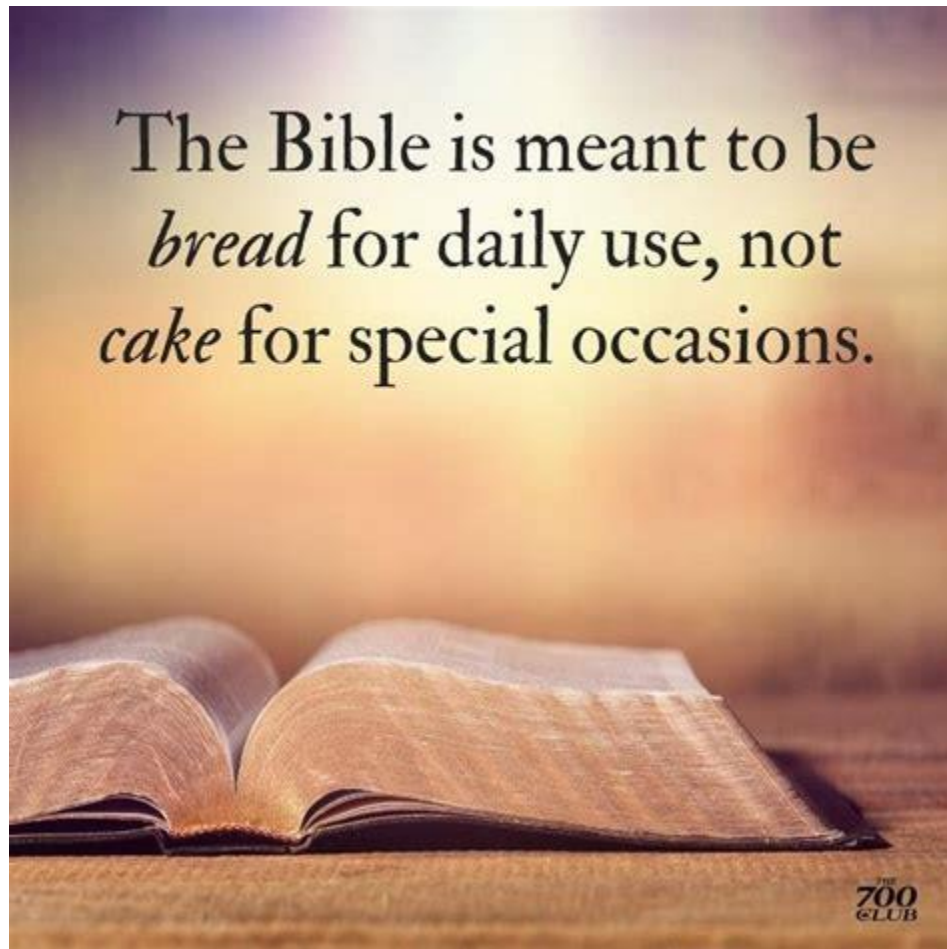


FROM FATHER JOHN: *“Since many have undertaken to compile a narrative of the events that have been fulfilled among us, just as those who were eyewitnesses from the beginning and ministers of the word have handed them down to us, I too have decided, after investigating everything accurately anew, to write it down in an orderly sequence for you, most excellent Theophilus, so that you may realize the certainty of the teachings you have received.” ~ Luke 1:1 – 4*



Fr. Larry Hennessey was one of my professors at Mundelein Seminary. He was a professor of Systematic Theology as opposed to being a scripture scholar. Even though he wasn't a scripture scholar, he would always tell us to "read the scripture every day. If you're lying in bed at night and you realize you haven't read any scripture that day, get out of bed and read a couple of paragraphs from the bible and then go back to bed."

Reading sacred scripture is vitally important to our spiritual lives. God reveals Himself to us in the sacred scripture. Every time we read scripture we grow a little closer to our Lord Jesus. One of the beauties of the scriptures is that it doesn't take a lot of time to read scripture each day. Its amazing how much scripture we can read in a year if we just spend five minutes a day reading the bible.

This past Wednesday was the feast of St. Luke, Evangelist. He wrote the gospel of Luke and the Acts of the Apostles. We can glean many things from the scripture that he composed. We can take St. Luke's writings as an example of what scripture can reveal to us and how important it is to read the bible.

Luke was a Gentile, in fact the only non-Jewish writer in the New Testament. It is also clear that he wrote mainly for Gentiles. For example, he seldom quotes the Old Testament, and he is not concerned about showing us that Jesus is the fulfilment of Jewish prophecy. He never used the Jewish title Rabbi when referring to our Lord Jesus, instead, he used a Greek word that means 'Master'. He traced the descent of Jesus from Adam as the first human person rather than from Abraham, who was the founder of the Jewish race. These are differences from what Matthew did in his gospel which he wrote for a primarily Jewish audience.

Luke's gospel highlights prayer. He often shows our Lord Jesus in prayer. His gospel is also a gospel of praise: he uses the expression "praising God" more often than all the others put together. And he gave us the *Benedictus*, the *Magnificat* and the *Nunc Dimittis*.

The Gospel According to Luke gives us the infancy narrative of Jesus' conception and birth. It alone has preserved the parables of the Good Samaritan, Lazarus and the Rich Man, the Rich Fool, the two sons, the Prodigal Son and the Dishonest Steward.

Much of what we know about the early life of the church comes from St. Luke and the Acts of the Apostles. Acts gives us the description of Pentecost and much of what we know about the conversion of St. Paul and his missionary journeys. It describes the Council of Jerusalem which made a key decision about Gentile converts and Jewish observances.

St. Luke's Gospel could also be known as the Gospel of Forgiveness. Only in Luke's Gospel do we meet the penitent woman whose many sins were forgiven because of her great love (Lk 7:47). In contrast with Saints James and John, who wanted to destroy a Samaritan town by fire (Lk 9:54), St. Luke shows our Lord Jesus exalting the virtues of the Good Samaritan (Lk 10:33). Our Lord Jesus also lifted up tax collectors when he ate with Zacchaeus (a hated tax collector) and granted him salvation (Lk 19:5ff).

Only in Luke's Gospel do we meet the prodigal son, his forgiving father, and unforgiving older brother (Lk 15:11ff). This parable is a great revelation of God's way of forgiving. God forgives affectionately, graciously, and mercifully. It shows us that not only does God offer us forgiveness for our sins but does so with affection, grace, mercy and love.

Only in Luke's Gospel do we meet the Good Thief in his version of the passion narrative. While suffering on the cross, our Lord Jesus said, in Luke's gospel, "Father, forgive them; they do not know what they are doing" (Lk 23:34). Then Jesus forgave the Good Thief and promised him paradise that very day (Lk 23:43).

St. Luke spread the Good News to the Gentile peoples of his day but also down through the ages to each of us. But, for us to receive this Good News from St. Luke, we need to read the sacred scriptures daily.

May God Bless you and all those who love the Lord.

