Holy Assumption Orthodox Church

Celebrating 125 years witnessing to the Apostolic Faith

110 EAST MAIN STREET,
Marblehead, OH 43440

V. Rev. Archpriest Peter Tomas, Rector

Rectory: (419) 798-4591
Father Peter's cell: (607) 206-5523
E-mail: info@holyassumptionmarblehead.org
Father Peter's email: frpetertomas@yahoo.com
website: www.holyassumptionmarblehead.org

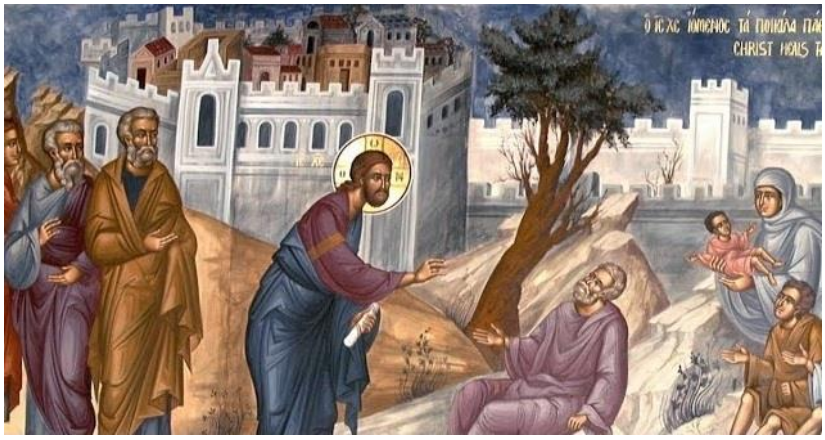
Holy Assumption Orthodox Church is a parish of the Orthodox Church in America, Diocese of the Midwest

JANUARY 18, 2026

THIRTY SECOND SUNDAY AFTER PENTECOST

EPISTLE: 1 Timothy 1:15-17

Timothy, my son: This is a faithful saying and worthy of all acceptance, that Christ Jesus came into the world to save sinners, of whom I am chief. However, for this reason I obtained mercy, that in me first Jesus Christ might show all longsuffering, as a pattern to those who are going to believe on Him for everlasting life. Now to the King eternal, immortal, invisible, to God who alone is wise, be honor and glory forever and ever. Amen.



Healing of the blind man at Jericho

GOSPEL: Lk 18:35-43

At that time, as Jesus was coming near Jericho, that a certain blind man sat by the road begging. And hearing a multitude passing by, he asked what it meant. So they told him that Jesus of Nazareth was passing by. And he cried out, saying, "Jesus, Son of David, have mercy on me!" Then those who went before warned him that he should be quiet; but he cried out all the more, "Son of David, have mercy on me!" So Jesus stood still and commanded him to be brought to Him. And when he had come near, He asked him, saying, "What do you want Me to do for you?" He said, "Lord, that I may receive my sight." Then Jesus said to him, "Receive your sight; your faith has made you well." And immediately he received his sight, and followed Him, glorifying God. And all the people, when they saw it, gave praise to God.

LITURGICAL SCHEDULE FOR THE WEEK

MON. Jan 19	Venerable Macarius the Great; James 2:14- 26, Mk 10:46-52
TUE. Jan 20	Venerable Euthymius the Great; James 3:1-10, Mk 11:11-23
WED. Jan 21	Venerable Maximus the Confessor; James 3:11-4:6, Mk 11:22-26
THU. Jan 22	Apostle Timothy of the Seventy; James 4:7-5:9, Mk 11:27-33
FRI. Jan 23	Hieromartyr Clement, Bishop of Ancyra, and Martyr Agathangelus; 1 Peter 1:1-2, 10-12, 2:6-10, Mk 12:1-12
SAT. Jan 24	Venerable Xenia of Rom; 1 Tess 5:14-23, Lk 17:3-10
4:00 PM	**VESPERS**
SUN. Jan 25	**33rd SUNDAY AFTER PENTECOST, *Sunday of Zacchaeus, Tone 8***
9:10 AM	**HOURS**
9:30 AM	**DIVINE LITURGY** Followed by Coffee Hour

