

BDV digital

Bulletin Dei Verbum
English Edition
2016, n. 104

Contents

Editorial	2
Forum	
Cesare Bissoli <i>Young People and the Bible. Directions for a Journey of Faith</i>	4
Mary Elizabeth Sperry <i>Bible Resources for Catholic Youth</i>	10
Thomas P. Osborne <i>Editions of the Bible for Young Persons</i>	13
Projects and Experiences	
Let the Word set us on Fire	18
»Kalimat Hayat«	22
LectioYouth.Net	26
Bible and art forms	
The Tabernacle of the Chapel, AMECEA Pastoral Institute in Eldoret, Kenya	27
Federation News	28
Biblical Pastoral Publications	34

*BDV digital is an electronic publication of the Catholic Biblical Federation,
General Secretariat, 86941 Sankt Ottilien, Germany gensec@c-b-f.org, www.c-b-f.org.
Editorial Board: Giuseppe de Virgilio (Coordinator), Thomas P. Osborne, Gérard Billon,
Christian Tauchner SVD und Jan J. Stefanów
Translations: Michael James
Liga Bank BIC GENODEF1M05 IBAN DE28 7509 0300 0006 4598 20*

Editorial

No. 104 of the *DEI VERBUM DIGITAL BULLETIN* addresses a very relevant issue for the life of the *Catholic Biblical Federation* and more generally for the World Church, that of "Young People and the Bible".

In addition, the need to deepen the relationship between young people and the Bible has been given further urgency by the announcement of the coming 15th Ordinary General Assembly of the Synod of Bishops, to be held in Rome in October of 2018, which will have as its theme: "*Young People, Faith and Vocational Discernment*" (cf. THE SYNOD OF BISHOPS, "*Young People, Faith and Vocational Discernment*", Preparatory Document, Vatican City, January 13, 2017).

All ecclesial communities are called upon to reflect on the maturity of the faith of today's youth culture and on the road that leads to vocational discernment.

One essential element of this process is represented by the role of Sacred Scripture at the service of young people and their choices in life.

Encounters with the Bible, knowledge of biblical traditions and figures, listening the Word proclaimed in the liturgy, the use of biblical texts in prayer, in *lectio divina* and in various forms of catechesis all represent necessary «next steps» in the process of providing formation for young people.

But how many young people actually draw near to the texts of the Bible? What is being done to familiarize the youth of our communities with the Bible? How should we prepare for the young a form of Biblical Pastoral Ministry which will have an existential repercussion in their lives? What skills are needed by the pastoral worker who animates young people on their path?

These are questions that touch every local Church, called to question itself regarding this "frontier of evangelization". For its part, the *Catholic Biblical Federation* must feel that it is involved firsthand in furthering knowledge of the Bible and in fostering appropriate resources for biblical pastoral

ministry. The world of youth is the privileged recipient of this educational process. The contributions proposed in the *Forum* of this issue deal with the theme from different points of view.

In her contribution *Bible Resources for Catholic Youth*, M. E. Sperry offers a panorama of biblical tools suited to the world of young people. She stresses in particular the need to put young people in touch with the Bible, beginning with the different situations in which they find themselves. This is the outcome which the magisterial documents of the Church expressly desire. There are already a good number of helps, publications, tools, and resources of a biblical nature both in the area of the knowledge of the literary sources as well as in the area of prayer, liturgy and *lectio divina*.

C. Bissoli (*Young people and the Bible*), points to the educational importance of the Bible in accompanying young people on their journey of faith. A church capable of generating faith must open itself up to the world of youth and have the courage to propose the Bible as a "*compass*" guiding young people in their search for God. Bearing in mind the difficulties of meeting and communicating with the world of the young, Bissoli emphasizes four aspects that must guide our proposal of the Bible in the educational process: "proclamation, celebration, service (*diakonia*) and missionary witness".

M. Vaňuš reports on an important biblical initiative, launched in Africa and Madagascar, called "*LectioYouth*". Beginning with a thoughtful treatment of the 'Word proclaimed' during the Sunday liturgies, he proposes a meditative reading of the texts in youth groups, deepened by age-appropriate exegesis, contextualization and explanations of the passages of Scripture. "*LectioYouth*" represents a concrete form of biblical inculturation in the church environments (youth groups, movements, parishes) on African soil.

J. Puthussery, Secretary of the Catholic Biblical Commission of Kerala (India) has written about a series of biblical pastoral activities involving young people which have been initiated in the region of Kerala. The first of these initiatives is the *Bible Quiz*, intended to promote the study of the Bible.

It was launched by the Episcopal Conference of Kerala on the occasion of the Great Jubilee of the year 2000. This initiative has been running for more than 15 years now and is celebrated in 57 dioceses with a growing number of young people eager to participate in the *Bible Quiz* each year. A second initiative which involves the world of youth is entitled "*Bible Art Festival*", which gives the young the opportunity to present biblical themes in various creative and artistic forms. A third proposal concerns the month of the Bible, which involves a reading of the sacred text in the parishes (*Bible Reading Marathon*).

The perusal of this number can help you understand how the Bible is effective in the educational process of today's youth culture.

The strength of originality and the openness to the future that young people carry in their hearts should inspire all believers to become aware of the duty to share the Holy Book, source of our faith and of renewal.

Giuseppe De Virgilio



*The multiplication of the loaves (detail).
For more about these photographs see the section of „Bible and art forms“.*

Forum

Young people and the Bible

Directions for a journey of faith

CESARE BISSOLI

Catechetical Institute of the Salesian University – Rome

1. “Like a compass”

a) *“My dear young friends, I urge you to become familiar with the Bible, and to have it at hand so that it can be your compass pointing out the road to follow.”*

With those words Pope Benedict XVI concluded his discourse to the young people of the entire world on the occasion of the 2006 World Youth Day in Munich, Germany.

It is the Pope's belief that in the Holy Book rightly encountered, youthful faith will find an indispensable guide (*compass*), provided that the young are careful not to think of the encounter with the Bible as a *deus ex machina* or as a dossier of recipes for the miraculous but place it within the broader project of well thought out evangelization or, as French-speaking catechists like to say, in strong terms of ‘generativity’.

For this reason, we need to be careful not to reduce the practice of turning to the Bible, which today is enjoying a certain flowering among God's people, to a simple practice of devotion. It is rather an engine of *generation* – and in mainland Europe, of *re-generation*, of learning how to become Christians all over again.

I won't mention the radical demands that come to mind, and which I realistically join together here into two: *it is important that we get the young together in order to speak to them about the Bible; and secondly, we need to get young people interested in a book that is as ‘alien’ to their culture as is the Bible.*

b) Meanwhile, here at an early stage, we affirm *three certainties*:

– For every person, especially the young, the grace of the word of God matures in a process of formation, in which the biblical texts are the bricks for the construction of a biblically inspired, organic faith within a dynamic project of evangelization that respects each person's journey.

– This requires a clear pedagogical choice: you must look at the Bible not as a book, or even as a library of books complete in themselves, but as the world of the characters and of the events through which those characters lived, hence as a historical journey nourished by experiences. Its high doctrinal profile as the Word of God must be understood in the life and history of a people, embodied in a culture of other times in order to provide a serious inculturation in our times.



The Eucharist, source of life in the local Christian community.

– But it is true that the journey of faith will never be able to manage without the Bible, which in effect is like a compass; deep friendship with Jesus and a person's relationship with him must be decoded and narrated in the testimonies of the first persons who encountered him, and of the others who came after them down through the centuries and up to our present day. Today, as in the past, it is possible for young people to have access to the Bible, because today as yesterday, the Teacher continues to invite: "Come and see!" (Jn 1.39). This kind of thing is happening in every country. Take for instance the example, which has become known all around the world, of Cardinal Carlo Martini of Milan, whom Pope Benedict himself recommended to young people as a "true master".

c) Now *let's delve into this theme a bit more* and make two points: 1) what the actual relationship between young people and the Bible might be like; and 2) practical guidelines for introducing the Bible to young people.

It should be noted that these considerations apply above all to the secularized world (North Atlantic), but can be useful as diagnoses for Christianity in other countries where the Bible is experiencing its first flowering, thanks also to the worldwide Catholic Biblical Federation.

2. A chasm to be crossed: Young people and the sacred book

a) In and of itself, the Bible fails to excite in the eyes of a young person, especially one caught up in the midst of adolescence, any particular attraction or affection. It is therefore possible to note *a substantial indifference* towards a faith communicated through Sacred Scripture, rather than through the personal testimony of a believer, an indifference which is accompanied, cause and effect together, by a considerable level of ignorance and above all by the difficulty of recognizing Sacred Scripture's vital force. The Bible does not appear to be full of people of any real significance, except perhaps the person of Jesus. And so, for the young person immersed in his or her 'virtual' world, often attracted by interests of a completely different type, propelled toward more intense and satisfying free time, mediated by expressive languages in which neither the written form nor historical memory play any great role, it turns out that, at the very least, the Bible appears to be a channel of communication that is unbalanced, out of step with the times, "neither for, nor against, but simply as if from another planet". Moreover, in the biblical world



Sharing of Food in the Community.

itself, the contents which the Scriptures convey appear to be "stuff for adults", which reach the younger generation only through an intergenerational relationship, marked by the flow of a living tradition, maintained by a living people (cf. Ex 12:14.42; 2 Tm 3:14).

b) In fact, depending on attitude, it can be noted that in some young people, there is a *surprising openness* toward the Bible, taking into account, however, that this "connection" is not achieved, at least initially, due to any authority of the biblical page itself, even if it is admitted to be the Word of God. It is due, rather, to the adults who come close to the young as patient educators and credible witnesses of the greatest character in the Scriptures, Jesus. In short, everything depends on persons who,

when they speak the Word of God, demonstrate it in their very lives. This is precisely what the experience of Benedict XVI shows, and before him of John Paul II and now of Pope Francis, who even as they deliver the Bible to young people, integrate with their own personal credibility the need of the young for orientation and certainty. We note once again that good stimulus for this availability is produced by privileged networks. Notably, they affect the paths of faith in opportune moments (e.g., in biblical youth camps, or spiritual retreats throughout the year) and in the shape of well-organized movements, today the most efficacious for our argument. For a certain percentage of adolescents the path of their preparation for confirmation might be the only biblical channel capable of having any effect. As for the Eucharist, center-court *par excellence* of God's Word, there is sadness at the absence of the young but not the hope of a rapprochement! Thanks to engaging forms, in the midst of this intersection between exterior detachment and readiness to listen, one can speak of a potential 'youthful' resurrection of Scripture as an interesting voice, capable of meaning and opening fresh avenues in the history of the spirituality of the young.

3. "Open the Bible with confidence. It will carry you beyond yourselves" (Card. C. M. Martini to the young people of Milan)

A journey to be undertaken with wisdom and decision

On the operational level, however, everything is not so clear and easy in this relationship between the Bible and the young. So, even if the need for teaching the Bible in the perspective of faith is not up for discussion, we still do need to clarify some points about how to proceed, first in the form of establishing criteria and then suggesting some possible approaches to the task. Here I would like to express some of my own convictions which have been born of experience.

