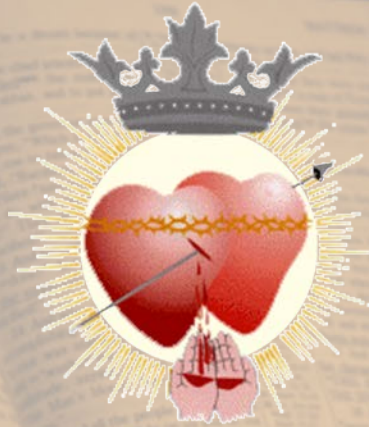


Summary of
Dei Verbum
Dogmatic Constitution
on Divine Revelation
of the II Vatican Council
November 18, 1965





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Servants of the Pierced Hearts of Jesus and Mary

Preface

- The Council Fathers desired to lay out “authentic doctrine on divine revelation and how it is handed on” (DV 1)
 - The document’s intent is to define doctrine on revelation with the vision of a more coherent proclamation of the Good News that has been revealed (cf. 1 John 1:2-3 as cited in DV 1)



Chapter I: Revelation Itself

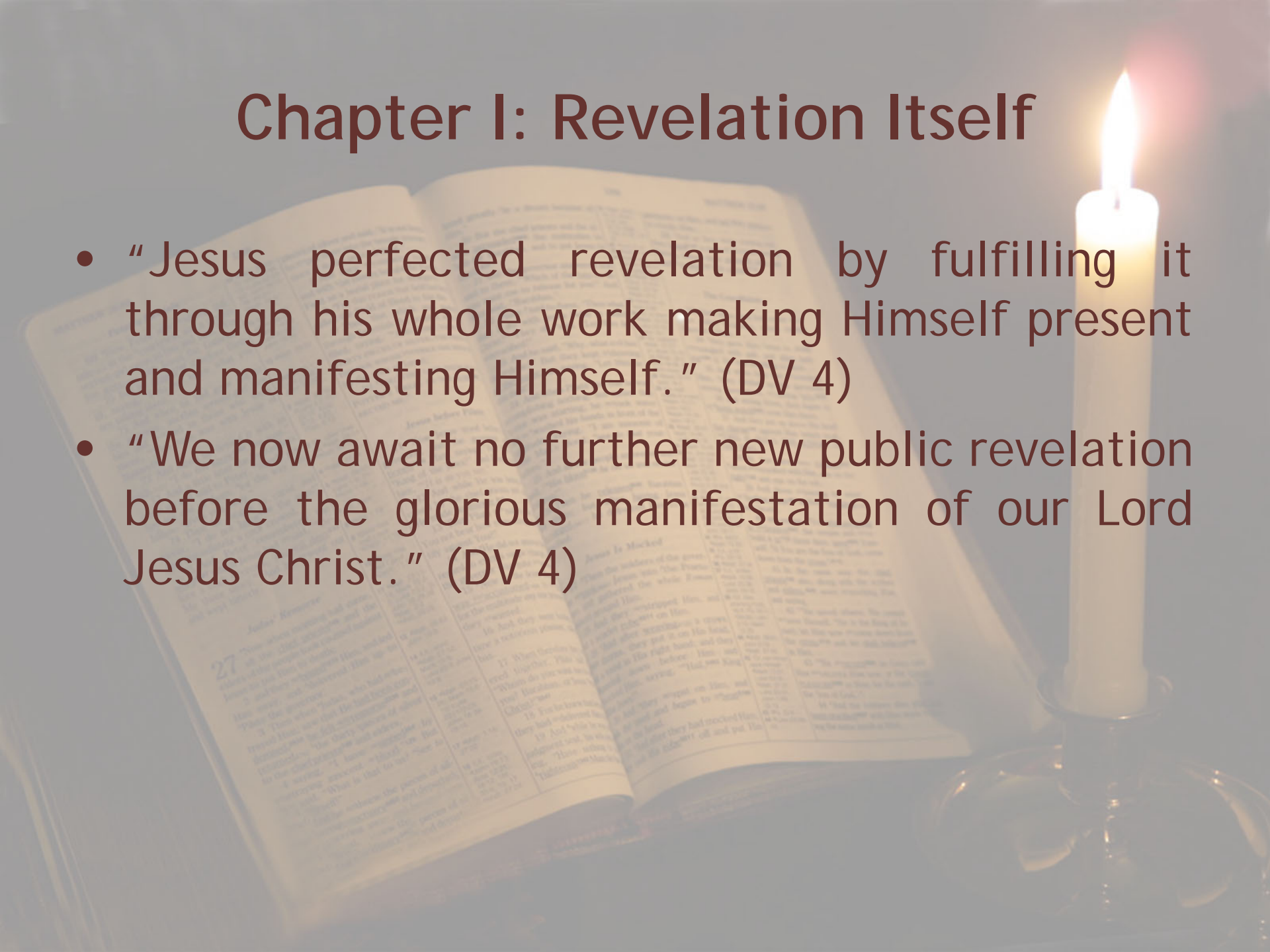
- God's revelation of Himself is rooted in His love for man
 - "In His goodness and wisdom God chose to reveal Himself and to make known to us the hidden purpose of his will..." (DV 2)
 - "The deepest truth about God and the salvation of man shines out for our sake in Christ, who is both the mediator and the fullness of all revelation." (DV 2)

