***Sacred Scripture Alone?***

Is the Bible the only authority that we

need? Is Oral Tradition authoritative? Is the Bible

self-interpreting? Will the Holy Spirit guide each Christian in understanding the Bible?

Over the next several weeks we will tackle all of these questions that might have been posed to you by family members who have left the Catholic Church for another denomination or by those who ring your doorbell seeking to bring you out of the Catholic Church. Let’s take a look at some of the challenges being posed to Catholics around the country.

**Is the Bible the only book we need?**

If the Bible was intended to be an all inclusive handbook of how the Church should operate, be structured, and teach a Christian all they must know, why doesn’t one find the method or ceremony about how to get married in it? Especially since marriage is a union God established between a man and a woman. The marriage ceremony is in fact a tradition which has been passed down through generations relatively unchanged beginning with the Catholic Church. Other denominations simulate it. Doesn’t it say in the Gospel of St. John that “there are also many other things which Jesus did; were every one of them to be written, I suppose that the world itself could not contain the books that would be written.” (John 21:25).

We also need to look in particular to St. Matthew’s Gospel.

In Matthew 18:17-18, Matthew tells us to go to the Church to settle disputes rather than the Bible. If the Bible is the only authority we need, then this verse doesn’t make sense. The church here is not two or three gathered in His name, but an apostolic authority (remember the articles on apostolic succession?) given the power to bind and loose. If the Bible is all we need, why are there over 30,000 Bible based churches claiming to be the true church, yet teaching every different doctrines? The Church that Christ established is one in unity, not many in division. The guaranteed guidance of the Holy Spirit was given to the Apostles and to the Church, not to each individual believer. The Church is made up of believers but it is the teaching office of the Church (the Magisterium) that correctly instructs the faithful.

However some may answer with 2 Timothy 3:16-17 which says, “All Scripture is inspired by God and profitable for teaching, for reproof, for correction, and for training in righteousness, that the man of God may be complete, equipped for every good work.” Catholics agree with what this verse is saying…but don’t take it to the extreme that some non-Catholics do. It says that scripture is useful, not necessary. The Bible alone concept is not supported by this verse even though many try to make a case for it. The Bible is a collection of letters and accounts of what happened throughout Bible history. It is useful but it is not an all inclusive handbook for being a Christian or running a church.