3.1 Meeting the Bible within the mystery of the Word of God

The perspective of meeting, especially for young people in need of a radical reinterpretation of their faith, must go beyond objectives even if they are pertinent but dependent such as those strictly moral or cultural or of simple prayer. The birth in question does not concern having some extra knowledge of Christianity but rather of (re)-becoming and of living as Christians. Clearly, even if with progressive steps, you need to be able to arrive at a climate of the faith that entrusts itself to the Lord who speaks. Otherwise it is a proposal that fades into a flea-market style collection of sacred odds and ends.

This evokes a theological-pastoral framework, that of *Dei Verbum* and *Verbum Domini*, the becoming aware of which and the making of it an object of progressive maturation, requires using a language accessible to the young.

I restate here the essential connections:

- By means of His Word, God establishes His people of sons and daughters as brothers and sisters to one another.
- This is accomplished in the proclamation of the Gospel, which brings about conversion/faith, through which one receives the Gospel and so enters into and joins the ecclesial community.
- Within an organic process of 'initiation' into the Word of God, a process which includes: proclamation, celebration, *diakonia* and missionary witness.
- In this dynamic and vital context, called *Tradition*, lies the service of the Bible – not identifiable as a book – with the Word of God, which is always about grace; but the Bible is still the '*sacrament*': wellspring, regulatory certification for all time.

Introducing the young to the Bible means getting them to read 'the Bible through the lens of their life and to read their life through the lens of the Bible', to discern the Word of God in history, and to welcome it into their lives as a promise of freedom and salvation.

As for methodology, I believe that, while looking always to encourage personal involvement, the wiser course is to alternate the *kerygmatic* process (the Bible to us) with the *anthropological* (from us to the Bible).

3.2. *Educating the young to prepare them for an encounter with Scripture is essential if that encounter is to take place and be efficacious*

We have already mentioned the difficulties of the young with regard to the holy Book, without denying their openness to it. 'Education' means a process that is as enlightened and well planned as it is creative, shared and patient.

Here it would be good to share certain *considerations* arising from experience:

- Have the *courage to openly propose* to the young that they become or re-become Christians, to make the choice of faith in Jesus, and in that choice to make the choice of their life in a dimension that goes beyond a merely human understanding.

- From within the biblical text, to understand the Word in its continuous interweaving, sometimes dramatic, of question and answer about the *existential aspects of the person*, in particular about those most familiar from their own youthful experience (such as the aspiration to freedom and joy, to life as a project, to their search for security, trust and solidarity ...).

It is that significance which indicates the authenticity of the truth, because God himself yearns to encounter and insert Himself fully into human desire.

- In this process only *a genuinely personal encounter* (friendship and dialogue) between the young person(s) and their teacher has any possibility of success, because only this will allow the Bible to reveal itself and to act efficaciously as the sacrament of the encounter with God, a sacramental sign which reveals and makes effective the encounter with the text as a participation in the encounter between God and his people.

- The ultimate goal of this pedagogically intense relationship is *eventual visible membership in a community*, seen as a life-giving place (and as the Body of Christ which grows thanks especially to the Eucharist) where the Word resonates and the grand biblical gestures of listening, contemplation, *diakonia* and mission are practiced.

- Precisely with regard to these acts, a Bible (the Gospel) proposed to the young cannot but guide them towards a double goal: a choice of vocation, of which today the most attractive choice is that of volunteer service, a decision to become involved in real help to the world of the poor.

If the Bible does not help young people discover the resources (the charism) of love that is in them, a love which expresses itself in a care for justice, in help for the indigent, in the quest for peace ... we are in danger of making the Bible "a resounding gong or a clashing cymbal" (1 Co 13:1).



Jesus sharing bread with the disciples of Emmaus, the multiplication of the loaves and Abraham's sacrifice of Isaac.

As for this area of dedicated service, formative and operational, it appears to me that the relationship between the young and the Gospel is in need of development.

But if the young are not educated to desire and create a different future in the light of the Word of God, when might this future ever come to be?

3.3 Suggestions on how to proceed...

The following suggestions come from the light of experience...

- The biblical approach in the form of group work always remains valid, provided we distinguish between adolescents and those young people who are more mature, and between those who have already made a faith choice and those who are still searching or who are still far away from such a choice. The group experience should give rise to personal and communal experience of the Bible.

- As has already been hinted above, it is important to take advantage of times and spaces that can be more significant when the young will be more receptive (i.e., the solemn seasons of Advent and Lent, pilgrimages, retreats or recollections, etc.).

Religious instruction in the school for those who have made this choice should be given particular attention and importance. In addition, the route of catechetical preparation leading up to and following Confirmation also offers good opportunities.

- The process is fruitful as long as it unfolds in an organic biblical way which includes moments of study, prayer and evangelical discernment, and which contrasts critically the ever more invasive religious and cultural pluralism with a practical commitment in the service of others.

- We recommend an *experience of the biblical text* on four levels:

- * *inductive*: begin with the story of Jesus in the Gospels in order to arrive either at the Old Testament as the religious and cultural homeland of Jesus, or at the New Testament of the Acts and of the letters, as the necessary development of the message of Jesus in the life of the first Christian communities.
- * *rational explanation*: provide criteria for coming to an understanding of the real meaning of the text; solve the mystery of the 'difficult' pages of the Holy Book.
- * *theological*: recognition of the gift of the Word of God in the light of *Dei Verbum* and *Verbum Domini*.
- * *spiritual*: the interaction of the biblical text with catechesis, the liturgy and the practice of charity.

- We can only make a nod in the direction of this next point, but the most comprehensive and effective form of bringing the Bible to the young remains the model of *Lectio divina*, as recommended by Pope Benedict, but which needs, however, to be reformulated and adapted for young people, as was done, for example, at Cardinal Martini's *School of the Word* or in the seven steps of the *Lumko Method*. We recognize the following elements as being necessary: – the dynamic of *listening/study* (without hurrying but also without making it too boring and demanding); – *personal meditation* that is duly hard-hitting; – *sharing* one's reflections with the group (an essential step); a *climate of prayer*; and finally, a *decision* for life. All of this requires a patient apprenticeship. And also here it comes to generating...

In the installments to follow, we will propose some specific outlines for dealing with the Old and the New Testaments.

A conclusion without a conclusion

We began with the words of Pope Benedict and we will conclude with the passionate testimony of Pope Francis, directed as always to the world of the young, in the preface which he wrote for a German edition of the Bible intended for young people:

“My dear young friends, if only you could see my Bible, you probably wouldn’t be very impressed by it. You would say: ‘What’s this? This is the Pope’s Bible? That book is so old, so shabby!’ You might even want to give me a new one as a gift, perhaps even a really good one costing 1,000 Euro: but no, I wouldn’t want it. I love my old Bible, which has accompanied me through half of my life. It has seen my joys, it has been bathed by my tears: it is my priceless treasure. I draw my life from it and I wouldn’t give it away for anything in the world.” That’s how he began, with a confidence of heart that captivates the young people themselves: “You play sports together. You go shopping together; so why can’t you also read the Bible together, in groups of two or three or four? Maybe you could do that out in the open, immersed in nature, in the woods, at the seashore, or evenings by the light of a candle... If you would only do so, you would have an experience so powerful that it would shake you to your roots. Or maybe you are just afraid to appear ridiculous in front of your friends and peers? Read the Bible with attention! Don’t just stay on a superficial level in the same way you might read a comic book. The Word of God is not something that you can just skim over quickly with a glance. Only in this way can the Word of God unfold all of its power; only in this way can our life transform itself, becoming full and beautiful”.



Alpha and Omega, The Wedding Feast in Cana, Moses and the bronze serpent healing the people of God.

Bible Resources for Catholic Youth

MARY ELIZABETH SPERRY *

It can be very difficult to engage youth in Bible reading. Since parts of the Bible are more than four thousand years old and the people who wrote it lived in a vastly different culture, young people can find it difficult to see how the Bible can have anything to say to them. Still, though the lives of people in Bible times were very different than the lives of most young people today, they faced many of the same challenges, turning to God to find the help they needed.

The following resources can help pastoral ministers develop in young people the abiding love of the Word of God that should mark the Christian life.

Of course, the most important Bible resource is the Bible itself. We must READ THE BIBLE rather than simply read about the Bible. If possible, a parish or Catholic organization should keep several Catholic Bible translations at hand. No single translation can encompass all possible meanings of the original text, so the translators must make choices. Comparing the same passage in multiple translations can give a new perspective on the meaning.

In addition, if possible, access to Bible versions appropriate for various age groups may be helpful. Several Bible translations offer editions particularly suited for young people and for families. The supplementary materials in various editions may give a fuller sense of the text's background and meaning to aid in understanding. Discussion questions and prayer resources help readers enter more deeply into the sacred text.

To ensure that they read the Bible with the mind and heart of the Church, young people and those who minister to them should have access to the major *Church documents on Sacred Scripture*. Most of these documents are available in many languages on the Vatican website



Jesus breaks bread with the disciples of Emmaus (detail).

* Mary Elizabeth Sperry holds Master's Degrees in liturgical Studies from the Catholic University of America and in political science from the University of California in Los Angeles. She has worked with the United States Conference of Catholic Bishops since 1994 and is presently the Associate Director for USCCB Permissions and NAB Utilization at USCCB Publishing. She serves as staff to the Confraternity of Christian Doctrine which is responsible for the development, publication, and distribution of the New American Bible and the promotion of biblical literacy. Her biblical pastoral publications include: *Bible Top Tens, Ten: How the Commandments Can Change Your Life* and *Scripture in the Parish: A Guide for Ministers*. Mary Sperry is also the Catholic Biblical Federation's coordinator for the North American Region.

(www.vatican.va). Key documents include *Dei Verbum*, the Dogmatic Constitution on Divine Revelation of the Second Vatican Council; *Verbum Domini*, Pope Benedict's post-synodal apostolic exhortation following the Synod of Bishops on the Word of God in the Life and Mission of the Church; Pope Francis' apostolic exhortation *Evangelii Gaudium*; and, the many statements and studies of the Pontifical Biblical Commission. The *Catechism of the Catholic Church*, with its extensive biblical index, can help young people understand the relationship between Scripture and Tradition. As Catholics, we do not read the Bible in isolation. The Church's teaching does not limit our ability to study the Bible. Rather, it opens the most productive avenues for study.

Another useful resource is a *Bible atlas*. While many Bibles include a maps section, a Bible atlas is usually larger and more complete. Spending time looking at the maps and photographs in an atlas can help bring the Bible's stories to life, allowing young people to understand the geography of the Bible's world and follow the paths taken by Abraham, Moses, the Israelites in exile, and Paul on his missionary journeys. Knowing the places of the Bible may engender a greater compassion for those Christians still living in the lands of the Bible who face daily persecution for the sake of Christ's name, enhancing the relationship between Scripture and modern life.

