Q1. (Faith) At the Last Supper, Jesus consecrated the Apostles and Himself in the truth so that for all those who came to faith because of their teaching, and those who followed them, could be assured that it was, indeed, Holy Truth, received from God. Today we refer to this Holy Truth as the Magisterium of the Church: the infallible teaching of God, through the Church on matters of faith and morals. As in today’s lesson, that authority is often exercised through a council of the Church. How does this chrism and authority give you assurance in the validity of the teachings of the Church?

What handy reference has been given to us by the Magisterium to enable us to research the divine truth and meaning of most passages of Holy Scripture?

Acts 15:28

It is the decision of the holy Spirit and of us not to place on you any burden beyond these necessities

John 17:17, 19-20

17 Consecrate them in the truth. Your word is truth.

19 And I consecrate myself for them, so that they also may be consecrated in truth.

20 “I pray not only for them, but also for those who will believe in me through their word,

CCC2034

The Roman Pontiff and the bishops are "authentic teachers, that is, teachers endowed with the authority of Christ, who preach the faith to the people entrusted to them, the faith to be believed and put into practice." The ordinary and universal Magisterium of the Pope and the bishops in communion with him teach the faithful the truth to believe, the charity to practice, the beatitude to hope for.

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The supreme degree of participation in the authority of Christ is ensured by the charism of infallibility. This infallibility extends as far as does the deposit of divine Revelation; it also extends to all those elements of doctrine, including morals, without which the saving truths of the faith cannot be preserved, explained, or observed.77

Q2. (Hope) Our hope of salvation relies on the Grace of God and our belief in Jesus Christ and His Word that we live out in our daily lives. How is your hope of salvation strengthened by the knowledge that what we are taught by the Church is true and that truth has been consecrated by Jesus Himself? What doubts could creep into your mind if each person, individually, had the authority to interpret the divine truth of Holy Scripture, indeed, even what books comprised the body of Holy Scripture?

Q3. (Love) Consider how the early Christian Church with both Jewish and Gentile believers could have faced significant dissention over the foods one is permitted to eat. The dissension was resolved in favor of mutual love by minimizing the distinctions of practice at the First Church Council in today’s reading and eliminated completely in the Council of Florence when the distinctions based on the teaching of Jesus Himself. What distinctions in practice do we face today in our Church and even our Bible Study that love can overcome to eliminate dissension?

Matthew 15:11

It is not what enters one’s mouth that defiles that person;   
but what comes out of the mouth is what defiles one.”

A1. (Faith) At the Last Supper, Jesus consecrated the Apostles and Himself in the truth so that for all those who came to faith because of their teaching, and those who followed them, could be assured that it was, indeed, Holy Truth, received from God. Today we refer to this Holy Truth as the Magisterium of the Church: the infallible teaching of God, through the Church on matters of faith and morals. As in today’s lesson, that authority is often exercised through a council of the Church. How does this chrism and authority give you assurance in the validity of the teachings of the Church?

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That Jesus Himself, consecrated the Apostles, the Church at that moment, in the truth, consecrated Himself in the truth for the Church and promised the Holy Spirit to be the guarantor of the truth throughout the ages gives me an absolute assurance in the Church as the keeper of the truth. That the Church has given us the Catechism of the Catholic Church as a resource for finding and understanding the true teachings of the Church is little short of miraculous.

A2. (Hope) Our hope of salvation relies on the Grace of God and our belief in Jesus Christ and His Word that we live out in our daily lives. How is your hope of salvation strengthened by the knowledge that what we are taught by the Church is true and that truth has been consecrated by Jesus Himself? What doubts could creep into your mind if each person, individually, had the authority to interpret the divine truth of Holy Scripture, indeed, even what books comprised the body of Holy Scripture?

The authority of the Church was not something that was assumed by those in power, it was a chrism given to it by Christ Himself with the assurance that the Holy Spirit would guide the Church in truth Without that authority given by Christ to His Church and the successors of the Apostles, every individual could assume his own authority to interpret Holy Scripture in way he wanted. There would be no authoritative body to adjudicate differences of opinion, exclude heresies, and even no list of books that should be included in the Bible. We tailor our own version of the Bible to fit our own particular desires. As a Christian, I would be plagued by doubt of whether there even was an absolute truth; something doubted in secular society today. I would also never know where to go for an answer to a question of interpretation. All I would get would be opinion without authority.

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We face distinctions in practice on things such as: should girls be allowed to be altar servers, should women be ordained to the priesthood, to what extent should Latin be used in the Mass, what is the proper way to receive Holy Communion. In Bible Study we face issues such as: what books to study, how to perform our prayer ministry, how difficult should the questions be, what is the authority of the Catechism in interpreting Holy Scripture. All these issues must be resolved in favor of love, respecting each other’s opinions, staying true to the teachings, and encouraging every person to a closer relationship with Christ.