FOR YOUR PRAYERS

Tina Rindfleisch & Tony Monastra, Apt. E11, 524 Woodshire Ln., Naples, FL 34105-7472; **Greg Twarek,** 117 Lucien Drive, Marblehead, OH 43440 **Patti Owens,** 311 Woodbridge Road Vermilion, OH 44089; **Irene Vangeloff**, 3580 Shaw Ave., Apt. 305, Cincinnati, OH 45208 Tel.: (513) 376-9693

JANUARY REPOSED

Andrew Matway (1906) No date provided; William Gratson (1908) No date provided; Eva Hritsko (1908) No date provided; Sara Rose (2005) No date provided; **3**- Mat. Marilyn Federoff (2019); **3**- Larry Naiser (2019); **3**- Elinor Williams (2021); **4**- Margaret Reavley (1965); **4**- Baby Clyde Madison (2020); **5**- Russell (2019) Heidi's relative; **5**- Donald (2019) Waynes Relative; **5**- Maria Semionow (1981); **11**- Anna Tomko (1960); **15**- Archpriest Pavel Soucek (2009) Former Pastor; **21**- Daniel Kowal (2006); **21**- Philip Kobb (2018); **23**- Helen Beadle (1988); **23**- Deborah Pribanic (2020); **25**- Jane (2019) Ron's Aunt; **25**- William "Bill" Alber (2021); **28**- Michael Tarasavage (2021); **29**- Anna Kravetz (1973); **29**- Marjorie Kowal (2003); **29**- Ernest Gresh (2020); **29**- Rick Schlotterer (2020); **30**- Anna Schofield (2021)

PRAYER LIST

Parishioners & Family: Amber Twarek / Richard Williams / Christine Twarek / Tony Monastra / Alvin Foland / Delaine Ward (Ron Royhab's sister) / Rachel and her newborn baby / Danielle and her unborn baby / Kristen Cassell / Laura DeKemper / Tom Hileman / Cliff & Kathy Ruggles / Sandra / Renee Haynal / Sharon Shaheen (Patti Owen's sister) / Norb / Heidi Golob / Ron & Bobbie Royhab /Rodney Clevenger / Jennifer Heffernan / Pam / Jim Twarek / Ed Garrity / Patti Owens / Barbara Wroblewski / Michal Tomáš / Helena Tomášová / Ruth Sheller / Carol / David Martin / Fred Soski / Irene Vangeloff / Sonja Rose / James Bargdill / Carole Conaway/ Gary Conaway / Sharon Dietrich / Michael Glovinsky / Shirley Gresh / Betty Kovach / Child Stella Miller / William Pipenur / Helen Jean Rofkar / George Royhab / Marianne Royhab / Kathy Jacob / the child Bodhi Cassell / Gleice, Sophie & Chloe / Carol / Nora.

Other Requests: Patty Wandover / Russ M. / Suzeann / Laura Engler / Robin (Niece of Kathy Ruggles) / Catechumen Sessely / Catechumen Daniel / Catechumen Adam / Catechumen Joshua /

Catechumen Stephanie / Catechumen Max / Catechumen Michael / Catechumen Sharon / Steve Rohweder / Nicole Williams / John Couture / Ann Turinsky / Marcia / Catechumen Blake Shoemaker / Linkoln Paull / Matushka Melania / Sharyn Osborne / Amy / Bill Byrnes / Susanne / Charles Schlett / Kathy Debevits / Maxwell Chaney / Anthony / Archpriest Ján Čižmár / Archpriest David Lis / Archpriest Emilian & Matushka Laryssa Hutnyan / Donald Gresh / Mark Ludvik / Robert Piznar / William / Rick Rowe / Chris.

Military: Craig Cassell / Jake Ellithorpe / Jordon Fulton / Justin Issler / Tikhon / Nicholas / & All Military

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VIGILS FOR JANUARY 11

Jean Hileman 2 For healing and recovery of Greg Twarek, Special intentions

Laura Kovach 3 God's guidance for Tina's surgeon; for health and/or healing of Greg T., Lindsay & Janet, Jerry Z., Patti O., Deb F., Tony M., Russ M, Burt K., Bobbie & Ron R., Peggy S., Brenda T., Betty K., Margaret M., Mark M., Dana M., Bodhi C.; safe travels for our family and friends.

