

Why do we teach Traditions that are not in the Bible?

We Catholics freely admit, our teachings do not all come directly from the Bible. We had Holy Tradition before we wrote the New Testament. Our Church is the New Testament fulfillment of the Old Testament People of God. All our Catholic teachings originate in what our Jewish Jesus brought forward from the Jewish tradition along with the new revelations He left with the Twelve Apostles. This comes down to us in the 2000 year memory of our living Church. We are the Mystical Living Body of our risen Christ, protected by the Holy Spirit. This living memory is handed down through our bishops who are the historically direct and unbroken successors of the Apostles. We call this deposit of truth the ***Apostolic Tradition***. (Capital T) This Tradition is the Word of God. It is not simply a tradition of man. The New Testament Bible, which came from the Church a little later, has not added to or subtracted from this Tradition. Neither can the Pope. We can only grow in our understanding of it. The New Testament is an inerrant written record of the heart of this Oral Tradition. Our Church dogmas are infallible interpretations of both the Bible and the Apostolic Tradition alive in our living memory. No teaching, of course, can contradict any truth already recorded in the Bible or in later dogmatic statements.

The books of the New Testament were written mostly to address problems in an already existing Catholic Church. The earliest Christians considered themselves Jews. We Catholics are the new covenant continuation of the Jewish religion. Many Jewish beliefs, like prayer for the dead, were naturally held on to in the Church. Since there were no arguments against these beliefs, no epistles needed to be written for or against them. Therefore they are not always specifically mentioned in the Bible. We can, however, find much scriptural support for such teachings, and we can find places where the scripture writers assume people already know about these things.

The Bible comes from the Church, not the other way around. The Church existed at least ten years before the first book of the New Testament was written. Our Church was about seventy years old before the last book was written. We were almost four hundred years old before all the books were discerned and gathered together into one inerrant volume we call the New Testament.. This was done under the leadership of popes. The Protestant New Testament comes from the Catholic Church. The Holy Bible is the precious product of our Church, discerned with the infallible guarantee of the Holy Spirit, but it is not our only rule of faith. Nothing we teach can be contrary to the Bible but it doesn't always have to specifically come from the Bible. Some things were there before the New Testament was formed. Jesus told us to tell the Good News. Writing it down was one way we responded. Inspired by God, the Holy Bible is the work of the Catholic Church, by the Church and for the Church. It was originally written down to be read at Holy Mass. It can only be properly interpreted under the guidance of the bishops of our original and true Body of Christ, the Catholic Church. This is done in the light of the Holy Tradition with the guarantee of the Holy Spirit.

The ideas of, "private interpretation", and especially of, "Bible Only," were foreign to Christianity for about 1400 years, until the first pre-Protestants came along and needed a substitute for the teaching authority of the Church they abandoned. "Bible only", was borrowed from Islam. Islam is a religion of the Book. Christianity is a religion WITH a Holy Book that supports Holy Tradition.