

BIBLE SEMINAR HELD AT OUR LADY OF PRAISE ABBEY BUTENDE
FOR THE JUNIOR BROTHERS AND SISTER AND SECOND YEAR NOVICES
FROM 6TH OCTOBER TO THE 11TH OCTOBER 2019

BY FR. DR. HILARY MUNYANEZA

PARTICIPANTS

6 BROTHERS FROM OUR LADY OF VICTORIA; 4 JUNIORS AND 2 NOVICES

5 SISTERS FROM OUR LADY OF PRAISE BUTENDE; 4 JUNIORS AND 1 NOVICE

1 VISITOR A SISTER FROM ARUA MONASTERY

SECRETARY FOR FORMATION RAFMA SR. ELIZABETH

INTRODUCTION

CONSIDERING THE BIBLE AND HISTORY IN SUMMARY

Father gave a general introduction of the Bible and said the Bible is an expression of our friendship with God. It was written over the span of 1500 years and it shows the real events at a certain geographical time and history. In the Bible God used various personalities and various tactics of writing: like the writings of St. Paul are not the same as those of St. Peter. He continued to elaborate and to explain the word Canonicity and its meaning.

Canonicity of the Bible, it means in other words Rule of the Bible. The word Canon is a Greek word meaning rule or standard (Galatians 6:16). He said in the formation of the Bible there were rules considered when writing the Bible. Therefore Canon can also mean the list of books recognized by the Church to be divinely inspired. The Bible is the Word of God in human language (John 1:14) what we could not understand God made it possible for us in our human language.

IMPORTANCE OF CANONICITY.

The Bible contains the Divine truth concerning God, man and the universe. In the Bible there are questions concerning our **Origins** (Jeremiah 1:5), our **Purpose** here he used the example of St. Bernard the question he constantly asked himself "Bernard, Bernard why are you here?), and lastly the question of **destination**; reading the Word of God strengthens our faith (Luke 24:44). When we pray the Psalms we are praying the Jesus prayer. He gave the example of Psalm 22, we too experience these same sentiments and we can use these very words to address God in faith and confidence. In a nut

shell, the Bible today is the same as in the past. The translations do not affect the meaning of the message. This is proven by the Dead Sea scrolls that were discovered by archeologists in 1947 that 99.5% is in agreement with the present text of the Bible.

WHY SHOULD WE ACCEPT THE NEW TESTAMENT CANON?

Because they were written by the *Apostles*,

They were first hand eye witness

These books have apostolic authority. (2Peter 3:4 and 1Peter 5:13)

Some books give testimony to the inspiration of their contemporaries (2Peter 3:16)

Cross reference that is two or more texts agreeing with one another (Deut. 25: is related to Luke 4:7) the words are not the same but the idea.

There is order from the beginning for example in the Book of Genesis; paradise is lost as a result of sin and in Revelation sin is conquered and paradise is restored.

There is acceptance by the faith community.

He concluded giving affirmation to the participants saying all scripture is inspired by God. It challenges us; 2Timothy 3:16 it's good for teaching, for correcting error and for training in righteousness. He continued to encourage the participants to pray with King David in Psalm 50 for example, to take up responsibility for our failings and not to blame others which so much happens in community life.

Before he went into the divisions of the Bible he gave some reasons as to why the Bible was written.

To preserve the memory of what Jesus taught and deed (Luke 1:1-4)

To strengthen our faith in God (John 20:30-31)

To show the death of the eye witnesses

To help spread Christianity beyond Jerusalem.

MAJOR DIVISIONS OF THE BIBLE

The Bible is divided into two major testaments

1. Old Testament which has 52 books inclusive of the Deutro - Canonical books (books that protestants don't believe)
 2. New Testament which has 27 books
- This gives the total of 77 books in the whole Bible.

