



Dear parishioners of Our Lady of Grace, in 2026, you will see my updates in the parish bulletin, with a section dedicated to the Bible. In this first article, we will explore the number of books in the Bible.

First, we need to discuss two main topics: the origins of the Hebrew Bible and the Greek Bible. The difference between the 73 books of the Catholic Bible and the 66 books of the Protestant Bible mainly arises from the issue of the Old Testament canon, which is the list of books recognized as inspired by God.

1. Origin of the Hebrew and Greek Bibles

The Hebrew Bible (Tanakh), used in Judaism, consists of 24 books, which correspond to the 39 books of the Protestant Old Testament (since some books are combined differently).

During Jesus' time, many Jews, especially those living outside of Palestine in the diaspora, read a Greek Version of the Old Testament called the Septuagint (LXX), which included more books than the Hebrew Bible.

2. The Catholic canon: 73 books

The Catholic Church relied on the Septuagint, which was widely used in the early Church. It includes 46 books of the Old Testament (including the seven so-called "deuterocanonical" books) and 27 books of the New Testament, totaling 73.

The deuterocanonical books include Tobit, Judith, 1 and 2 Maccabees, Wisdom, Sirach (Ecclesiasticus), and Baruch.

3. The Protestant canon: 66 books

During the 16th-century Protestant Reformation, Martin Luther rejected the deuterocanonical books because he believed they weren't part of the Hebrew Bible. Protestants therefore kept 39 books of the Old Testament, the same as the Jewish canon, and 27 books of the New Testament, totaling 66 books.

4. The Council of Trent (1546)

In response to the Protestant Reformation, the Catholic Church officially confirmed the 73-book canon at the Council of Trent. These books had already been in use since the early centuries, but the council formally declared them canonical.

My dear beloved, I encourage you to study the Church's teachings through biblical commentaries frequently. Protestants rejected the deuterocanonical books, claiming that God does not inspire them. However, they overlook Saint Paul's exhortation to Timothy in this pastoral letter: "All Scripture is God-breathed and is useful for teaching, rebuking, correcting, and training in righteousness, so that the servant of God may be thoroughly equipped for every good work."

2 Timothy 3:16-17.

Thank you to everyone who recognizes that the parish bulletin is also a pastoral tool for strengthening faith. I look forward to seeing you soon in the second article of this biblical journey.

Your brother, Frantzcy Mahotiere,

Parish Vicar.