Sandy Martin 3 For the health of Greg and Tina, In memory of Don L., Special intentions

Natalie Twarek 10 For God's blessings to Tina and her surgical team, Health and recovery of Greg, Health and recovery of Amber, For health and recovery of Richard Williams, Birthday blessing for Matushka Michelle, For the health of Fr Peter & Matushka Michelle, For Birthday blessing and health & recovery of Matushka Melania, For the health and recovery of Patty, Cathy, Patti, Laura, Kathy & Cliff, Irene, Ron & Bobbie, Rodney, Betty, Carol, Kayla, Pam, Jim, Heidi, Wayne, Peggy, Marcia, Health and healing for Father's parents Michal & Helena and Matushka's mom Barbara, and Walter, For the health of Elaine, Christine, Jen, Tina, Tony, Father David, Carole, Gary, Sharon, Sonya, Margi & Joe, MaryAnn & Bob, Bodhi, Stella, Jake, Pat, Special Intentions

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JANUARY CANDLE SPONSORS

Altar Candles: Fr. Peter and Mat. Michelle, For Health and God's Blessings for Barbara Wroblewski, and Michal & Helena Tomáš **($50); Chandelier:** Tina and Tony, In loving memory of Michael Neubauer **($50); Eternal Light & Icon Screen:** Jean Hileman, In loving memory of Elaine Hileman **($25); Candles at the Cross:** Laura Kovach, Birthday blessings to Jim and Sarah **($20); Candles at St. Tikhon Icon:** Available **($20)**

READERS LIST

Sunday Jan 18 – Joe
Sunday Jan 25 – Joe

ATTENDANCE

01/10 Vespers, **11** attending; **01/11** Divine Liturgy, **14** attending;

JANUARY BIRTHDAYS AND ANNIVERSARIES

22 – Linkoln Schaffer Paull*

CLEANING SCHEDULE

Jan 19, Sue
Jan 26, Jean
Feb 2, Stephanie
Feb 9, Greg

CHARITY OF THE MONTH

"Support a Priest (OCMC);" is the charity we donate to for the month of January.

UP-COMING EVENTS IN OUR PARISH – MARK YOUR CALENDAR

Feb 2nd MEETING OF OUR LORD IN THE TEMPLE *(Monday)* – Blessing of candles

Feb 14th Memorial Saturday *(Saturday)*

Feb 23rd Beginning of the Great Fast *(Monday)*

Apr 5th Palm Sunday *(Sunday)*

Apr 12th HOLY PASCHA *(Sunday)*

SUNDAY OFFERING

Sunday, January 11, 2026

Tithe	$1,470.00
Donations	$ 50.00
Candles	$ 56.00
Vigils	$ 115.00
Holy Day Donation	$ 85.00
Chandelier	$ 50.00
Altar Candles	$ 50.00
Eternal light & Icon Screen	$ 25.00
Support a Priest (OCMC) (Jan)	$ 60.00
Total:	**$1,961.00**

May the Lord reward you for your financial and spiritual support!

CHURCH MONTLY INCOME AND EXPENSES

Month of **DECEMBER 2025**

Church Donation income was	$10,039.00
Church Operating Expenses totaled	$20,094.23
net loss of	**- $10,055.23**

COFFEE HOUR SPONSOR LIST

Jan 18– Potluck lunch
Jan 25– Teri & Fred Cassell

Please sign up to host coffee hour. Signup sheet is located in the Social Hall

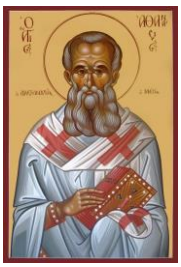
THEOPHANY – THE ANNUAL BLESSING OF HOMES

Between the Feast of Theophany and the beginning of the Great Fast (Lent), it is customary in our Holy Church to have our homes blessed by the parish priest with the Holy Water sanctified on this glorious Feast Day. This is an ancient tradition of the Orthodox Church and through it we extend the "Blessing of Jordan" into our homes and private places.

Please Note: *Parishioners who wish to have their house blessed are asked to fill out the form, which can be found in the vestibule. Each household that requests this blessing will be contacted by phone to schedule the mutual convenient time.*

HOLY WATER

You may take some Holy Water home for your private use at any time. Just bring your own container and help yourself. The Holy Water Font is in the church and easily accessible.