A *Bible timeline* is an excellent resource for young people. They can chart the great events of the Bible (e.g., the exodus, the reign of King David, the exile, the rebuilding of the Temple, the life of Christ, the ministry of Paul, etc.) on a long strip of paper or even a wall in a parish gathering space. Such an aid can help people understand the way that Bible events overlap (e.g., the ministry of the prophet Isaiah is recounted in the Books of Kings, and Paul's letters to cities he visited in the Acts of the Apostles). A timeline can also help place the events of the Bible in the context of world history. Tracing events on a map and timeline can help young people understand that the events of the Bible happened to real people in real places, giving a concrete sense to key events in our faith history.

The *Biblia Clerus* site from the Vatican's Congregation for the Clergy (http://www.clerus.org/bibliaclerus/index_eng.html) offers the Bible in seven languages (Latin [the Vulgata and the Nova Vulgata], English, French, German, Italian, Portuguese, and Spanish). Each passage has links to commentaries from the Fathers of the Church and magisterial teaching that reference a specific passage. However, digital and electronic resources cannot be used without discrimination. Many websites and computer packages expand their offerings by including materials in the public domain. Some of these additions, such as the writings of the Church Fathers, are a great help. Other additions, such as commentaries and devotionals written by Protestant leaders, may not reflect the Church's understanding of Scripture and may, in fact, be anti-Catholic. Care should be taken in accessing such resources.

Another group of resources include reflection guides for discussion and study, for the Sunday readings, on specific topics, or for books of the Bible. Young people may use the supplementary notes in their Bibles and look up the cross references, supplementing these with discussion guides and commentaries. All Catholic Bibles are required to include sufficient annotations to aid in the understanding of the biblical text. Still, all too many people fail to make use of these helpful introductions, explanatory notes, and cross-references.

Young people should make the Bible a regular part of their prayer. Praying the Bible is different from studying the Bible. *Lectio divina* is one of the Church's oldest ways of praying with Scripture. A youth group or individual might choose to pray an entire book of the Bible over the course of a few months, reading and reflecting on a small portion each week (*lectio continua*). Alternatively, they might choose to reflect on shorter passages around a given theme. For example, the United States Conference of Catholic Bishops has prepared a series of *Lectio divina* resources around themes of pilgrimage and mission, intended for young people participating in World Youth Day 2016 (<http://www.usccb.org/about/world-youth-day/world-youth-day-spiritual-preparation.cfm>).

Young people might also engage with Scripture by sharing it with others. This sharing can take many forms. Young people might read Bible stories to their younger siblings or to the elderly. A youth group might dramatize key stories from Scripture for children in faith formation. Scripture can be shared in songs, poems and art by those with particular gifts. Digital applica-

tions exist to allow young people to share favorite Bible quotes or reflections on Scripture with their peers.

Young people may be tempted to treat Scripture as something separate from their ordinary lives. But we believe that the God who reveals himself in the words of Sacred Scripture wants to be part of our lives. By studying and praying the text of the Bible, we seek to hear the voice of God in the words of the Bible, moving beyond a purely academic interest in the Bible to a more intimate knowledge of the text so that the Word may be in our minds, on our lips, and in our hearts.



Editions of the Bible for Young Persons

THOMAS P. OSBORNE

"The most important Bible resource is the Bible itself", Mary Sperry writes in her contribution on youth Bible ministry. And "we must READ THE BIBLE rather than simply read about the Bible". This double insight has motivated many publishers across the world to prepare special editions of the Bible with young people in mind. What differentiates editions of the Bible for children, for youth and for adults, etc. one from another? The following presentation of a selection of Bibles developed specifically for the youth in various languages (English, Spanish and German) allow us to observe and perhaps evaluate some of the editorial options at work.

Which translation of the Bible should be used: the official, liturgical translation or some other translation reflecting in one way or another contemporary or youth sensitivities and language skills?

Should the youth Bible publish the *full Biblical text* or *only a selection of Biblical texts*?

Which form of the canon should be used? The New Testament presents no difficulties. What about the Old Testament? Should the traditional Catholic Canon (Pentateuch, Historical Books, Poetic Books and Wisdom Literature, Prophets, in which the Deuterocanonical Books are included within these sections) provide the outline of the Bible? Or should the Hebrew Canon (Torah, Prophets and Other Writings) with a separate section devoted to the Deuterocanonical Books be followed? Or should some other criteria be used, whether for full Bibles or a selection of Biblical texts (thematic groups of writings or writings of various literary forms...)?

What type and length of introductions and other commentaries should be provided for assisting in a better understanding of the Biblical texts? Which introductions motivate the reader to reading the text himself or herself? And which types of introductions lead the reader to more or less rapidly return the Bible to the bookshelf? What about referencing literary theories of the composition of the Scriptural writings which often enough are destined to be abandoned or seriously modified in light of continuing research (see, for example, the theory of the four source documents proposed for the understanding of the composition of the Pentateuch, which is repeated in many Bible editions, even though it has been the object of radical criticism in Biblical scholarship since the 1970's).

What pedagogical materials or reading itineraries should be proposed for young people?

Which editorial options come to play in decisions concerning *the strategy of illustrations* for youth Bibles?

In short: *what makes a youth Bible a Bible for today's young people*? Is it even possible to publish a Bible for all of the world's young people, in spite of the very widespread cultural and social differences between the young persons living in the various countries and cultures of our planet today?

The following schematic presentation of some of the Youth Bibles available in various languages attempts to provide an overview of some of these editorial options. It is at the same time an invitation to take part in a more widespread debate on the publishing of Bibles for various populations and cultures which motivates concrete women and men, adults, youth, and children to effectively read the Scriptures themselves and to allow them, as a source of life, to dialogue with their concrete lives.

Title: *La Biblia joven*

Language: Spanish.

Editors: Carlos Granados García, Guillermo Santamaría de Pando.

Publishing House: Biblioteca de Autores Cristianos (Madrid, Spain);
Editorial Verbo Divino (Estella, Navarra, Spain).

Publication Date: 2015 (first edition).

Pages: XXXII, 1560 p.

Translation: Official translation of the Spanish Bishops Conference (Conferencia Episcopal Española).

Full Bible or Selection (criteria): Full Bible, traditional Catholic canon.

Introductions: General introduction, Intro. OT (p. 3-15), Intro. NT (p. 989-996), brief two page intro. to each book (including presentation of author, readers, date of redaction, outline message and key words).

Spots: actuamos (action), anunciamos (fundamental biblical theological concepts of the Christian faith), conocemos (brief explanations), oramos (forms of prayer), te presentamos a ... (introducing Biblical persons), vivimos (living the Scriptures in liturgy and in life), ¿por qué? (questions and answers).

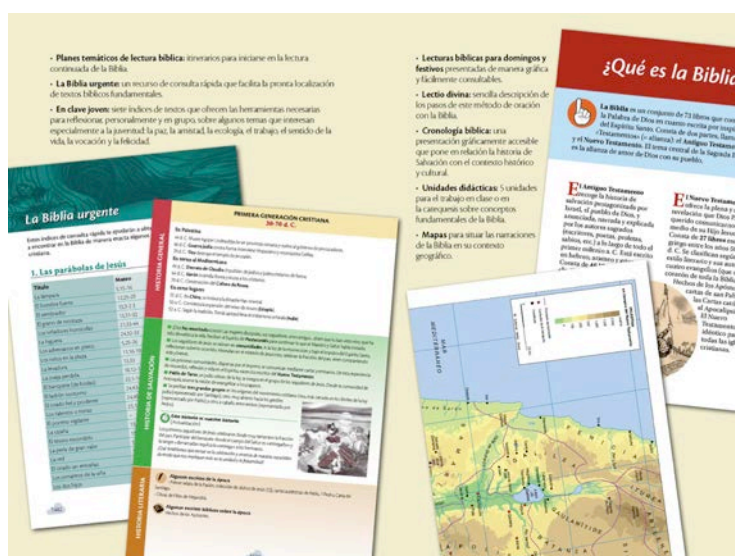
Illustrations: the relatively sober black and red illustrations invite the reader to reflect on the more important biblical texts, without unduly taking the primary attention away from the biblical text itself.

Indexes and appendixes: Biblical Vocabulary, indexes of commentaries, illustrations, biblical themes, thematic propositions for Bible reading, lists of texts for rapid consultation, thematic lists of Bible texts of particular interest to youth, list of liturgical readings, a presentation of lectio divina, chronological overview, five didactic entities, 4 maps.

Associated Websites:

www.youtube.com/watch?v=_DIIE10upcA&feature=youtu.be

www.rtve.es/alacarta/videos/ultimas-preguntas/ultimas-preguntas-biblia-joven/3614116/



Title: *La Biblia Católica para Jóvenes*

Language: Spanish.

Editors: Carmen María Cervantes, Maria Pilar Cervantes Gutiérrez.

Publishing House: Instituto Fe y Vida = Institute for Faith and Life (Stockton, California, U.S.A.); La Casa de la Biblia (Madrid, Spain); Editorial Verbo Divino (Estella, Navarra, Spain).

Publication Date: 2005 (First Edition).

Pages: 1776 p.

Translation: *Biblia de América*, approved by the Bishops Conferences of Mexico, Colombia and Chile.

Full Bible or Selection (criteria): Full Bible, with a hybrid form of the Hebrew (Tora, Prophets and Other Writings) and Greek or Catholic canons (Pentateuch, Historical Books, Psalms and Wisdom Literature, and Prophets for the Old Testament, presented in the traditional categories of the Catholic Canon (Pentateuch, Historical Books, Prophets, Poetic Books and Wisdom Literature): the Deuterocanonical books have been inserted into the categories of the Hebrew canon, rather than being regrouped in a separate category; and certain books of the "Other writings" or "Chetuvim" in particular, Ruth, Lamentations, Daniel, etc. have been displaced, while the Psalms and Wisdom literature has been reorganized into two categories of poetical books and wisdom literature ... (see p. 21 of the general introduction).

Introductions: General introduction (p. 14-42), OT intro (p. 45-63), NT intro (p. 1175-1190), brief introductions to categories of writings.

Spots: Vive la palabra, Entra en oración, ¿Sabías que...?, Reflexiona, Te presentamos a..., Textos resaltados.

Illustrations: Sober, two color (blue and black) drawings of some biblical stories in a simple, naïve style.

Index: Biblical Vocabulary, Cross references to Events and major teachings, to Commentaries concerning faith and life, to Prayers in the Bible, to Persons, to Catholic perspectives, to the Biblical basis of the Sacraments, to Biblical Symbols, to Maps and schemata; the Liturgical use of the Scriptures, 7 thematic itineraries for Bible reading.

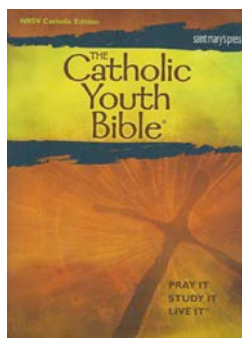


Associated Websites:

www.bibliaparajovenes.org/

for a "guided tour":

<http://www.bibliaparajovenes.org/files/u1/documentos/BCJ/BCJ-Tour-animado.swf>



Title: *The Catholic Youth Bible: NRSV Catholic Edition*

Language: English.

Editors: Virginia Halbur, development editor.

Publishing House: Saint Mary's Press (Winona, Minnesota, U.S.A.).

Publication Date: 2010 (3rd Edition).