Chapter I: Revelation Itself

- Throughout salvation history, God revealed Himself in ceaselessly keeping “the human race under His care” (DV 3):
 - To our first parents
 - In promising redemption after the Fall
 - Through His covenant with Abraham and the patriarchs
 - Through the Law given to Moses and the teachings given through the prophets which taught His people “to acknowledge ...the one living and true God...and to wait for the Savior promised by Him.” (DV 3)

Chapter I: Revelation Itself

- “Jesus perfected revelation by fulfilling it through his whole work making Himself present and manifesting Himself.” (DV 4)
- “We now await no further new public revelation before the glorious manifestation of our Lord Jesus Christ.” (DV 4)



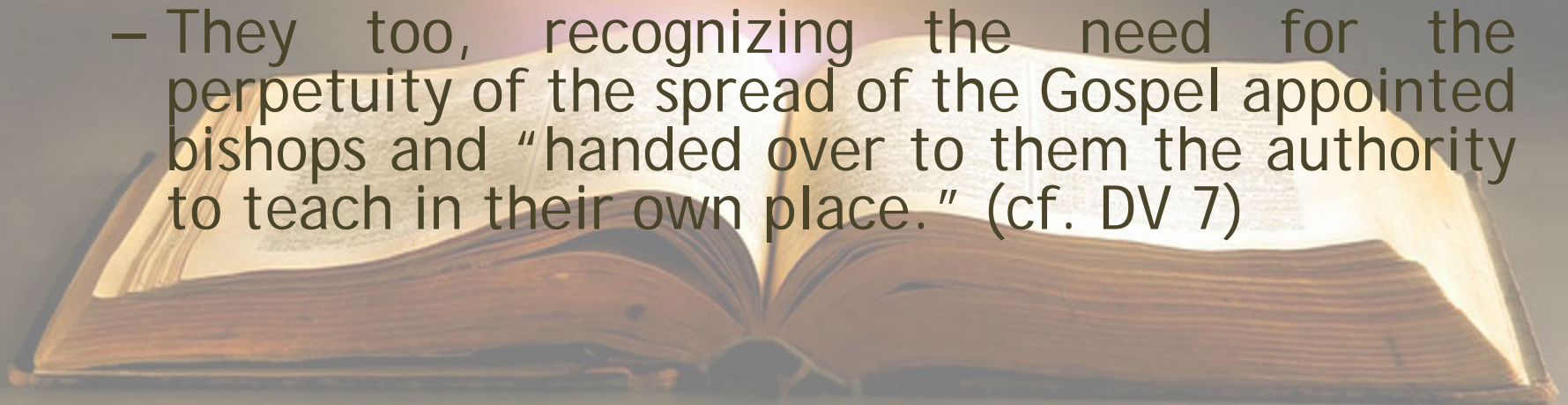
Chapter I: Revelation Itself

- “‘The obedience of faith...is to be given to God who reveals, an obedience by which man commits his whole self freely to God, offering the full submission of intellect and will to God who reveals’ and freely assenting to the truth revealed by Him.” (DV 5)
 - This is the basis of faith, yet the “grace of God and the interior help of the Holy Spirit” (DV 5) must bring the human heart to even respond to God’s revelation