Saint Athanasius the Great, Archbishop of Alexandria

Commemorated on January 18

Saints Athanasius and Cyril were Archbishops of Alexandria. These wise teachers of truth and defenders of Christ's Church share a joint Feast in recognition of their dogmatic writings which affirm the truth of the Orthodox Faith, correctly interpret the Holy Scripture, and censure the delusions of the heretics.

Saint Athanasius took part in the First Ecumenical Council when he was still a deacon. He surpassed everyone there in his zeal to uphold the teaching that Christ is consubstantial (homoousios) with the Father, and not merely a creature, as the Arians proclaimed.

This radiant beacon of Orthodoxy spent most of his life in exile from his See, because of the plotting of his enemies. He returned to his flock as he was approaching the end of his life. Like an evening star, he illumined the Orthodox faithful with his words for a little while, then reposed in 373. He is also commemorated on May 2 (the transfer of his holy relics).

Our Faith is Light: Why We Light a Vigil Lamp before Icons

by Saint Nicholas of Serbia (Velimirović)

A small flame before an icon is easy to overlook. For Saint Nicholas of Serbia (Velimirović) it was not a mere custom, but a confession of faith. Bishop, missionary, and confessor of the twentieth century, he spoke to people who carried the weight of war, loss, and doubt, and answered their questions with the language of the Gospel rather than theory.

In this short letter he replies to a simple question: why do we light a vigil lamp before an icon? His seven brief answers reveal what this little flame says about Christ, about the saints, and about the hidden life of the heart that stands praying before God.

1. First, because our faith itself is light. Christ said: "I am the Light of the world" (John 8:12). The light of the vigil lamp reminds us of that Light with Which the Savior illumines our souls.

2. Second, to remind us of the bright, holy character of the saint before whose icon we light the lamp, for the saints are called children of light (John 12:36).

3. Third, to reproach our dark deeds, evil thoughts and desires, and to call us to the path of the Gospel light, that we may more zealously keep the commandment of the Savior: "Let your light so shine before men, that they may see your good works" (Matthew 5:16).

4. Fourth, that it may be our small offering to the Lord, Who gave Himself wholly as a sacrifice for us: a little sign of great thanksgiving and of our love for Him, from Whom in our prayers we ask life, health and salvation, which only His boundless heavenly love can give.

5. Fifth, to drive away the powers of evil, which sometimes attack us even during prayer, turning our thoughts away from the Creator. For the powers of evil love darkness and tremble before the light, especially the light that serves God and His saints.

6. Sixth, to stir us up to self-sacrifice. As the oil and wick in the lamp burn in obedience to our will, so may our souls burn with the flame of love, in all sufferings obedient to the will of God.

7. Seventh, to remind us that, just as the lamp cannot be lit without a human hand, so our heart, our inner lamp, cannot be kindled without the holy fire of Divine grace, even if it were filled with every virtue. Our virtues are the fuel, and it is the Lord Who sets it alight with His fire.

How Do We Know the Bible Is True?

by Anton Zaitsev

"In a world of fleeting truths and shifting sands, where can we find a rock upon which to build our lives?" This question haunts the heart of every seeker of God. For two millennia, Christians have pointed to a sacred library of books – the Holy Bible – as that unshakable foundation of truth. But how can we, in the 21st century, know that this ancient text is not just a collection of venerable stories, but the living Word of God? The Orthodox Church invites us to approach this question not merely as an intellectual puzzle, but as a sacred journey. We do not see the Bible as a standalone manual that fell from heaven; we see it as a treasure born from within the life of the Church, preserved by the Holy Spirit, and understood only in the Church's living experience. The truth of Scripture shines forth through its divine origin, the Spirit-guided wisdom of the Church in recognizing its contents (the biblical canon), its profound internal harmony, and its miraculous power to transform human lives. Let us walk through this "library of the Kingdom" with reverence and wonder, discovering how and why the Bible is true – in what it is, how it came to be, and what it does in the hearts of the faithful.

A Divine Symphony: Who Wrote the Bible?