Pages: XVII, 1558 p.

Translation: New Revised Standard Version Catholic Edition (1993).

Full Bible or Selection (criteria): Full Bible, Catholic Canon.

Introductions: General introduction (p. VI-XVII), Brief introductions to Sections of Writings and one page introductions to each book of the Bible (In depth, At a glance and Quick facts).

Spots: Live it!, Pray it!, Did you know?, Introducing..., Catholic Connection, Cultural Connection, Catholic Social Teaching; and 5 color inserts: Reading and studying the Bible, Praying with the Bible, Living Biblical principals, Charts and photos, Catholic practices and prayers.

Illustrations: Two color (green and black) illustrations characterizing each Biblical Book.

Indexes, etc.: Where do I find it?: Events, People and Teachings, Catholic Connections, Sacrament Connections, Life and Faith issues, Article Subject Index; The Church Year and Sunday Readings, Glossary, Maps, Old and New Testament Figures and Events, and Encounters with Jesus, Biblical History Timeline.

Associated Websites:

<http://www.smp.org/series/64/the-catholic-youth-bible/>

Note: The Catholic Youth Bible is also available with the New American Bible Revised Edition (2012). www.smp.org/product/4133/The-Catholic-Youth-Bible/

The Catholic Youth Bible editions are accompanied by a Leader Guide, and Teacher Guides for both the OT and the NT.



Title: **Neue Jugend Bibel**

Language: German.

Editors: Rainer Dillmann, Agnes Wuckelt.

Publishing House: Deutscher Katecheten Verein and Verlag Katholisches Bibelwerk.

Publication Date: 2015 (2nd printing of the new edition 2014=2. Auflage der Neuausgabe 2014).

Pages: 312 p.

Translation: Einheitsübersetzung (1980).

Full Bible or Selection (criteria): A selection of Biblical texts, based on various themes of interest to youth, accompanied by other short texts, poems, etc.: Relationships (In Beziehungen leben), Creation (Schöpfung bekennen und gestalten), Time for life (Zeit zum Leben. Lebenszeit), Work and leisure (Arbeit und Freizeit), Man and woman (Mann und Frau), Love (Nur die Liebe zählt?), Family (Familie), Stories that speak of life (Geschichten, die das Leben schreibt), Conflict (Streit), Anguish (Angst), Violence (Gewalt), Why, God ...? (Warum, Gott?), Guilt (Schuld), Death and new life (Tod und neues Leben), Faith (Glaube), Hope (Hoffnung).

Introductions: Each theme is introduced briefly.

Spots: Each text is accompanied by three spots: a brief explanation (Kurz erklärt), explanation of specific terms (Was bedeutet?), other related Biblical texts for further reading (Zum Weiterlesen).

Illustrations: Color photos taken from contemporary human life, nature and modern civilization

Index, etc.: Who is who? (Wer ist?), Geographical indications (Wo liegt?), Maps, Chronology, List of Bible passages quoted in this book.

Title: *Bibel: Jugendbibel der Katholischen Kirche*

With a preface by Pope Francis

Language: German.

Editors: The Austrian Bishops' Conference; Bernhard Meuser, Michael Langer, Georg Fischer, Dominik Markl, Thomas Söding

Publishing House: YOUCAT Foundation (Augsburg), Verlag Katholisches Bibelwerk (Stuttgart).

Publication Date: 2016 (3rd edition).

Pages: 431 p.

Translation: Einheitsübersetzung (1980)

Full Bible or Selection (criteria): A selection of texts from all books of the Bible, according to the Catholic canon, made by the editors in consultation with groups of youth.

Introductions: Brief introductions to the Bible "How you can read the Bible" and "The Bible is unique" (p. 8-13), as well as to the OT (p. 14-15) and the NT (p. 248-249) and to the individual groups of writings and individual books.

Spots: 8 types of brief commentary accompany the text in the margin (cross references, astonishing insights, explanations, saints and their living of the Bible, testimonies of contemporary youth, quotations from various persons of various cultures, questions which the Bible asks us, references to YOUCAT, the Youth Catechism of the Catholic Church).

Illustrations: A line of matchstick figures extends throughout the entire Bible and illustrates the Bible narrative; color photos of youth groups, nature and archeological sites mark the beginning of each new book of the Bible; a variety of small illustrations (details of art works, persons of the past and of the present...) accompany the Biblical text, without distracting from its reading; other graphics provide information on the Biblical history line, religious feasts in the Bible, maps of the territory of the twelve tribes, of Israel, Juda and the surrounding nations, of Jerusalem at the time of Jesus and of St. Paul's voyages.

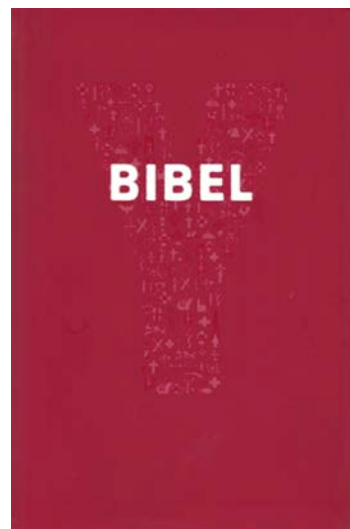
Indexes, etc.: Lists of persons mentioned in the text or the commentaries, subjects and special Bible passages refer the reader to the page of the Bible rather than to the Biblical reference.

Associated Websites:

<http://www.youcat.org>

N.B. Various language editions of the YOUCAT Jugendbibel are available:

- French: Youcat Bible (Paris: Éditions du Cerf, 2016)
- English: Ignatius Press, in preparation.



Projects and Experiences

Let the Word set us on Fire

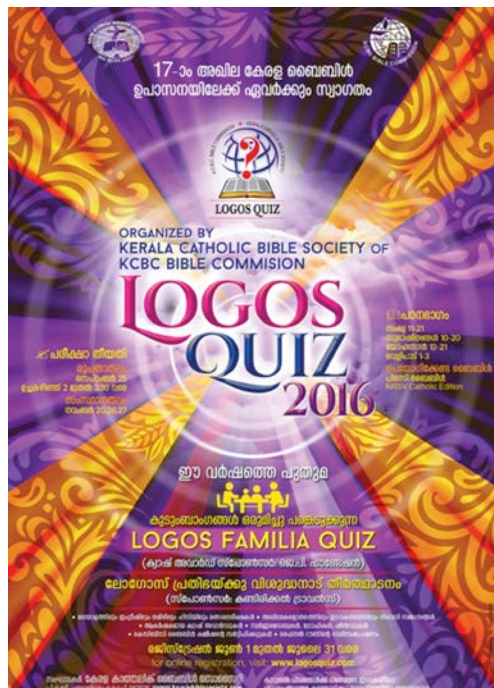
The Word Mission of the KCBC Bible Commission

A craving for God-experience burns in the hearts of many young people. But it is a spiritually parched world that they see all around. The present culture of violence and consumerism often smothers the embers of spiritual quest in them. How to bring the youth closer to the Word and set their hearts on fire is the challenge before the Church today. New and imaginative initiatives are necessary to bring young people closer to Jesus, the Word incarnate. The Bible Commission of the Kerala Catholic Bishops' Council in India has successfully launched many Bible related programmes to this effect.

Logos Quiz: A Model for New Evangelization

Kerala state on the south-west coast of India, popularly designated as God's own country, is known not only for its scenic beauty but also for religious harmony among the people. The Christian community here that claims its roots going back to the first century and was enriched by

later missionaries sends now missionaries all over the world. The vibrant Catholic community has a cultural mix of Latin, Syro-Malabar and Syro-Malankara traditions. Many religious movements and activities have sprung up here to revitalize the Christian community. "Biblos", a Bible quiz initiated by a few youngsters two decades ago in Kerala, was one such initiative to encourage reading and studying the Bible.



This novel idea of Bible Quiz for Bible study was then taken over by the Bible Commission and Bible Society under Kerala Catholic Bishops Council in the great Jubilee Year 2000. Since then it has spread like wildfire, both beyond the boundaries of this small state and even of India. The Bible Society conducts every year this quiz programme for different age groups in various languages with the support of zealous leaders. After 15 years of its existence, it can boast of over half a million participants from 57 dioceses, including 26 dioceses from North India, making it perhaps the largest quiz of the world.

Methodology for quiz, though simple, requires meticulous planning and organisation. Every year different sections of the Bible are prescribed for the quiz. This year, for example, study material consists of sections from *Numbers*, *Proverbs*, *John* and *Revelation*. First, preliminary examination is conducted at diocesan level and then the winners participate in a State level competition. The *Grand Finale* of the quiz is telecast in Christian TV Channels to popularise studying the Bible. The winners are given prizes at parish, diocese and state level and the topper is offered a pilgrimage to the Holy Land. Interestingly, the first prize has most of the times gone to the youth.

The diocesan and parish level co-ordination of children and the youth is the life-line of this Bible learning programme through Logos Quiz. Though the competition is conducted for all age

groups, majority of the participants is children and youth. The eldest participant last year was 85 years “young”. This Bible Quiz turns even elderly people young!



The young participants of the Quiz often make Bible study part of their normal curriculum. “Though I spend time on learning the Bible, I lacked nothing. My school studies and extra-curricular activities flourished as well”, proudly shares Dinta Baby, who came first in B-Age category in 2014. Often the whole family with children prepare for the Bible Quiz and make it a part of Christian education at home. For the coming year we have planned also a *Family Logos Quiz* in which the whole family takes part. When many are anguished by the onslaught of secular culture that sidelines religion and religious language in day-to-day life, Bible Quiz helps one to keep Jesus close to heart. The Word strengthens families.

The Word beyond Boundaries

To bring the Word of God to everyone is the cherished dream of KCBC Bible Commission. Realising that the differently-abled section of the society is often left out from mainstream activities, the Commission has brought out the first video programme *Ephphatha* of a series that contains Bible narrations in sign language, meant for hearing-impaired children.

Accessible Bible, a computer programme that can be freely downloaded to computers or mobile phones, is another initiative to bring the Bible in Malayalam, the vernacular language in Kerala, to the youth who have vision deficiency. The Catholic Braille Bible in Malayalam is now being prepared to be distributed freely in Kerala.



Bible Art Festival

Art is the best medium to bring the Word of God to the children and the youth. *All Kerala Bible Art Festival* offers the youth an opportunity to present Bible themes and messages in creative media such as drama, folkdance, classical dance, storytelling, singing, painting, etc. Along with

this, literary competitions are also conducted for different age groups. This art festival which brings youth groups from all over Kerala offers an occasion for exchange of creative presentations of Bible themes and also various art forms.

Various Bible Reading Experiences

The written Word seeks readers. Motivating the people to read the Bible is one of the most important tasks of a Bible apostolate. We prepare a Liturgical Bible reading Calendar for the whole year and distribute it all over the State. It helps the faithful in their preparation for the daily Mass.

