

FAITH CHAT

with James & John

Does The Bible Interpret Itself?

Know This...

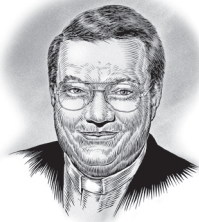
The Magisterium (the living teaching authority of the Church) infallibly interprets oral and written Apostolic Tradition. The Bible does not and cannot interpret itself. It's impossible for each person to accurately interpret what the divine Author intended. The Magisterium received its authority from Christ and exercises its authority under the guidance and protection of the Holy Spirit. The Pope and the bishops in union with him comprise the Magisterium.



John: The Magisterium cannot err when it teaches universally on faith and morals. Guided by the Holy Spirit, it accurately interprets the Word of God. The Magisterium is not superior to the Word of God, but is its servant.

James: The Magisterium can teach us about God and His plan for our salvation, can help us turn away from sinful habits, immoral behavior, and misguided views of right and wrong.

John: The Church is not a democracy governed by majority opinion. The Church is a kingdom, ruled by a King.



James: Christ is the King. The Pope is the "prime minister." The bishops are the "administrators."

John: The Holy Spirit-guided Magisterium is the sure voice for authentic Church teaching, yesterday, today, and tomorrow.

James: It has the right and duty to accurately proclaim, teach, and defend Apostolic Tradition. When we trust the Magisterium, we trust Jesus.

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Jesus said to His disciples, "If your brother sins against you, go and tell him his fault, between you and him alone. If he listens to you, you have gained your brother. But if he does not listen, take one or two others along with you, that every word may be confirmed by the evidence of two or three witnesses. If he refuses to listen to them, tell it to the Church; and if he refuses to listen even to the Church; let him be to you as a Gentile and a tax collector." Mt 18:15-17

"Sacred Tradition, Sacred Scripture, and the teaching authority of the Church, in accord with God's most wise design, are so linked and joined together that one cannot stand without the others, and that all together and each in its own way under the action of the one Holy Spirit contribute effectively to the salvation of souls... The task of authentically interpreting the Word of God, whether written or handed on, has been entrusted exclusively to the living teaching office of the Church, whose authority is exercised in the name of Jesus Christ." Vatican II, Dei Verbum, 10



PAPA SAYS

Peter said, "Consider that our Lord's patience is directed towards salvation. Paul, our beloved brother, wrote you this in the spirit of wisdom that is his, dealing with these matters as he does in all his letters. There are certain passages in them hard to understand. The ignorant and the unstable distort them to their own ruin, just as they do the rest of Scripture. You are forewarned, beloved brothers. Be on your guard lest you be led astray by the error of the wicked, and forfeit the security you enjoy." 2 Pet 3:15-17 The Apostles and the elders were gathered together to consider a matter of faith. After there had been much debate, Peter rose and said, "Brethren, you know that in the early days God made choices among you, that by my mouth the Gentiles should hear the word of the gospel and believe. And God who knows the heart bore witness to them, giving them the Holy Spirit just as He did to us; and He made no distinction between us and them, but cleansed their hearts by faith. Now therefore why do you make trial of God by putting a yoke upon the neck of the disciples which neither our fathers nor we have been able to bear? But we believe that we shall be saved through the grace of the Lord Jesus, just as they will." Acts 15:6-12a The living teaching voice of the Church had spoken and the whole assembly fell silent.



Jesus, You established Your Church as Your visible kingdom on earth. You sent the Holy Spirit to guide Her in all faith and moral decision making. You gave authority to the Pope and the College of Bishops to proclaim, explain, and defend Your teaching. I pray that the example of these holy men will inspire and guide all the baptized to total faith and trust in You. I ask this in Your most Holy Name. Amen.