The Bible was written by over 40 men – kings and shepherds, physicians and fishermen, prophets and apostles – across some 1,500 years. Yet the Orthodox Church boldly confesses one ultimate Author: God Himself. The Scriptures are "God-breathed" (from Greek *θεόπνευστος*; 2 Tim. 3:16), written by divine-human synergy. This means that in composing the Bible, God's Holy Spirit and the human authors worked together in a mysterious harmony. The Holy Spirit did not override the personalities of the writers or turn them into robotic scribes. Rather, as Bishop Kallistos Ware explains, *"divine grace cooperates with human freedom… God does not abolish our individuality but enhances it. The authors were not just passive instruments… Each writer of Scripture contributes his particular personal gifts. Alongside the divine aspect, there is also a human element in Scripture, and we are to value both"*.

St. John Chrysostom – one of the great Church Fathers – beautifully illustrated this mystery using the image of a musical instrument. Describing how the Apostle John wrote his Gospel, Chrysostom said John had *"made ready his soul as a well-fashioned and jeweled lyre… and yielded it for the utterance of something great and sublime to the Spirit."* When John wrote, *"it is no longer the fisherman… but the Holy Spirit that striketh this lyre… For he will say nothing to us as a man, but what he saith, he will say from the depths of the Spirit."* In other words, each biblical author is like a master musician playing in a grand symphony. They each have their own tone, style, and context – David's poetry differs from Luke's history or Paul's urgent letters – yet the Composer is the same Holy Spirit, breathing through their unique voices to produce one glorious melody of salvation. Thus, the Bible is at once 100% the Word of God and 100% the word of its human authors – a divine symphony in which heaven and earth sing together. This miracle of inspiration is our first foundation for trusting that the Bible speaks the truth: its author is Truth Himself.

The Measuring Rod of Faith: Understanding the Biblical Canon

If God inspired many books, how do we know which books truly belong in the Bible? The term "canon" itself comes from the Greek kanon, meaning a reed or measuring rod – essentially, the "rule" or list of books that are authoritative Scripture. The canonical books of the Bible did not appear as a neat table of contents from the sky. Rather, they were discerned and recognized from among many religious writings by the early Church. It is crucial to understand that the Church did not "create" the canon by her own whim; she received and confirmed it through the guidance of the Holy Spirit. The Orthodox Church, which St. Paul calls "the pillar and foundation of the truth" (1 Tim. 3:15), was the living context in which the Scriptures were preserved and authenticated.

How did the Church recognize the canonical books of the Bible?

The Church's discernment was organic and worshipful, not merely academic. Guided by the Holy Spirit, she received the Scriptures within her life of prayer, doctrine, and worship. The criteria were applied contextually:

For the Old Testament:

- The Church received, rather than invented, the Scriptures of Israel—now read in the light of Christ. In the Septuagint (LXX), the Old Testament of the Apostles, these books entered the Church's bloodstream: their authority rests on unbroken reception, their transparent witness to Christ, and their constant proclamation in the Liturgy.

For the New Testament:

- **Apostolic origin (or close apostolic witness):** A writing was authored by an Apostle or by a close associate of the Apostles, thus rooted in the eyewitness testimony to the Lord Jesus.
- **Orthodoxia (Right belief):** Its teaching cohered with the Rule of Faith—the apostolic doctrine living in the Church and confessed "everywhere, always, and by all."
- **Liturgical usage:** The books read consistently in the Divine Liturgy and in the common prayer of the faithful were recognized as Scripture. For generations the Gospels and Apostolic Epistles were proclaimed on the Lord's Day; these texts nourished the Church's life and bore the recognizable voice of the Shepherd.

Taken together, these marks show that the biblical canon was not invented by committee but recognized through the Church's lived communion with Christ. As Fr Georges Florovsky observed, Scripture is "a selection… authorized and authenticated by the community's use (first of all liturgical) and finally by the Church's formal authority." The message is divine, yet it is the Church that acknowledges the Word. In short, the Church confirmed the canon through prayerful use and Spirit-guided consensus, rather than arbitrarily creating it.

Historically, by the end of the 4th century this consensus was codified. Regional councils (such as at Hippo in 393 and Carthage in 397) listed the canonical books of the Bible matching the 27 New Testament books we have today, along with the Greek Old Testament (Septuagint) books received by the Church. St. Athanasius of Alexandria, in his Paschal Letter of 367 A.D., enumerated the exact New Testament canon and declared: *"These are the fountains of salvation, that they who thirst may be satisfied with the living words they contain. In these alone is proclaimed the doctrine of godliness. Let no man add to these, neither let him take aught from these."* The Church Fathers fiercely defended this "measuring rod" of true Scripture against both those who tried to subtract from it and those who tried to add spurious writings. Athanasius, for example, warned the faithful not to be deceived by *"apocryphal"* books, calling them *"an invention of heretics who write them as they please and assign them dates, that so, using them as ancient writings, they may find occasion to lead astray the simple"*. In affirming the canon, the Church was essentially saying: *These* are the books that from the

beginning have nourished the Church's faith, proclaimed Christ rightly, and been sealed by the Holy Spirit's witness.