The month of December is observed as the Bible Reading Month, in order to prepare the faithful to welcome “the Word become flesh”. Of course, this is also a cultural adaptation of the Hindu tradition to dedicate a month for reading *Ramayana*, their Sacred Scriptures. For the last Bible Reading Month the Bible Commission prepared a Bible Reading Chart that helped many faithful to read the whole Bible in a month dedicating almost three hours per day. The last Sunday of December is celebrated as Bible Sunday for special Bible related programmes in parishes. Such efforts have popularised the public reading of the Word of God among the people. The Catholic youth of Kerala has heartily welcomed these popular initiatives, and often they are the ones who come up with such creative programmes to support new-evangelisation.

Word is essentially vocal and reading it aloud brings out its deeper meaning to hearers. *Bible Reading Marathon*, another model devised specially for parishes, is a 100 hours’ day and night marathon reading of the Bible in a specially arranged hall or church. It involves hundreds of participants. Each person reads one chapter from the Bible and is given a certificate for participating in the Bible reading programme. This model proposed by the Bible Commission has been executed in various parishes and institutions, adapting to their life situations.



Bible materials for children

Bible Games help the younger ones to learn the Bible and its background through games. We have also prepared preliminary texts that introduce *Biblical languages* as well as *Biblical Geography* to children. We have also published *Illustrative Bible Story books* for children.



Impact of the Bible

The Bible Commission in Kerala has ventured in the last decade with new creative initiatives to popularise reading and studying the Bible. These efforts to keep the symbolic world of the Bible alive in the minds of the children and the youth have now begun to reap rich harvest. Now-a-days one is not surprised when even children freely recite verses from the Bible one after the other and answer questions regarding the Bible. Familiarity with the biblical text, its symbols and story opens the door to the world of the Bible and, then, to the kingdom that Jesus preached.



Dr. Johnson Puthussery CST

Secretary
Kerala Catholic Bible Commission
India

Father Dr. Johnson Puthussery CST, a priest of the Little Flower Congregation, holds a master's degree from the Jnana Deepa Vidyapeeth (Pune, India), a licentiate from the Pontifical Biblical Institute (Rome) and a Doctorate in Theology from the Gregorian University (Rome). His publications include exegetical contributions to the study of the Book of Revelation. Professor of Sacred Scripture in a variety of theological institutes in India, he is also involved in the translation of the Bible into the Malayalam language. Presently, Fr. Puthussery is the secretary of the Kerala Catholic Bishops' Conference Bible Commission and the Kerala Catholic Bible Society.

»Kalimat Hayat«¹

“In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God. He was with God in the beginning. Through him all things were made; without him nothing was made that has been made” (Jn 1:1-3).

It all started with a Word... The Word was there in the beginning and has started creation and revealed the Glory of the Lord... The Word has inspired people and revealed the real image of God the Father. It has been transmitted through Scripture projecting the Truth. “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 Tm 3:16-17). So, to whom shall we go when Christ has the words of eternal life? (Jn 6:68).

Proceeding from this Truth, and from the need in our Church to further deepen the faithful's knowledge of Scripture and from the recommendation of the Synod for the Christians of the Middle East (2010), Kalimat Hayat – Word of Life – Group was born. Kalimat Hayat is a Christian



Catholic Maronite Group in the Parish of the Patriarchal Diocese of Jounieh-Lebanon, under the patronage of Bishop Antoine Nabil Andari. Our Mission is to deliver Biblical Teachings and Trainings, in harmony with the teaching of the Holy Church, to achieve the ultimate goal: “knowing Christ Jesus our Lord” (Ph 3,8).

This knowledge is attained through meeting the Word of God, understanding it, and living it in order to then spread it. The group bases its work in the Word

of God to delve into life that then leads it back to the glory of the Word. It is a group that prays the Word... prays Life. It believes that this Word is alive and active (Heb 4:12) and is for everyone. The tools that are used in spreading the Word of God, are new, modern, creative methodologies to reach out for all nations and serve the New Evangelization.

The organizational life of the group

Kalimat Hayat is part of the Church and is composed of clergy as well as laity. An apostolic team lead by Father Anthony Azzi, works on the spirituality of the group and its mission. The group meets regularly to pray, reflect, and work on the annual action plan based on the needs in parishes. Then,



¹ An expression in Arabic meaning „the Word of Life“.

the decisions taken are divided into tasks and communicated to the community. In addition, every year, the members meet once to renew their commitment in the mission and spirituality of the group.

Our group makes the best out of the expertise of theologians in the Biblical Association and uses them as a reference in all activities. Regarding the financial resources, the group relies on two main ones in their activities: revenues from activities and Kalimat Hayat's biblical products as well as donations.

Apostolic Dimension

Needs assessed: Through its apostolate, active for seven years now, Kalimat Hayat group has encountered multiple needs related to the understanding and experience of the Word of God. These needs can be summed up as follows:

- The Need for Knowledge: What is the Bible? How do we read it? Can we believe it? Who is God according to the Bible? Who is Jesus?

These questions are fundamental and frequently asked especially by the faithful.

- The Need for Personal Experience: How does the Word of God speak to my life today? Can Jesus encounter me through His word? How can this word lead me closer to God, help me grow, discern, live life to the fullest?



It was very surprising to find that many of the faithful committed Christians have never encountered Jesus on a personal level and are not used to pray the Word of God. They are used to refer to it only as a teaching authority of what is right and what is wrong.

The strategy:

To answer these pressing needs, Kalimat Hayat prepares different activities and projects.

As previously mentioned, the base of Kalimat Hayat is the Word of God, the Scripture. Thus, all its preparations are based on it with a spiritual, scientific, psychological, and sociological dimension.



- **Training and formation:** Biblical workshops are organized, each ranging between 8 to 16 hours of work. Some of them target fundamental and introductory biblical topics, while others dive deeply into specific topics. These training sessions are open to anyone who desires to attend. Kalimat Hayat has organised 33 workshops to date.

In addition, Kalimat Hayat answers requests from parishes and youth groups all around Lebanon to teach about specific topics, training parish members, or give them tools to be capable of proclaiming the Word of God. More than 100 training sessions have been delivered to date.

- **Mass attendance events:** Kalimat Hayat has developed a one of a kind biblical exhibition, a 280 square meters space to introduce the world of the Holy Scripture and the beauty of the Word of God. This exhibition targets mainly youths and adults. It has different sections to introduce the Bible: its history, its bases, characters, main events, how it is spread... and most importantly, how can we uncover the Face of Jesus Christ throughout the whole Bible. The exhibition also includes live activities to target all age groups, such as concerts, lectures, interreligious talks, rally competitions for youths, a section/day for children with biblical games, adoration and others... This exhibition has been displayed eight times to date.



Another mass attendance event is the diocesan children day, with 4 editions so far. It is a full day event that gathers children from 6 to 12 years old to meet, play, pray, sing and discover Scripture.

- **Spiritual retreats and gatherings:** In addition to the mentioned activities, Kalimat Hayat prepares prayers and spiritual retreats to deepen the knowledge of the Scripture into a personal relationship with God through meditation, prayer and adoration of the Eucharist.

To date, three spiritual retreats have been organized (according to the Ignatian spirituality) with other multiple prayer and worship gatherings. These gatherings aim to create space and opportunity for individuals to answer God's call for a personal encounter.



- **Social gatherings:** In order to reach out to an audience that is not interested in workshops and retreats, different social gatherings are created. These include dinner gatherings, brunches, hiking and outdoor events, with unique themes drawn from the Holy Bible. Within these events, special segments, talks, and performances are organized in order to trigger the curiosity of individuals to know more about God and his Word.

- **Social Media Platforms and Products:** Kalimat Hayat also makes the best use of social media to reach out to the largest audience possible where prayers, studies and short video lectures are shared.

Thus far, the group has also created ten biblical products and publications to help people read, share and spread the Word of God.

- **Mission to Iraq, Christmas - New Year 2014-2015:** In late December 2014, Kalimat Hayat has also participated, in coordination with the Biblical Federation in the Middle East, in a mission to Iraq in order to support the displaced and persecuted Christians. Different donations were gathered from Lebanese faithful to contribute to and express their fraternal solidarity with the Iraqi Christians. Moreover, our role was to work on the spiritual and social dimension. The mission worked in nine camps focusing on youth and children. The activities included biblical and spiritual discussions and exercises, leadership and soft skills training, games and animation music to the children. Moreover, we contributed to establishing a small workshop that produced hand-made rosaries and Bible covers. Their products were then sold in Lebanon to obtain some financial resources for the Iraqi community in a way that respects their dignity. The mission lasted ten days during which the presence of the divine providence was clearly experienced and the enrichment by the living spirit of our brothers and sisters in Christ was felt.

The journey of being disciples continues in faith, hope, and love. "And we know that in all things God works for the good of those who love him, who have been called according to his purpose." (Rm 8:28)

Jessica Abou Haidar
Coordinator of Kalimat Hayat

For further information:
Email: info@kalimathayat.org
Website: <http://www.kalimathayat.org>
Facebook: <https://www.facebook.com/KalimatHayat.org/>



Launch of the New Biblical Project LectioYouth.Net

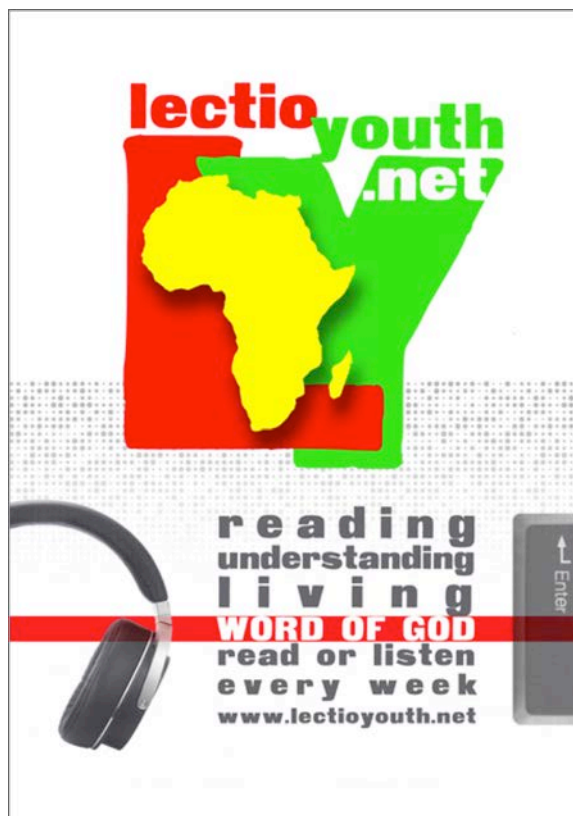
“Behold, I make all things new”, says “the one who sat on the throne” in the final vision of the new creation described by the Book of Revelation (21:5). The “newness” consists in “God’s dwelling with the human race” since – as the biblical author explains further – “He will dwell with them and they will be his people and God himself will always be with them [as their God]” (Rev 21:3). The core of the newness in this vision is the experience of God’s personal closeness.

A similar concept can be used to describe the purpose of the new biblical initiative for Africa and Madagascar, called LectioYouth.Net. The program aims at bringing people to experience God’s closeness through an encounter with His Word. As the name suggests, the project is intended primarily, but not exclusively, for the youth. The primary goal of LectioYouth is to facilitate the encounter with the Word of God through Bible study groups, especially with the youth, devoted to systematic and regular study and reflection on the Word of God, in order to be guided and transformed by it, both on the personal and on the local community levels.