Chapter II: Handing on Divine Revelation

- Sacred Tradition

- Christ “commissioned the Apostles to preach to all men that Gospel which is the source of all saving truth and moral teaching.” (DV 7)
- In doing so, He entrusted them to pass on through “oral preaching, by example, and by observances” (DV 7) the Life they had received from Him
- They too, recognizing the need for the perpetuity of the spread of the Gospel appointed bishops and “handed over to them the authority to teach in their own place.” (cf. DV 7)



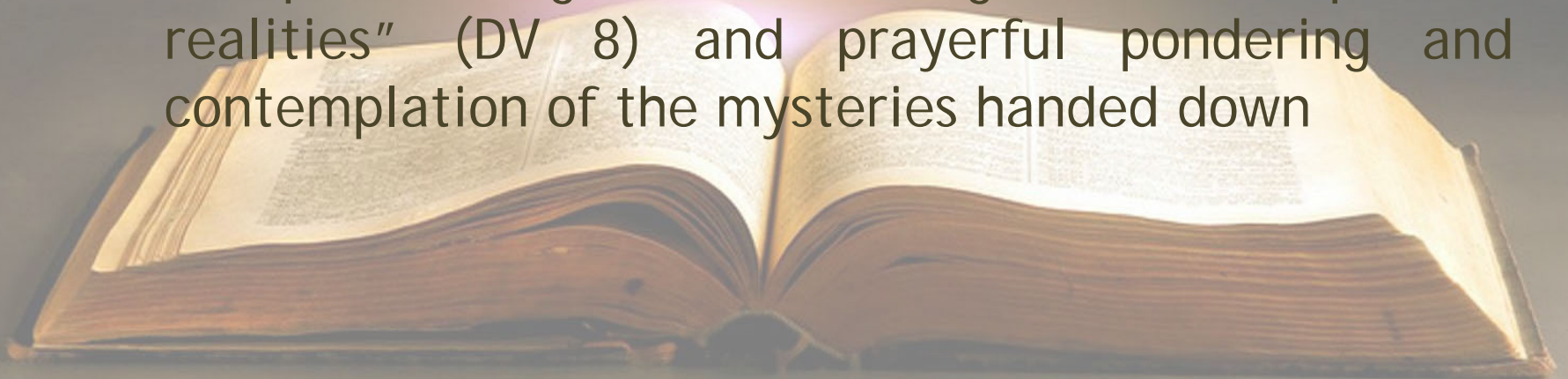
Chapter II: Handing on Divine Revelation

- “This sacred tradition, therefore, and Sacred Scripture of both the Old and New Testaments are like a mirror in which the pilgrim Church on earth looks at God” (DV 7)
 - This sacred tradition includes “everything which contributes toward the holiness of life and increase in faith of the people of God” (DV 8)



