

Take-Home 7 | Until the End of the Age

Guard What Has Been Entrusted

Scripture, Tradition, and faithful development

Keep this sheet for prayer, review, and practice this week.

What We Found

Jesus condemned a tradition that voided God's command. Paul commanded the Church to hold the traditions he taught by mouth or by letter, and praised the Corinthians for keeping them. The word is the same; the source is the test. The Catechism separates the apostolic Tradition from traditions that can change, and puts the Church's teaching office under the word of God as its servant. Understanding can grow, the way a body grows, but the faith cannot be reversed. And 2 Timothy 3 names Timothy's teachers and the Scriptures in the same breath. (Mark 7:6-13; 2 Thessalonians 2:15; 1 Corinthians 11:2; 2 Timothy 3:14-17; CCC 80-86; 94.)

Voices of the Church

St. Irenaeus of Lyons

Summary: Against teachers who claimed a secret tradition handed to a few, Irenaeus argues that the Apostles held nothing back and hid no mysteries. If they had known secret things, they would have entrusted them above all to the men to whom they were entrusting the churches themselves. The apostolic teaching is public, and anyone can check it in the churches the Apostles founded.

Against Heresies, III.3.1

St. Vincent of Lerins

Summary: Writing in 434, Vincent asks whether there is progress in the Church of Christ and answers: certainly, and a great deal. But it must be real progress of the faith, not alteration of it. Understanding, knowledge, and wisdom should grow, in each person and in the whole Church, as a body grows from infancy to age while remaining the same body.

Commonitorium, 23

Second Vatican Council

Summary: The Tradition that comes from the Apostles makes progress in the Church with the help of the Holy Spirit. Understanding of what has been handed down grows in three ways. It grows through the contemplation and study of believers who treasure these things in their hearts, and through their experience of spiritual realities. It grows too through the preaching of those who received the sure charism of truth with episcopal succession.

Dei Verbum, 8

Ready Response

If someone says: "Jesus condemned tradition. The Bible is all you need."

You can say: Jesus condemned a tradition that canceled God's command, and he said that was the reason. Paul, in the same Bible, praised the Corinthians for keeping the traditions he delivered and told the Thessalonians to hold what they were taught by mouth or by letter. The question is never whether something is a tradition. It is where it came from.

Live It This Week

Read. Read CCC 80-86 in one sitting. Write the difference between Tradition and traditions in your own words.

Sort. Pick one thing you do as a Catholic and decide whether it is apostolic Tradition, a changeable practice, or a devotion.

Explain. Explain the Mark 7 and 1 Corinthians 11:2 contrast to someone this week, in plain words, and admit what you still need to look up.

Scripture Memory

"So then, 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 (RSV2CE)

A Personal Response

Is there a place where I have treated my preference as if it were the faith, or the faith as if it were my preference?

Before Next Session

Read: Acts 2:42-47; 2 Timothy 1:5; 2 Timothy 3:14-15; Matthew 28:18-20. Come ready to revise your sealed guess one last time.

Catechism: CCC 863-864, 1546-1547.

In the Catechism this week: 66-67; 80-86; 94; 120.