Its specific approach can be summarized in five main points and features. The first one is the “comprehensive and thematic” approach. The Liturgy of the Word of each Sunday is studied as a coherent message with the particular focus that unifies the readings. The second approach is the “exegetical dimension”. In order to understand the revealed message of the biblical text, the historical, cultural and literary contexts in which it was written must be taken into account. This program attempts to provide participants with modest but firm exegetical foundations to facilitate such understanding. The third is the “contextualized approach”. The program focuses on the African context. Pastoral reflections come from within the African context, are written by African writers, appeal to African proverbial tradition, and focus on the African youth. The fourth feature is the “holistic biblical formation”. LectioYouth.Net offers biblical formation in a Catholic, meaning holistic or inclusive, manner. It combines biblical intellectual formation with pastoral engagement. Thus, it leads people to “incarnate” the message of the Bible in the context of a local group or community. Finally, the fifth feature is the “communitarian dimension”. While the program may be used by individuals, the primary objective is formation of local groups in parishes and other institutions who would regularly gather to study the Word of God as guided by this program. This community context is essential for the Word of God to be effective in our world.

Starting with the first Sunday of Advent 2016, the program is available online – www.lectioyouth.net – on Facebook, and also through a smartphone app. The initiative comes from the Catholic Biblical Federation, but effectively the program is developed by the Divine Word Missionaries from the Africa and Madagascar region (AFRAM). At the moment it is available in English and French, with a Portuguese version expected soon.

The general editor and SVD AFRAM Biblical Pastoral Ministry zonal coordinator, Fr. Wojciech



Szypula SVD, expressed this hope for the program: "I believe it has great potential for expending our biblical outreach because it has some quite unique and useful features... As SVD's, this new initiative offers us a new possibility to focus and reinvigorate our biblical apostolate".

Fr. Marek Vaňuš SVD

Born in Slovakia, Father Marek Vaňuš, svd was ordained in the Divine Word Missionaries in 2002. He defended his doctoral thesis on "God's Presence among People: The tradition of 'shekinah' in Neophyti and in Matthew" at the Gregorian University in Rome in 2015. He is teaching New Testaments studies in the Theological Faculty of Trnavska University in Bratislava, Slovakia and is the General Biblical Apostolate Coordinator for the Divine Word Missionaries.



Bible and art forms

The Tabernacle of the Chapel of the AMECEA Pastoral Institute in Eldoret, Kenya

Saint Mary's Seat of Wisdom Chapel on the Gaba Campus of the Association of Member Episcopal Conferences in Eastern Africa (AMECEA) Pastoral Institute in Eldoret, Kenya, preserves a remarkable collection of art, giving form to the inculturation of Christianity in Africa. Wall paintings on the "new heavens and new earth" and wood carvings witnessing to the contact between African values and life forms and biblical narratives as well as a series of statues and the way of the cross are the work of a team surrounding Fr. Claude Boucher, W.F. and Mr. Tambala Mponyani. For the illustration of this issue of *BDVdigital* we have chosen the carved tabernacle and its striking representation of Biblical scenes set in an African cultural context. I took the photos during a visit to Eldoret in early 2015. A description of the Chapel and its art collections is available in Fr. J.C. Lemay's booklet, *Gaba, the Chapel: Religious Art: An African Expression* (Eldoret: AMECEA Pastoral Institute, 1986[?]).



Here follows the description of the Tabernacle ensemble as found in this publication (p. 20-21):

1. The artists who designed the present tabernacle chose the granary, which in Africa is found almost everywhere under a variety of forms. The artist carver cut this handsome piece out of a single piece of wood – black wood as it is called in Eldoret. The granary and the supporting table are a single piece of tree.

2. This sculpture rests on a pillar that is the trunk of an ebony tree (from a forest in the area of Mtito Andei). The tree has been carved all over with scenes and symbols taken from the Old Testament, the New Testament and the Church heritage, related to the Eucharist and its meaning. Here follows a list of these carved bas-reliefs:

Old Testament: a. The sacrifice offered to God by Melchizedek (Gn 14:17-24); b. The sacrifice of Isaac by Abraham (Gn 22:1-19); c. The manna feeding the Hebrews in the desert (Ex 16:1-36); d. The bronze serpent healing the people of God (Nb 21:4-9); e. David dancing in front of the ark (2 S 6:1-19).

New Testament: a. Water changed into wine at Cana (Jn 2: 1-12); b. Multiplication of the loaves and fish (Mk 6:30-44); c. Jesus' sacrifice on the cross (Lk 23: 33-46); d. The encounter at Emmaus (Lk 24: 13-35).

Sharing food in table fellowship.

The Christian symbols for the Eucharist: the fish, the Greek, the Greek letters X and R.

3. The supporting column is planted right in the middle of the village, symbol of the Christian community. That is to signify that while the Eucharist is the source of life of the Christian community, at the same time it is the expression of the communion and self-giving experienced in the community.

Thomas P. Osborne



Federation News

General Secretary visits Antilles (Trinidad & Tobago) **2016.01.19-26**

During his Trinidad and Tobago visit 19-26 January, 2016 the General Secretary of the Catholic Biblical Federation met with the Permanent Board of the Antilles Episcopal Conference, participated in the Encounter of Biblical Animation of the Antilles Episcopal Conference and delivered a lecture to the clergy and religious of Trinidad and Tobago on the theme "The Centrality of the Word of God in the Spirituality and Life of Worldwide Church".



The meeting with the Permanent Board of the Antilles Episcopal Conference was a face to face opportunity to present the activities of the Catholic Biblical Federation and the fruits of the last Plenary Assembly, including the new Constitution and Action Plan for the years 2016-2021. Discussions were also held on the most important challenges for the AEC Zone, including the edition of the Bible in local languages and the possibility of creating links with members of the Catholic Bible Federation in Africa and North America.

"Sacramentalité de la Parole" Symposium in Luxembourg **2016.01.28-30**

During the weekend 28-30 January 2016, the Scientific Colloquium was held on the theme "Sacramentalité de la Parole" organized by the *Luxembourg School of Religion and Society* (LSRS).

The Colloquium, inspired by the post-synodal Exhortation *Verbum Domini* and integrated into the project of the Masters in Biblical Animation of all Pastoral Life developed by the LSRS under the auspices of the Catholic Biblical Federation, was attended by speakers and participants from various countries from Europe and Africa. The fruits of the discussions and the content of the papers will be published by the Luxembourg School of Religion and Society.



Annual Meeting of the BICAM Executive Committee in Nairobi (Kenya)
2016.02.11-13

The annual meeting took place from 11 to 13 February 2016 in Nairobi, Kenya of the Executive Committee of BICAM which is also the coordinating body of the Africa Region of the Catholic Biblical Federation. The meeting was attended by the General Secretary of the Catholic Biblical Federation, Fr. Jan J. Stefanów SVD. In addition to the presentation and approval of the report and balance sheets for the year 2015 and the budget and programme for 2016 by the Director of SECAM (who is also ex-officio Coordinator for the Africa Region), Fr. Yves-Lucien Evaga Ndjana, his proposed reforms to the structure of the Region were discussed at the request of Fr. Stefanów.

At the end of this meeting, the General Secretary the CBF was requested by the SECAM General Secretary to extend his stay in Nairobi to meet with the members of the *SECAM Standing Committee* at their meeting in Nairobi on Monday, 15 February and to make a presentation on the history, status and possible options for the BICAM property in Nairobi (Kenya). This meeting was also an opportunity to present to the bishops the proposal for changes in the structure of BICAM and the Africa Region of the Catholic Biblical Federation to facilitate more active participation of the associate members of the Federation and the proposal for the creation by SECAM, under the auspices of the CBF, of the African Biblical Institute in Nairobi.



CBF-UBS
Biblical Translations Forum
2016.03.07-10

Almost three years after its creation – during a meeting on the occasion of the Year of the Family of delegates of UBS [United Bible Societies] and the CBF in Rome in October 2013 – the CBF-UBS Biblical Translations Forum had its first meeting. The group comprising a delegate from each region of the CBF and their UBS counterparts met in Antalya, Turkey 7-11 March, 2016 in the context of the annual meeting of the UBS Translation Department.

The experiences and the projects for translations of the Bible of the members of both institutions were shared, the main areas of possible cooperation were outlined and the modus operandi of the group was established for the future, including an annual face to face encounter and a Videoconference during the year.

Biblical Symposium and Subregional Meeting
of the South Asia Subregion of the CBF
in Bangaluru (India)
2016.04.01-03

An International Bible Symposium under the theme "*The Word of God, Source of Life in the Family*" organized by the South Asia Subregion of the Catholic Biblical Federation took place in Bengaluru (India) 1-3 April 2016. In conjunction with the Symposium, taking advantage of the presence of the majority of its delegates, the Subregional meeting of the South Asia Subregion of the Catholic



Biblical Federation took place. The content of the main presentations and the conclusions of the work groups will be published by the Biblical Animation Department of the CCBI.

Meeting of the Regional Executive Committee of the FEBIC-LAC Region **2016.04.05-08**

The Regional Executive Committee (CER) of FEBIC-LAC met in Ciudad de la Alegría, Cancun, Mexico, 7-8 April 2016. Among the wide variety of issues addressed and decisions taken are the following:

- date and format for submission of annual reports;
- incorporation of Brazil into the Southern Cone Zone to promote its regional integration;
- preparation of informational brochures on the Catholic Biblical Federation;
- role and responsibilities of the Regional Committee;
- payment of fees;
- review and approval of changes in the statutes of the Region;
- reactivation of the "La Palabra Hoy" publication;
- preparation of the Regional Meeting in Quito (12-14 August 2016);
- Action Plan of the Region for the years 2016-2021.



Annual meeting of the Administrative Board of the Catholic Biblical Federation with the representatives of donor agencies **2016.04.12**

The annual meeting of the Administrative Board and the General Secretary of the Catholic Biblical Federation with representatives of the German Donor Agencies (Hilfswerke), which financially support the projects of the General Secretariat and of members of the Catholic Biblical Federation, took place 12 April, 2016 in Munich at the headquarters of Missio München.

The annual report and financial report presented by Fr. Jan J. Stefanów SVD, the General Secretary of the CBF, received warm welcome and approval as were the current year and long term projects.

Possible ways of cooperation between the CBF and the Agencies were also addressed. Given the continued decline in agency revenues, these are being constrained to rethink their objectives and priorities. It was agreed to establish a transition period of three years in the structure of financing of the operations of the General Secretariat of the CBF to move from a *grant* system to a project system. Financing of projects from members will continue unchanged.

Coordinator of the Northeast Asia Subregion **2016.04.25**

The Executive Committee of the Biblical Federation, after having heard the views of the members of the Northeast Asia Subregion and positively welcoming the recommendation of the General Secretary, in an electronic vote on April 25, 2016, reappointed sister Emmanuel Gunanto OSU as Coordinator of the Subregion. Sister Emma will coordinate the Subregion until the Subregional Assembly to be held in July 2017 in Vietnam, where the election of a new Coordinator and the Subregional Executive Committee will take place.

