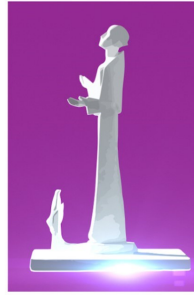


# EXPLORING THE BIBLE

a St Francis College short course



## Theme 4: Reading the New Testament

### Question 4c : What's in the New Testament?

1. When Marian says something like 'none of us know if Hebrews is a sermon' the life of these texts is brought into sharp focus. The books and letters of the New Testament were written for particular audiences and had lives of their own before being collected in a formal work called the Bible. We use these texts in ways that the writers may never have imagined. How might this idea influence and enliven your reading of the New Testament?
2. The New Testament contains many types of writing: Marian mentioned letters, sermons, apocalyptic writings, gospels. How does an awareness of the genre (type) of writing influence the way we read each 'book'?
3. Is it possible that modern Christian writings might be collected into another Testament? In what context would this be done?

#### **Marian Free**

What is in the New Testament? Like the Old Testament a great variety of things - a number of letters to early Christian communities and Gospels for starters! Within the Gospels there are differences as each is written for a different audience, with different emphases. You've got the book of Hebrews and none of us are quite sure if that's a sermon. We're fairly sure its not a letter but it ends like a letter!

Then there's the Book of Revelation. So the New Testament is a bit narrower than the Old Testament but you still get within the Gospels and certainly the Book of Revelation what we call 'apocalyptic literature' - the more dramatic expectations of the end times. I think that covers it.

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