**Glossary of Terms for Introduction to Scripture**

**Acts of the Apostles:** an early partial account of the historical spread of Christianity; not a complete “history” of 1st century Christianity. It was written by the same person who authored the Gospel of Luke.

**Allegory:** A literary form in which something is said to be like something else, in an attempt to communicate a hidden or symbolic meaning.

**Allegorical sense:** looks at how the people, events and things in the literal sense point to the mystery of Christ. It looks at the Christological significance.

**Anagogical sense:** investigates “realities and events in terms of their eternal significance” (CCC,117).

**Bible**: The collection of books accepted by Christian Churches as the authentic, inspired record of the revelations made to mankind by God about himself and his will for men. It is divided into the Old Testament and the New Testament to distinguish between the Jewish tradition and the Christian.

**Bible Commentary:** a book of explanations of biblical texts, arranged in biblical order modern scholars’; it usually includes notes on items necessary for understanding the text and the scholars interpretation of its meaning.

**Biblical exegesis:** The critical interpretation and explanation of a biblical of a biblical text.

**Biblical inerrancy:** The doctrine that the books of the Scriptures are free from error regarding the truth God wishes to reveal through the Scriptures for the sake of salvation.

**Book of Revelation:** also called “The Apocalypse” A book containing seven short letters addressed to the Churches,” and a long series of highly symbolic ”visions” attributed to a certain man named “John”, culminating in the destruction of all evil and the establishment of “a new heaven and new earth”, and “the New Jerusalem.”

**Canon:** The collection of books the Church recognizes as the inspired Word of God.

**Contextualist approach:** The interpretation of the Bible that takes into account the various contexts for understanding. These contexts include the senses of Scripture, literacy forms, historical situations, cultural backgrounds, the unity of the whole of the Scriptures, Tradition, and the analogy of faith.

**Covenant:** A solemn agreement between human beings or between God and a human being in which mutual commitments are made.

**Criticisms:** various methods of doing biblical exegesis, each having a specific goal and specific questions; biblical “criticism” does not mean “criticizing” the text, but asking “critical” questions (based on “criteria” that are as clear, careful, and objective as possible).

**Dead Sea Scrolls:** severalcollections of ancient writings (2ndcentury BCE to 2nd century CE) discovered between 1947 and 1956 in various caves near the NW shores of the Dead Sea.

**Deuterocanonical Books:** seven more books that are in the Catholic Bible- Tobit, Judith,1&2 Maccabees, Wisdom, Ecclesiasticus and Baruch.

**Divine Revelation**: God’s self-communication through which he makes known the mystery of his divine plan. Divine Revelation is a gift accomplished by the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit through the words and deeds of salvation history.

**Epistle:** Another name for a New Testament letter.

**Evangelists:** this is the name given to the four Gospel writers.

**Form Criticism:** attempts to determine literary patterns in Scripture, isolate units of text and trace each unit to its origin in oral tradition.

**Genre:** the literary “form” or “category” of a text (not just biblical, But any literature); larger genres in the NT include Gospels, Letters, Acts, etc; smaller genres within the Gospels include parables, sayings, etc.

**Gospels:** Translated from a Greek word meaning “good news”, referring to the four books attributed to Matthew, Mark, Luke, and John, the principal source for the life and teaching of the Incarnate Word

**Historical criticism:** the process which attempts to reconstruct the historical situation out of which a writing arose and how it came to be written.

**Lexicon:** a dictionary explaining the meaning of ancient Hebrew or Greek words, and usually also providing some references for where and how they are used in ancient literature.

**Literal sense:** the meaning conveyed by the words of Scripture and discovered by Exegesis.

**Moral sense:** searches for what it means to live a just ethical life. How does this Scripture passage instruct us to live in right relationship with God, neighbor, self and the earth.

**Natural Revelation:** The process by which God makes himself known to human reason through the created world.

**New Testament:** The twenty-seven books of the Bible written in apostolic times, which have the life, teachings, Passion, death, Resurrection, and Ascension of Jesus Christ and the beginnings of the Church as their central theme.

**Oral tradition:** The handing on of the message of God’s saving plan through words and deeds.

**Parables:** Short stories that use everyday images to communicate religious messages.

**Pauline letters:** Thirteen New Testament letters attributed to St. Paul or to his disciples who wrote in his name. They offer advice, pastoral encouragement, teaching, and community news to early Christian communities.

**Pentateuch:** A Greek word meaning “five books”, referring to the first five books of the Old Testament.

**Primeval history:** The time before the invention of writing and recoding of historical data.

**Psalms:** Hymns or songs of prayer to God that express praise, thanksgiving, or lament.

**Q source:** (Quelle=source) is a hypothetical collection of sayings and teachings of Jesus. Many scholars think it was a written source (from the 50’s) used later by Matthew and Luke, but is now lost.

**Sacred Tradition:** Refers to the process of passing on the Gospel message. It began with the oral communication of the Gospels by the Apostles, was written down in the Scriptures, and is interpreted by the Magisterium under the guidance of the Holy Spirit.

**Septuagint:** A collection of up to 53 books of ancient Jewish Scriptures written in Greek

**Source Criticism:** seeks to determine the sources used to develop the final form of the biblical text.

**Spiritual sense:** Goes beyond the literal sense of words to consider what the realities and events of Scripture signify. There are three categories: allegorical sense, moral sense and anagogical sense.

**Synoptic Gospels:** From the Greek for “seeing the whole together,” the name given to the Gospels of Matthew, Mark, and Luke, because they are similar in style and content.

**Textual Criticism:** used to determine what the original manuscripts of the Bible said.

**Torah:** A Hebrew word meaning “law” referring to the first five books of the Old Testament.

**Wisdom literature:** The Old Testament Books of Proverbs, Job, Ecclesiastes, Sirach, and the Wisdom of Solomon.

**Written Tradition:** Under the inspiration of the Holy Spirit, the synthesis in written form of the message of salvation that has been passed down in the oral tradition.

**Vulgate:** a Latin version of both the old and New Testament, translated in the late 4th and 5th centuries by St. Jerome.