**THE PEOPLE OF THE BOOK**

**Megan McKenna**

1. **ORAL TRADITION**—we tell stories., share information, knowledge, family histories, the way we do things by word of mouth. This is the most ancient way of communicating with one another. Our word is our life, so we must always speak the truth.

The Gospels: Mark, Matthew, Luke and John, and the books of the Prophets and most of the first 5 books of the Bible: Genesis (beginnings), Exodus (the story of Passover to Freedom in the Promised land), Deuteronomy and Leviticus (the books of the laws) and Numbers—how the Lord made a people for himself. These were first told as stories before they were written down.

1. **WRITTEN TRADITION**—after stories, laws, experiences, history, covenants were told by word of mouth, then people started to write them down. People would listen to them out loud, together, standing to hear the Word of the Lord, respectful, attentive and then they would talk about them with each other, after the priests and leaders—both men and women talked about what the readings meant for the people. Then the people would talk about them with each other and share what they believed and hoped, and thought and then they would talk to their children about what it meant to them.

 They wrote them down as a way to remember them. We have to learn how to take them off the page and put them back in our mouths so that they live again in our lives and our communities and our world. People see THE WORD in us, much better than they hear us talking about what we believe!

3. **LIVING TRADITION**—there were always people in every community, village, place that incarnated, enfleshed and lived out the Word of God so clearly in their lives, that they were known as the living words of God—they modeled how to live, gave example every day of their lives and believed, helping the people to believe and grow in their faith. We call these people Saints, holy ones, the Friends of God—they were the prophets and great ones of the Old Testament: Adam and Eve, Noah, Abraham and Sarah, Moses, Aaron, Myriam and all the great teachers: David, Isaiah, Jeremiah, Micah, Ezechiel, Amos and Hosea, etc.

These 3 traditions are like 1. reading a book, where we make all the pictures and backgrounds and people. Then 2. We watch others act them out so that people can watch and see for themselves what we mean—like a play. And lastly 3. We are the actors and we are the ones that make the stories and the teachings come true—-we live them so that we can see, hear and know God as a human being and we can imitate him and become holy like God. We have Jesus' WORDS and LIFE in the SCRIPTURES, especially the GOSPELS and then God stayed with us in JESUS as the BREAD OF LIFE AND THE CUP OF SALVATION, as FOOD for us to make us strong and give us the courage to live out our lives in obedience to God's word.

WE HAVE TWO EYES, TWO EARS, TWO HANDS, TWO ARMS, TWO LEGS, TWO FEET... and so we need THE WORD OF GOD IN THE SCRIPTURES and THE EUCHARIST; *THE* BODY AND BLOOD OF CHRIST in order to be adult Catholics and beloved children of God. This is the way God feeds us with Jesus in the power of the Spirit—through the word of life and the bread of life.

WE ARE TOLD that we do not live on bread alone, but ON EVERY WORD THAT COMES FORTH FROM THE MOUTH OF GOD—we must gather to share the word together so that we are ready/prepared to shared the bread of God in Eucharist. We need both to stay alive.

The word was written so that we could hear it first. HEARING IT IS MORE POWERFUL than reading it to ourselves. And HEARING IT WITH OTHERS lets the SPIRIT loose among us. When we SHARE and SPEAK THE WORD OF GOD with others, and share with the Spirit has taught us in wisdom, meaning and insight than God is truly with us—"Wherever two or three are gathered together in my name, there I am in their midst." (Jesus in Matthew's gospel)

**WHEN WE GATHER FOR LITURGY and PRAYER we need 5 things.**

1. **THE PEOPLE**—we are words of God and God wants to use our lives, our bodies/flesh to teach the world the Good News of Jesus.
2. **THE BREAD AND WINE**—this is food for body, heart and soul We eat together because we are God's family. We call God Our Father, with Jesus our brother, in the power of the Spirit.
3. **THE WORD OF GOD**—this is food for body, mind, heart and soul too. It is God telling us what to do, how to live, how to endure suffering and stay faithful and live and die like his Son, Jesus the Lord, Just as we eat together as family, we pray and study and are converted to the way of God in Jesus' Word together, helping each other to grow as Jesus' followers.
4. **A COLLECTION FOR THE POOR**—our God feeds us with His Word, His Body and Blood, His Spirit, Our Father, their Presence in the Trinity that holds us together and we make sure that no one around us is ever hungry for food, water, education, medicine, shelter/clothing, what they need to live as the children of God

5. **THE PRIEST/THE PRAYER LEADER/THE CATECHIST**—these are the people who gather us together, remind us over and over again who we are and what we are called to be, and help us to pray with one mind, one heart, one spirit in God. They’re the servants of the servants of God.

THERE IS A SAYING: GOD IS ALWAYS LISTENING! WHAT ARE WE SAYING?

ARE WE THE GOOD NEWS OF GOD? WHEN PEOPLE SEE US COMING DO THEY THINK—

OH, HERE COMES GOOD NEWS!

1. The Prophets had the word of God in their mouths and only spoke what God wanted the people to hear. Sometimes they were told (like Jeremiah) to eat the scroll, the book with the Word of God on it so that they would become the Word and people would see them and hear them and know what God wanted.
2. The Prophets were interested in three things—the three things most important to God.

i) Worshipping God truly, the way God wants us to worship.

ii) Taking care of the poor around and among us,

iii) Bringing Justice to the world.

For the Prophets and for God, all three of those things were one and the same. This is what God wants of us; "To do justice, to love tenderly and to walk humbly with our God," Micah

JESUS IS THE WORD OF GOD MADE FLESH and we are baptized into THE BODY OF CHRIST so that our flesh, our lives can become Words of God that others can hear and take heart from—we have to remember that every day of our lives. We are the GOOD NEWS OF GOD for our world, today.