)*
* *If the Eucharist is just a symbol and nothing more than a symbol would the person who eats and drinks the cup worthily be answerable for the body and blood of the Lord?*
* Divine Revelation has three elements.

1. Sacred Scripture
2. Sacred Transition
3. Magisterium

* Divine Revelation can be compared to a three-legged stool. The stool is not able to stand without all three legs. All these three elements are essential for the safeguarding and handing on of the faith.

**Focus 5**

**Church Authority – Magisterium**

* The idea of accepting the authority of the Church can be scary. People do not necessarily want the church to tell them how to live their life.
* Parents have rules for their children to protect their children from harm. The rules of the church have a reason and a purpose.
* **Freedom** – Freedom from restriction is not true freedom for we become slaves to our own sins. The purpose of rules is for safety and to set boundaries.