Visit of the General Secretary of the Catholic Biblical Federation to Harare (Zimbabwe)

2016.05.03-10

The General Secretary of the Catholic Biblical Federation paid a working visit to Harare (Zimbabwe) 3-10 May 2016. This visit had two main objectives:

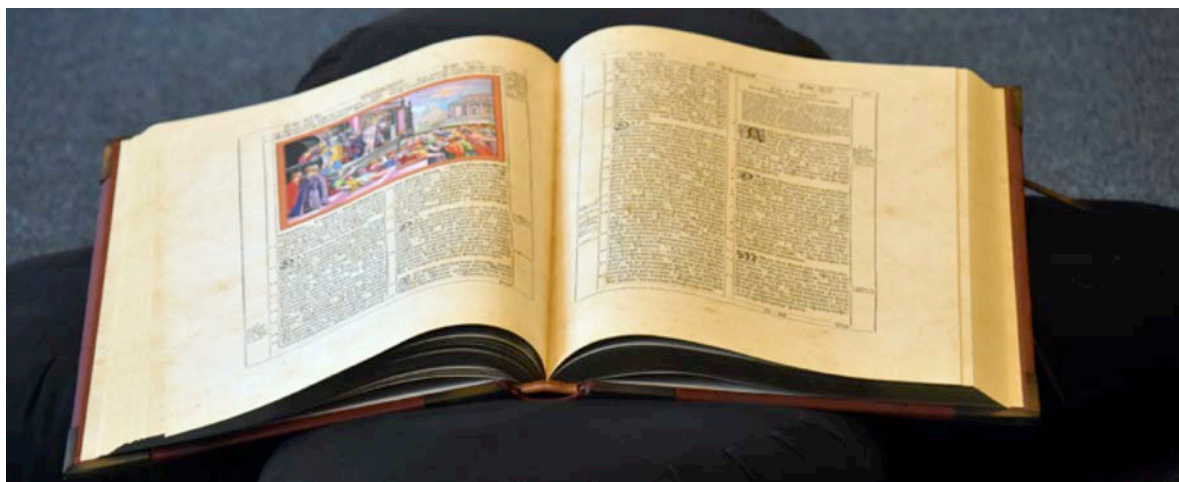
- first meeting of the Management Committee for the LectioYouth.Net Project;
- reactivation of the "Dei Verbum" course in Harare;

The Management Committee the LectioYouth.Net Project comprises Divine Word Missionaries from several African countries and the General Secretary of the CBF:

- Fr. Wojciech Szypuła SVD (SVD AFRAM Biblical Coordinator);
- Fr. Mirosław Wołodko SVD (SVD AFRAM Communication);
- Fr. Maciej Malicki SVD (SVD AFRAM Communication);
- Fr. Krystian Traczyk SVD (Biblical Department Director, Zimbabwe);
- Fr. Jan J. Stefanów SVD (CBF General Secretary).



This Committee held its first meeting during four days in Harare to design, develop and organize the Lectio Divina project on the Internet for young people in Africa under the name of LectioYouth.Net. This project, initially intended for Africa, will later be extended to Asia and the Middle East as well.



New members of the Catholic Biblical Federation**2016.06.24**

The Executive Committee of the CBF, after studying the documentation presented and accepting the positive recommendation of the General Secretary, by electronic vote on 24 June, 2016, admitted to the Catholic Biblical Federation 13 new associate members:

1. Archdiocese of Pelotas (Brazil);
2. Archdiocese of Salta – Archdiocesan Commission for the Biblical Animation of all Pastoral Life (Argentina);
3. Ascension Press (USA);
4. Claretian Missionaries Cameroon (Cameroon);
5. Rajab Theological Community (Argentina);
6. Diocese of Espinal (Colombia);
7. Diocese of Linz - Bibelwerk Linz (Austria);
8. Divine Word Missionaries – Ural Region (Russia/Belorussia);
9. Espacio Bíblico Palabras con Miel (Argentina);
10. Hermanas Pías Discípulas del Divino Maestro Argentina (Argentina);
11. Société Missionnaire de Saint Paul – DR Congo (DR Congo);
12. Society of the Divine Word – AFRAM Zone (Africa and Madagascar);
13. VERBUM (USA).



Biblical Pastoral Publications

Fruit of the seminar "Bible and Pastoral Ministry" of the Spanish Biblical Association, and of the work of the "School of Biblical Animation of Barcelona", is the book



Javier Velasco-Arias (ed.), The shared Bible. Bible and Pastoral Ministry, Madrid (*La Biblia compartida. Biblia y Pastoral*): San Pablo 2012.

In it we find nine contributions that reveal diverse complementary

aspects of the Bible, understood as the Word of God which share:

- Awakening the seeds of the Word (Justino Martínez Pérez);
- From "The Interpretation of the Bible in the Church" to "Verbum Domini" (Francesc Ramis Darder);
- The Bible: "Heart" of Pastoral Ministry (Javier Velasco Arias);
- The Bible prayed and lived: Lectio Divina (Pedro Barrado Fernández);
- Biblical Animation in the Parish and in the Catechesis (Quique Fernández Manzano);
- Keys and guidelines for the use of the media in Biblical Animation (José Ignacio Pedregosa Ordóñez);
- The Catholic Biblical Federation and the Biblical Animation of All Pastoral Life (Florencio Abajo Núñez);
- Biblical Animation in theological studies (Maria de l'Esperança Amill-Rocamora);
- Exegesis and hermeneutics, two moments of a single interpretive process (Núria Calduch-Benages).

The nine chapters, written in a literary symphony, unlock the doors to awakening interest in the shared reading of the Bible, its use in catechesis, the centrality of the Word of God in all pastoral ministry, the role of the media in biblical animation or the conciliation between its study and research and its diffusion ...

The book provides tools and practical examples for biblical animation, and is of unquestionable value to biblical scholars, pastoral workers, catechists and anyone interested in the spread and love of the Word of God.

***The Spanish-American Bible. An Interfaith and complete translation of the original texts* (Divine Word – United Bible Societies, Estella 2013). (*La Biblia Hispanoamericana. Traducción interconfesional e íntegra de los textos originales Verbo Divino – Sociedades Bíblicas Unidas, Estella 2013*). xviii + 2142 pp. (+ 15 pp maps). ISBN: 978-84-8083-274-8. € 16.70.**

In no. 115 of the post-synodal Apostolic Exhortation *Dei Verbum*, dedicated to translations and dissemination of the Bible, Benedict XVI expressly declares his desire: "The Synod considered it important, above all, to train specialists committed to translating the Bible into the various languages. I would encourage the investment of resources in this area. In particular, I wish to recommend supporting the work of the Catholic Biblical Federation, with the aim of further increasing the number of translations of sacred Scripture and their wide diffusion. Given the very nature of such an enterprise, it should be carried out as much as possible in cooperation with the different Bible Societies. "



Responding to this call, this edition of the Bible culminates a joint project undertaken by Catholic and Protestant biblical scholars that began in 1973. Five years later, the *Interfaith New Testament* (1978) appeared.

After thirty years of intense work, in which a score of Christian Bible scholars participated, the complete edition was published in 2008 of *The Bible. An Interfaith translation*, the Hispano-American version of which was

completed in 2011. Thus, the *Hispano-American Bible*, envisioned especially, but not exclusively, for the Spanish-speaking Christians of the Americas, represents the colophon of this "close, friendly and fruitful collaboration between Protestants and Catholics" (xii). It is, therefore, an interdenominational Bible, developed, supervised and approved by the Catholic Church and the Protestant ecclesial communities that is the culmination of the efforts of these three publishers: Biblioteca de Autores Cristianos (BAC), Verbo Divino (EDV) and United Bible Societies (UBS).

Translated from the original languages (Hebrew, Aramaic and Greek), the work follows the principle of "dynamic equivalence", which is based on the principle of equivalent effect. In other words, the translator is not so much concerned with the formal correspondence of the message of the target language to the message of the source language as with the dynamic relationship between them, that is, that the relationship between the message and the recipient in the target language is basically the same as that which existed between the original message and the original recipients. Thus, a translation in dynamic equivalence seeks the total naturalness of expression and aims for the recipients to be at ease with the translated text.

In our opinion, *the Hispano-American Bible* has succeeded in this. Let us cite as an example some of the resources used: the generalized use of "ustedes" instead of "vosotros" for the plural "You" or some colloquial expressions such as "es pan comido (all eaten up)" (Lm 2,16), "pagar con la misma moneda (a taste of your own medicine)" (Jl 4,7), "que el suelo se les hunda (may the earth open up and swallow you)" (Am 2,13), "gusanito de Jacob, cosita de Israel, (Jacob, you worm! You little handful of Israel!)" (Is 41,14), among many others.

The general index follows the message of Nicolas de Jesus López Rodríguez, Metropolitan Archbishop of Santo Domingo and Primate of America, and the presentation on the Bible by Samuel Escobar, Honorary President of UBS, and Adolfo González Montes, Bishop of Almería, President of the Episcopal Commission of Interfaith Relations of the EEC (Episcopal Conference of Spain).

This is followed by an exposition on the history of the translation and the list of editors and collaborators, specifying their tasks. A list of abbreviations of the books of the Bible and other abbreviations close this preliminary section (the numbering of these pages is in Roman numerals).

The major parts of the Bible (Old Testament, Deuterocanonical, New Testament) as well as sections of the Old Testament (The Pentateuch, The Prophets, The Writings) and some of the New Testament (The Pastoral Letters and the Letters of John) receive a general introduction. In addition, each and every one of the books of the Bible has a specific introduction.

There is a wide variety of footnotes divided into two groups or sections. The first group includes notes that clarify issues or aspects of historical, geographical, literary and cultural nature or offer possible variants of translation but, as is pointed out in the general introduction, "without ever going into questions of interpretation" (xiv). The reference to these notes is the chapter and verse in question. The second group presents parallel references to the main biblical passages related to the translated text. These are indicated with the sign ≈ before the biblical quotation to which they refer.

Regarding the order of presentation of the books of the Old Testament, the *Hispano-American Bible* has adopted the position of most interfaith bibles, that is, to follow the order of the Hebrew Bible: Pentateuch, Prophets (earlier and later) and Writings. As for the deuterocanonical books ("apocryphal" in the Protestant tradition), the agreements between UBS and the Catholic Church have been followed, according to which in interfaith bibles these books (Greek Esther, Judith, Tobias, 1-2 Maccabees, Wisdom, Ecclesiasticus, Baruch, Letter of Jeremiah, and Greek Daniel) are placed in a special block between the Old and the New Testament.

The work is completed with a 36-page biblical vocabulary, a detailed historical-literary chronology, a table of weights, measures and currencies, a review of the Hebrew calendar and its equivalence with ours and a collection of 10 top-quality, full-colour maps with the most important biblical places.

We have before us, therefore, an edition of the Bible elaborated with considerable care to all its details. We are confident that it will be very well received by the Spanish-speaking Christians of all Churches as also by all, believers or non-believers, who want to become familiar with Sacred Scripture.