The upshot is that our confidence in the Bible's truth is inseparable from our confidence in the Church. The canon is not a loose collection of old religious texts; it is the authoritative canon of God's revelation—the Church's charter of faith. It took shape within the worshipping community of the Church, and it was the Church's bishops and saints, guided by the Spirit, who discerned the difference between inspired Scripture and ordinary religious literature. The Bible, therefore, stands true not in isolation, but within the living Apostolic Tradition that identified and upheld it. As St. Irenaeus taught in the 2nd century, the true faith and the true Scriptures live in the Church that has received the apostolic teaching and preserved it without distortion. Cut off from that ecclesial context, one can easily be led astray by private interpretations or false gospels. But within the Church, the Bible's truth shines clear, for the same Spirit who inspired the Scriptures also dwells in the Church, guaranteeing a harmony between the Word of God and the People of God.

The Library of the Kingdom: How Many Books Are in the Bible?

It surprises many people to learn that not all Christians throughout history have used exactly the same Bible. The Orthodox biblical canon includes a number of books that are absent from the Protestant Old Testament. In total, an Eastern Orthodox Bible typically contains 76 books (49 in the Old Testament and 27 in the New Testament), in contrast to the 66-book Protestant Bible. What accounts for this difference? The answer lies in the version of the Old Testament that the early Church adopted.

Jesus and the Apostles primarily used the Septuagint (LXX) – a Greek translation of the Hebrew Scriptures made in the 3rd–2nd centuries BC. The Septuagint was the Bible of the Greek-speaking Jewish diaspora and included several books written in Greek (or in Hebrew/Aramaic but preserved only in Greek) that were not part of later rabbinical Jewish canon. These include Tobit, Judith, Wisdom of Solomon, Sirach (Ecclesiasticus), Baruch, the Maccabees, and some additional portions to Esther and Daniel, among others. The early Church accepted these Deuterocanonical books as Scripture, since they were used in liturgy and passed the same criteria of apostolic use and Orthodox teaching. When one examines the New Testament, one finds the Apostles quoting extensively from the Septuagint (even when it differs from the Hebrew text), and even alluding to those extra books. For example, the Epistle of Jude references details found in the Book of Enoch – indicating the broader canonical awareness of the early Christians.

It was not until the Protestant Reformation (16th century) that these books were removed from certain Bibles, being termed "Apocrypha" by Protestants. The Orthodox, however, never stopped reading these books as part of Scripture. We prefer the term *"Deuterocanonical"* (meaning "belonging to the second canon") over *"Apocrypha"* ("hidden away") – because these texts were never hidden in the life of the ancient Church. They were read openly for instruction of the faithful (as Athanasius notes, some were appointed to be read by new converts) even if a few were disputed at times. Thus, an Orthodox Bible includes all the books found in a Roman Catholic Bible (73 books) plus a few additional texts that were preserved in Greek usage – such as 3 Maccabees, 1 Esdras, Psalm 151, and in some traditions 4 Maccabees – bringing the total to 76. This broader canon reflects the full Septuagint inheritance of the original Church. It is important to stress that Orthodox Christians regard the Deuterocanonical books as fully inspired and edifying. They are not "extra bonus material" tacked on, but integral parts of the biblical witness, containing prophecies and wisdom that point to Christ. For instance, the Wisdom of Solomon clearly foreshadows Christ's Passion, and 2 Maccabees teaches about the resurrection of the dead. When we realize the Bible is not a single book but a library, we can appreciate that the Orthodox Church chose to keep the library complete, as received from the earliest Christians, rather than trimming it down later. In affirming these 76 books, the Orthodox Church again relies on the continuous guidance of the Holy Spirit in the Church's life to know which books belong. And it was in the unity of that same Spirit that the Church could declare these books canonical while setting aside other writings as non-canonical.