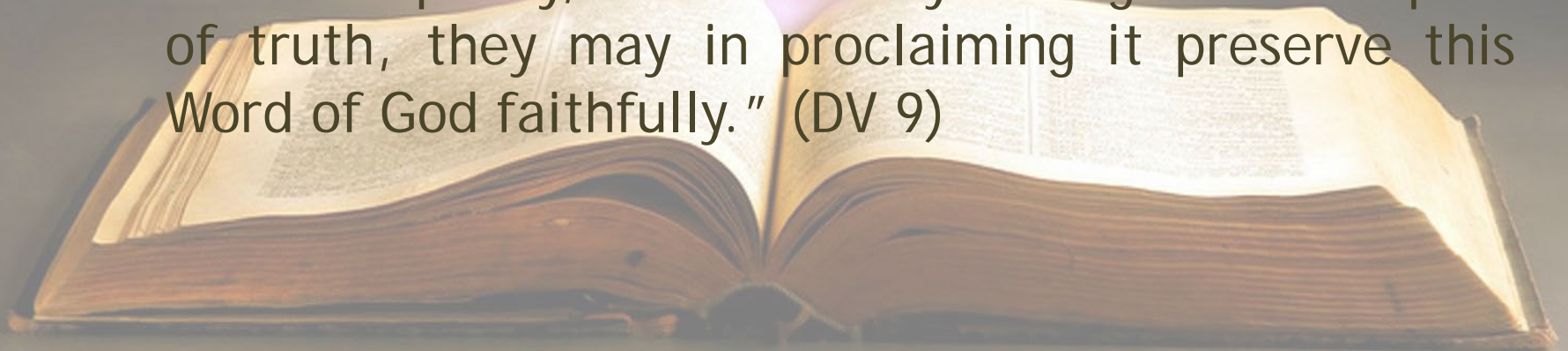
Chapter II: Handing on Divine Revelation

- The development of doctrine and matters of faith seen over the ages of the Church is attributed to the “growth in the understanding of the realities and the words that have been handed down.” (DV 8)
 - This ‘growth in understanding’ only happens through a “penetrating understanding of the spiritual realities” (DV 8) and prayerful pondering and contemplation of the mysteries handed down



Chapter II: Handing on Divine Revelation

- Sacred tradition and Sacred Scripture form one sacred deposit of the Word of God (DV 10)
 - “Sacred Scripture is the word of God inasmuch as it is consigned to writing under the inspiration of the divine Spirit while sacred tradition takes the Word of God entrusted by Christ the Lord and the Holy Spirit to the Apostles, and hands it on to their successors in its full purity, so that led by the light of the Spirit of truth, they may in proclaiming it preserve this Word of God faithfully.” (DV 9)



Chapter II: Handing on Divine Revelation

- The teaching office of the Church “serves [the Word of God], teaching only what has been handed on, listening to it devoutly, guarding it scrupulously and explaining it faithfully.” (DV 10)
 - Here we see the Marian heart of the Church as she “keeps all these things in her heart” (cf. Lk 2:19)



Chapter III: Sacred Scripture, Its Inspiration and Divine Interpretation

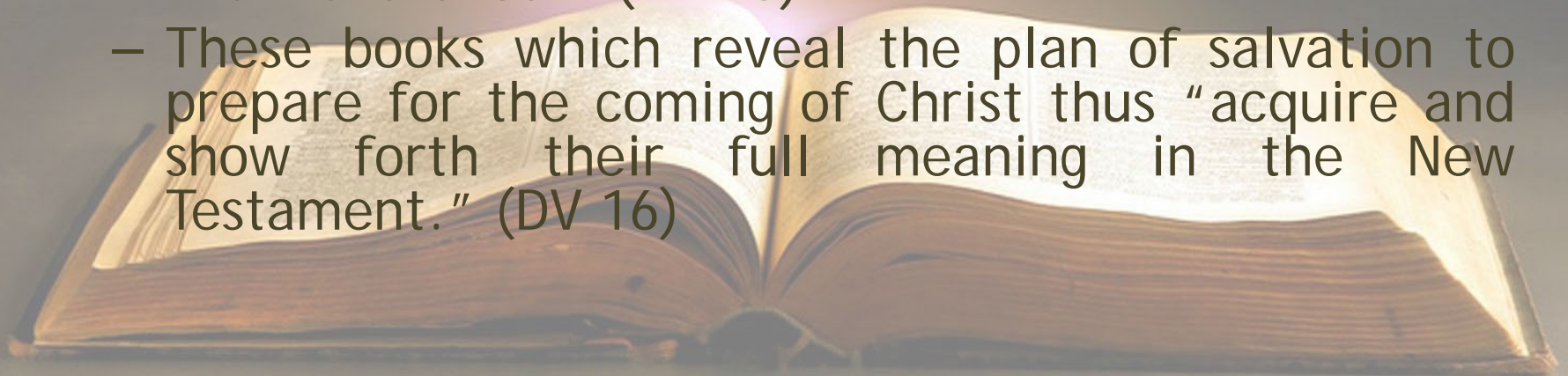
- The historicity of Scripture
 - “Everything asserted by the inspired authors or sacred writers must be held to be asserted by the Holy Spirit, it follows that the books of Scripture must be acknowledged as teaching solidly, faithfully and without error that truth which God wanted put into sacred writings’ for the sake of salvation.” (DV 11)