However, I would like to make a few small observations that could perhaps be considered in an eventual second edition. I refer, firstly, to the titles used on pages 1320-1321 ("Esther with the Deuterocanonical Texts") and 1572-1573 ("Deuterocanonical Texts of Daniel") that make no sense when they are being included under the block of "Deuterocanonical Books" (see also page vi of the general index). "Greek Esther" and "Greek Daniel" as they appear in the General Introduction (xiv) would be preferable and in the Abbreviations of the books of the Bible (xvii). Secondly, it is surprising that in the New Testament there is no specific introduction to its two major sections: The Gospels and Pauline writings (cf., in contrast, the introductions to the Old Testament). A third observation refers to the nomenclature used for the books of Ecclesiastes and Ecclesiasticus. Currently, the Hebrew names are used: Qohelet and Ben Sira or Sirach. Finally, one notes out that on page vii of the general index, the word "Introduction" should be added after "The Letters of John".

In conclusion, we congratulate the editors and contributors for this Interfaith Hispano-American Bible, the result of the collaboration between Catholics and Protestants promoted by Benedict XVI in *Verbum Domini*. We look forward to this collaboration continuing to bear fruit for the good of all Christian churches and of all humanity.

Núria Calduch-Benages

Faithful and Bold to the End

«The Bible on Sunday» by Nuria Calduch-Benages

from *L'Osservatore Romano*, Dec. 3, 2016, p. 4

This is a book that answers a need felt not only by the celebrants, but also by the ordinary faithful: **The Bible on Sunday – an aid to understanding and explaining the**

Sunday Mass readings

for years A, B and C (Bologna, Edizioni

Dehoniane, 2016, 496 pages, € 45,-): Its purpose: to understand the origins of the Scriptural passages read; to express their meaning in words that are more accessible

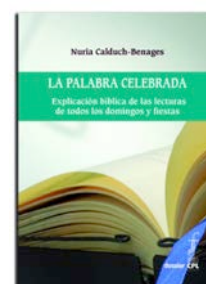
to the people. Each Sunday concludes with a short commentary that underlines the sense of the readings.

It doesn't seem like much, but to do this right requires a deep philological culture of the written tradition as well as the knowledge of centuries — or rather, of more than a millennium — of interpretative theological and spiritual work. Thanks to this preparation, we understand what we read, and we are helped — though not too much — to

grasp the spiritual lesson which the readings contain. In fact, the quiet and unassuming tone with which such help is provided leaves the reader free to meditate on her own, but starting from a solid foundation.

This book is basically a great service for every believer who, with great discretion, is gently helped to discover the Scriptures by strolling along the trail of the liturgical year, step by step. This is an invaluable guide, which hides within its deliberately modest format real pearls of interpretation.

And I am proud to reveal that the author of this book — which no doubt required years of work and preparation — is a woman,



The Spanish edition

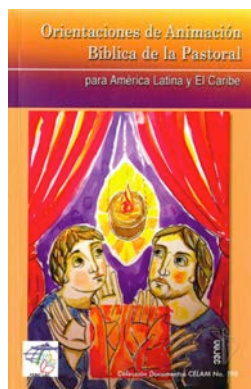
Nuria Calduch Benages, Professor of Old Testament studies at the Pontifical Gregorian University in Rome. Once again, here is a woman who knows how to turn the treasures of study and work into a book that provides a real service to others without seeking to draw attention to herself.

Yet in all of her comments, she shows her pride in being a woman face to face with a Gospel in which women play leading roles and are very much in the foreground: "present at the moment of the crucifixion and death of Jesus, women are also witnesses and missionaries of this announcement. They are the ones responsible for announcing to the disciples that Jesus is risen from the dead and that he will go ahead of them to Galilee – bringing the Good News to precisely those men who had followed the Teacher from Galilee and had, from afar, contemplated the drama of the cross: "Faithful and bold to the end."

Lucetta Scaraffia

CELAM/CEBITEPAL and CBF, *Guidelines for Biblical Animation of all Pastoral Life for Latin America and the Caribbean*, CELAM Document No. 198, Bogota: CELAM, 2016, 131 pp., ISBN 9789586258197

The "Biblical Animation of all Pastoral Life" (BAP) is one of the major undertakings and goals of the Catholic Biblical Federation (CBF) and of the whole Church. The present book is an important step in this quest and for its implementation given that these guidelines have been developed in a joint process with the Biblical School of CELAM (CEBITEPAL). At the level of all Latin America and the Caribbean these *guidelines* provide an impulse and suggestions for organizing BAP.



The book begins by recalling the importance of the Word of God throughout the pastoral process of Latin America, from Vatican II and its *Dei Verbum* Constitution as well as the episcopal conferences of Puebla to Aparecida, reinforced by the documents *Verbum Domini* of Benedict XVI and *Evangelii Gaudium* of Francis.

The *Guidelines* propose the narrative of the Emmaus disciples as inspiration for entry to the ABP process. This path follows the account of Luke 24: 13-36 and seven signs are highlighted as stages of development: The Journey, the Pilgrim, the Scriptures, the House, the Bread, the Heart and the Community. These stages of the narrative are presented using the Spanish translation of the *Bible in the Church in America (BIA)* and then commented upon.

The following seven chapters take up each of these signs and stages. The *Way* (Chapter 1) presents the Word of God as foundation. It recalls the history of the People of God from the beginning and the recognition of Jesus of Nazareth as the definitive Word of God.

The *pilgrim* presents people as bearers of BAP. It offers an understanding of humanity in general and of the People of God in their existential state as pilgrim and on the way. It proposes reflections about the context in which the Church finds herself as pilgrim, in situations such as individualism, consumerism, mistrust and inequality.

The *scriptures* that reveal Christ are addressed in the third chapter: Here the doctrine on revelation is outlined and of Christ who gives meaning to the scriptures. It goes on to note that BAP is, consequently, the task of all baptized. It also proposes a scheme for structuring BAP and its dimensions, clearly useful when implementing BAP.

The *house* into which the Emmaus disciples enter is compared to the Church as a meeting place for the community. Thus, it addresses kerygma and mission within the framework of an ecclesiology of communion in which ABP finds its place.

The fifth chapter focuses on the *bread*, the moment of recognition of the Risen One, reinterpreted as the bread of the Word. It

considers Christ as the bread of the Word and the Eucharist and, therefore, reflects on liturgical celebrations and the importance of the homily. Suggestions for *lectio divina* follow as an important part of BAP.

BAP *agents* bear the word of God in their *hearts*. This chapter deals with the description of the agents who are needed to give form to BAP – a question of identity between being a hearer and practicing the Word of God in mission.

Finally, the *community* to which the disciples of Emmaus return is presented in the last chapter as the place of encounter with Christ. Mission and diakonia become key concepts for BAP.

Each chapter concludes with suggested readings, usually texts from *Dei Verbum*, *Verbum Domini* and *Evangelii Gaudium* along with a biblical text for group work.

The book concludes with interesting annexes that present the history of biblical pastoral care since the twentieth century as well as outlines for the organization of BAP in dioceses and parishes.

These *Guidelines* outline a programme and suggestions for organizing BAP throughout Latin America and the Caribbean. It is a process that is not complete, it is a work in progress. It is therefore to be expected that there will be clarifications and improvements in the future.

Some observations: The traditional use of "man" generically in the text jars, and maybe some gender sensitivity is missing. It would seem at times that a sure faith is posited and required to recognize Christ as the Word of God, without allowing for the discovery and experience along the way that precisely is what the road to Emmaus illustrates. The

constant reference to *Dei Verbum* and, above all, to *Verbum Domini* is fine, but it may give the impression that the Word of God is to be accepted through these valuable documents, when in fact, of course, the Word of God itself occupies centre place. Perhaps this is due to reflections from the bishops' perspectives in the CBF and CELAM that obviously will project an episcopal viewpoint. Hence the ecclesiological vision is centred on hierarchy (e.g., p. 70), Tradition is placed ahead of Scripture (p. 22s, an unfortuitous reference to *Dei Verbum*), dogmatic positions are supported by biblical verses (for example P. 60). This can lead to confused approaches: The Church offers the Word of others (when she herself lives by the Word), as if the Church were something other than the people of God (e.g. p. 70). BAP should be something cross cutting all pastoral life, but it might appear to be having to seek its place as another branch within the organic pastoral ministry (for example, pp. 73, 76s). Silence is maintained regarding to the CEBs (Basic Christian Communities) as one of the spaces that have cultivated the closeness to and appreciation of the Word of God for decades. Its methodology of starting from reality is sometimes forgotten.

But these observations do not detract from the merits of the *Guidelines*. What is needed now is to use the text and implement an BAP, not as an additional task or a specific pastoral activity within an overall pastoral ministry, but as the lifeblood of the community and for society.

Christian Tauchner SVD



Catholic Biblical Federation
 Fédération Biblique Catholique
 Federación Bíblica Católica
 Katholische Bibelföderation

In the Gospel mystery of the Visitation (cf. Lk 1:39-45), we can see an icon of all Christian volunteer work. I would take three attitudes shown by Mary and leave them to you as an aid to interpreting the experience of these days and an inspiration for your future commitment to service. These three attitudes are listening, deciding and acting.

First, **listening**. Mary sets out after hearing the word of the angel: "Your relative Elizabeth in her old age has also conceived a son..." (Lk 1:36). Mary knows how to listen to God. It is not simply about hearing, but about listening attentively and receptively, and being ready to help. Think of how many times we come before the Lord or other people, but fail to really listen. Mary also listens to events, to things that happen in life. She is attentive to practical realities; she does not stop at the surface, but seeks to grasp their meaning. Mary knew that Elizabeth, now elderly, was expecting a child. She saw in this the hand of God, a sign of his mercy.

The second attitude we see in Mary is **deciding**. Mary listens and reflects, but she also knows how to take a step forward: she is decisive. This was the case with the fundamental decision of her life: "Here am I, the servant of the Lord; let it be with me according to your word" (Lk 1:38)... In life, it is often hard to make decisions. We tend to postpone them, even allowing others decide in our place, or else we let ourselves be dragged along by the course of events and to follow the "trend" of the moment. At times, we know well what we have to do, but we lack the courage to do it, since we think it is too difficult to go against the grain... Mary is not afraid to go against the grain. With a steadfast heart she listens and decides, accepting the risks, never on her own, but with God!

Finally, **acting**. Mary set out on her journey and "went with haste..." (Lk 1:39). Despite the hardships and the criticisms she may have heard, she didn't hesitate or delay, but "went with haste", because she had the strength of God's Word within her. Her way of acting was full of charity, full of love: this is the mark of God. Mary went to Elizabeth not to have other people praise her, but to be helpful, useful, in her service. And in setting out from her home, from herself, with love, she brought along the most precious thing she possessed: Jesus, the Son of God, the Lord. Elizabeth realizes this immediately: "Why has this happened to me, that the mother of my Lord comes to me?" (Lk 1:43). The Holy Spirit awakens faith and joy within her: "For as soon as I heard the sound of your greeting, the child in my womb leaped for joy" (Lk 1:44).

Pope Francis, Meeting with the WYD volunteers
 Tauron Area, Kraków, Sunday, 31 July 2016