The Old Testament has sub divisions

- i. **LAW:** that is the first five books Genesis, Exodus, Leviticus, Numbers and Deuteronomy.
In these five books father gave the basic ideas that appear i.e. origins of the world, call of Abraham, liberation of Israel and the giving of the law.
- ii. **HISTORICAL BOOKS:** Joshua, Judges, Ruth, 1&2 Samuel, 1&2 Kings, 1&2 Chronicles.
- iii. **POETRY BOOKS:** Song of Songs, Psalms, Wisdom, Proverbs and Ecclesiastes.
- iv. **PROPHETIC BOOKS:** These are divided into two. 1. **Major Prophets:** - , Isaiah, Jeremiah, Ezekiel and Daniel (they are major because of the size of what they wrote). 2. **Minor Prophets:** - from Hosea to Malachi.

Father went into details to explain the major contents and themes of each book and why it was called so for example Exodus meaning on the way that is from Egypt to the Promised Land, the symbolism of words and their meaning and revelations. In the writings of the prophets there are points in considerations; the Assyrian judgment (God used the Assyrians to purify Israel), the Babylonian judgment (Babylonians conquered Nineveh the capital of Assyria) and the restoration.

Lastly but not least father pointed out the role of prophets

1. A prophet is a spokesman of God (Exodus 6:28 and 7:1) mouth piece of God.
2. Is an ambassador between God and the people
3. Prophets make great proclamations etc.

In conclusion Jesus is the final fulfillment of all prophets

In brief this was the outline followed in the discussions and writings of the books of the Old Testament.

- Characteristics of the book
- The purpose of the book
- Major themes
- Divisions and contents
- Key personalities (especially in the Historical books)
- Christ in the prophets and in the Wisdom books

The New Testament divisions

1. Gospels } synoptic Gospels: Matthew Luke and Mark
 } 4th Gospel of St. John
2. Acts of the Apostles (historical)
3. Letters, these are: a) Pastoral b) Universal letters c) Revelation.

Why were the Gospels written?

- i. To preserve the memory of what Jesus did and taught (Luke 1:1-4)
- ii. To strengthen our faith in God (John 20:30-31)
- iii. To show the death of the eye witnesses
- iv. To help in the spread of Christianity beyond Jerusalem.

Father presented the Symbolic meaning of the four Evangelists and the biblical source

Ezekiel 1:10

Matthew is symbolized by “winged man” meaning the supreme nature of God. Matthew focuses on the Humanity of Jesus (Matthew 1:1-24) genealogy of Jesus

Mark is symbolized by “lion” king of the beasts. Christians are called upon to be courageous.

Luke is symbolized by an “ox” king of grass eating animals. An ox symbolizes sacrifice, service and strength

John is symbolized by an “eagle” king of the birds. This bird flies high up in the skies. For St. John when writing he begins from high (John 1:1-2) Christians are called upon to focus on eternity.

NB Mark is the shortest Gospel with 16 chapters while Luke is the longest even in the entire New Testament and it is worth mentioning that these Gospels were not written but composed.

There are 3 basic sources; Mark also being the first composed Gospel, Quelle meaning collection of Jesus' sayings and the Matthean. The following outline was used in detail to discuss the Gospels, Acts of the Apostles, Letters and the Apocalypse (Revelation)

- What were the sources
- Purpose
- Organization/content
- Major themes
- Characteristics.
- Problem and solutions (mainly in the letters of St. Paul)

General introduction of the letters: they focus on various aspects of Christian life, and they are addressed to a person. Why were they written? It was a form of presence (1Cor 5:3), a way of expressing oneself and a way of exchanging ideas

CLASSIFICATION OF THE LETTERS IN THE NEW TESTAMENT

13 LETTERS OF ST. PAUL	7 CATHOLIC LETTERS	1 EPISTLE
Romans (pillar letter)	James	Hebrews
1Corinthians “	1Peter	
2Corinthians “	2Peter	
Galatians “	1John	
Ephesians (prison letter)	2John	
Philippians “	3John	
Colossians “	Jude	
1Thessalonians}no name		
2Thessalonians}”		
1Timothy (pastoral letters)		
2Timothy “		
Titus “		
Philemon (prison letter)		

This brought us to the end of our seminar. In brief this is what took place in five days. The participants enjoyed it spiritually and intellectually. They thanked those who made it possible for them to have this seminar and they all agreed if it were possible to have more seminars of this kind. They appreciated so much Fr. Hilary and wished if he could come again to give seminars on Mariology and Christology.