Chapter III: Sacred Scripture, Its Inspiration and Divine Interpretation

- “To search out the intention of the sacred writers, attention should be given to” (DV 12):
 - Literary forms: historical, prophetic, poetic, etc.
 - These forms express truth differently (cf. DV 12)
 - Customary styles from writer’s historic period
 - “Content and unity of the whole of Scripture” (DV 12)
- Yet the weakness of human language to express divine truths must be recognized (DV 13)

Chapter IV: The Old Testament

- “The plan of salvation foretold by the sacred authors, recounted and explained by them, is found as the true Word of God in the books of the Old Testament: these books, therefore, written under divine inspiration, remain permanently valuable.” (DV 14)
 - The books of the Old Testament reveal “divine pedagogy” and thus “Christians should receive them with reverence.” (DV 15)
 - These books which reveal the plan of salvation to prepare for the coming of Christ thus “acquire and show forth their full meaning in the New Testament.” (DV 16)



Chapter V: The New Testament

- The Gospels

- “Among all the Scriptures, even those of the New Testament, the Gospels have a special preeminence, and rightly so, for they are the principal witness for the life and teaching of the incarnate Word.” (DV 18)
- The Church “unhesitatingly asserts the historical character” of the Gospels (cf. DV 19)
- The authors selected some events to record while summarizing others according to the Church for which they were writing, but always with the purpose to tell “the honest truth about Jesus” (DV 19)

Chapter V: The New Testament

- Other New Testament writings
 - “The writings of the New Testament stand as a perpetual and divine witness to [Christ’s life and the mission of His Apostles]” (DV 17)
 - The “epistles of St. Paul and other apostolic writings, composed under the inspiration of the Holy Spirit, by which...His true teaching is more and more fully stated” (DV 20)

Chapter VI: Sacred Scripture in the Life of the Church

- Sacred Scripture and sacred tradition are “the supreme rule of faith” (DV 21)
 - “All the preaching of the Church must be nourished and regulated by Sacred Scripture.” (DV 21)
 - “Easy access to Sacred Scripture should be provided for all the Christian faithful.” (DV 22)



Chapter VI: Sacred Scripture in the Life of the Church

- Study of the Fathers and the Scriptures
 - Essential under the guide of the teaching office of the Church to aid ministers of the Word to “effectively...provide the nourishment of the Scriptures for the people of God.” (DV 23)
 - “Study of the sacred page is, as it were, the soul of sacred theology.” (DV 24)



Chapter VI: Sacred Scripture in the Life of the Church

- Pastoral dimension of teaching on revelation
 - “May no minister of the Word “become ‘an empty preacher of the Word of God outwardly, who is not a listener to it inwardly.” (DV 25)
 - “Prayer should accompany the reading of Sacred Scripture, so that God and man may talk together.” (DV 25)



Chapter VI: Sacred Scripture in the Life of the Church

- “The hope for a new stimulus for the life of the Spirit from a growing reverence for the word of God” (cf. DV 26) through:
 - Spread of instructional and devotional aids with support of the bishops (cf. DV 25)
 - Instruction by bishops on the right use of Scripture (eg. through faithful translations) (cf. DV 25)
 - Distribution of editions of Sacred Scripture for non-Christians (cf. DV 25)

