



THE BIBLE  
*and the*  
CHURCH  
FATHERS



JOURNEY THROUGH SCRIPTURE

PARTICIPANT WORKBOOK





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Front Cover Image: *The Four Fathers of the Latin Church* – Jacob Jordaens

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## WELCOME TO JOURNEY THROUGH SCRIPTURE

Journey Through Scripture is the St. Paul Center's dynamic Bible study program designed to help ordinary Catholics grow in their knowledge of Scripture while deepening their understanding of the riches of our faith. Distinctively Catholic, Journey Through Scripture reads the Bible from the heart of the Church, considering both the Old and New Testaments and how they work together. It's grounded in history, yet it actively engages topics faced by today's Catholics. More than just an ordinary Bible study, it's biblical catechesis.

*The Bible and the Church Fathers* is the fourth study in the Journey Through Scripture series. In twelve beautifully produced lessons, you will learn who the early Church Fathers were and how they shaped the way we read Scripture. You'll discover the Church's favorite tools for reading it, and you'll understand Scripture's relationship to Tradition and, in particular, to the Sacraments.

What's more, you'll recognize the powerful effect of Scripture on the Church Fathers. For them, this was no academic pursuit. Their love of God's Word transformed their lives—just as it has the power to transform ours today.

### Study Components

*The Bible and the Church Fathers* is designed for both group and individual study. It contains six possible components, all of which can be ordered at [JourneyThroughScripture.com](http://JourneyThroughScripture.com).

- ✦ This Participant Workbook
- ✦ *The Bible and the Church Fathers* DVD set
- ✦ *The Fathers of the Church* by Mike Aquilina
- ✦ *Faith of Our Fathers* by Mike Aquilina
- ✦ *Consuming the Word* by Dr. Scott Hahn





*Lesson 1*

# AN INTRODUCTION TO THE FATHERS



When we speak of the Fathers of the Church, we're referring to those who have preceded us and have passed the Faith on to us, particularly in the centuries immediately following Christ. These men instructed the early Church in the doctrine of the Apostles, providing a close link to the teaching of Jesus himself.

Throughout the course, we'll encounter great teachers and cranky old men, hotheads and pacifists, as well as monks and poets. We're going to read some of their writings and hear some of their stories. We're even going to meet some of the heretics and heresies the Fathers battled in the preservation of the Truth entrusted to them.

What we'll find is that the Fathers of the Church are just as relevant now as they were in the earliest Christian centuries. So let's begin, because the Fathers are like an ancient chest full of priceless treasure that can't help but enrich your love for God and his beautiful Church.



## WHAT WE'LL COVER IN LESSON 1

### Introduction

Matthew Leonard, host of the series

### Themes covered

- ✦ Who are the Church Fathers?
- ✦ The four criteria to be a Church Father
- ✦ The Fathers as a link to the teachings of Christ

### Scripture Verses Read in Lesson 1

- ✦ 1 Corinthians 4:15–16





## REVIEW QUESTIONS

1. What is a father?

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2. What are the four criteria necessary to be a Father of the Church?

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3. When was the Patristic period in the Church?

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4. What does “orthodox” mean?

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## DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

1. Is there anything in this lesson that you have just heard for the first time?

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2. Why was it so important to the Fathers to guard the Church's doctrine? What made that work particularly challenging?

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3. Which one of the four criteria to be a Church Father do you find the most compelling when discussing the Fathers with someone considering coming into the Church?

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THIS LESSON'S MEMORY VERSE

“For though you have countless guides in Christ, you do not have many fathers. For I became your father in Christ Jesus through the gospel. I urge you, then, be imitators of me.”

— 1 Corinthians 4:15–16 —



PREPARATION FOR THE NEXT LESSON

✦ John 21:15–19

✦ 1 John 4:1–3

✦ *The Fathers of the Church* by Mike Aquilina, “Introduction,” pp. 17–32, 266–268

✦ *Faith of Our Fathers* by Mike Aquilina, “The Fathers as Teachers,” pp. 7–26

