

In this issue: *How can we read the Scriptures? The Holy Spirit will give us a disciple's ear if we are ready to listen. Below a summary of the workshop given by Don Schwager in the European Catholic charismatic conference in Warsaw, October 2015, on listening to the Word of God.*

Listening to the Word of God in the School of the Holy Spirit

A Charismatic and Scriptural Approach to Reading Scripture Spiritually

The Lord Jesus invites us to encounter him in the daily reading of Sacred Scripture. Through the gift and working of the Holy Spirit he opens our ears to hear his voice and to recognize his presence as he speaks to us through his word.

Saint Augustine of Hippo (354-430 AD), wrote: "The Scriptures are in fact, in any passage you care to choose, singing of Christ, provided we have ears that are capable of picking out the tune. The Lord opened the minds of the Apostles so that they understood the Scriptures. That he will open our minds too is our prayer."

The Lord opens the Scriptures for us

The Lord wants us to approach the Sacred Scriptures not simply as a word of the past but as God's Word that is also addressed to us today. Saint Jerome, an early church father (347-420 AD) who had a passionate love for the Bible, wrote that to read Scripture is to converse with God.

"You are reading [Scripture]? No. Your betrothed is talking to you. It is your betrothed, that is, Christ, who is united with you. He tears you away from the solitude of the desert and brings you into his home, saying to you, 'Enter into the joy of your Master'... 'How could one live without the knowledge of Scripture, through which one learns to know Christ himself, who is the life of believers?'"

Jesus told his disciples, "These things I have spoken to you while I am still with you. But the Helper, the Holy Spirit, whom the Father will send in my name, he will teach you all things and bring to your remembrance all that I have said to you" (John 14:25). The Scriptures will remain a dead letter until we allow the Holy Spirit to open our ears and soften our hearts to receive his word with meekness and

trust. Fr. Raniero Cantalamessa writes: "Reading the Scriptures without the Holy Spirit would be like opening a book in the dark" (*The Mystery of God's Word*).

A formational approach to reading Scripture with the Holy Spirit

How can we read the Scriptures with the help and guidance of the Holy Spirit? The Holy Spirit will give us a disciple's ear if we are ready to listen and eager to learn. "Morning by morning he awakens my ear to hear as those who are taught. The Lord God has opened my ear, and I was not rebellious" (Isaiah 50:4-5).

There are two very different ways of reading Scripture: informational reading and formational reading. We generally approach *informational* reading as a subject we wish to master. We approach the text with an analytical and critical mind so we can form our own opinion and judgment on the subject. In a *formational* approach to reading Scripture we allow the text to master us so we can grow in our understanding of God's mind, heart, and plan for us as it is revealed in his word. Formational reading requires a humble, detached, and loving approach that is also open to God's mystery.

Jesus offers us a great promise, "If you continue in my word, you are truly my disciples, and you will know the truth, and the truth will make you free" (John 8:31-32).

Don Schwager
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You will find the PowerPoint presentation of this workshop as 0411uk ([pdf](#) and [ppt](#)) on www.stucom.nl.

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