

25 January 2026 – Online Conference

LET THE WORD OF CHRIST DWELL AMONG YOU
(Col 3:16)

Introduction

by Ernesto Borghi

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On this seventh Sunday of the Word of God entitled 'Let the word of Christ dwell among you', based on Colossians 3:16, we at the Catholic Biblical Federation have decided not to consider this merely as a passionate invitation from the author of this New Testament letter, but above all as a responsibility that can be taken on by every person who thinks and says they believe in the God of Jesus Christ.

How can we bring the Word of Christ, that is, the most concrete and daily fraternal love, into our lives and the lives of others?

If we look back over the entire biblical revelation, particularly at this stage in human history when injustice and selfishness seem to be increasingly widespread, then we are faced with a constant reminder: loving God is an effective choice based on how much we truly want good for ourselves and for others. Without coercion or obligation, but also constantly asking ourselves what meaning everyday life can have without the practice of free and open, intelligent and passionate love. The Word of God is, in the final and culminating analysis, Jesus Christ, that is, the presence of love in the lives of all those who open themselves to this logic of life. It is a wise and vitalising Word, which we need to reflect on more and more every day.

With this in mind, we asked three colleagues and friends from three different continents - Adrian Graffy from Europe, Adrian Taranzano from South America and Nicoletta Gatti practically from Africa - to offer us some reflections on two biblical texts that are very eloquent on the subject - Wisdom 18:14-16 and Colossians 3:5-17 - and on how to effectively bring the Word of God into everyone's life. Our Catholic Biblical Federation exists and has meaning if it succeeds in collaborating on a goal that is essential to the very action and existence of the Church of Jesus Christ: to make the Word of God contained in the biblical Scriptures an ever greater point of reference for the lives of as many people as possible in the world. The Catholic Biblical Federation has a global reach. Its economic resources are certainly more limited than would be useful and necessary, but its work over several decades is all the more significant when it is the fruit of the cordial and creative interaction of many people of different nationalities, languages and cultures.

Each of the three colleagues will speak in their mother tongue and the text of their speech is available, as the Federation has done in the five previous initiatives for ‘The Sunday of the Word of God’ from 2020 to the present, in three other languages.

Presentation of the speeches

First, we give the floor to **Adrian Graffy**, born in Ilford (England) in 1950, ordained priest for the Diocese of Brentwood in 1974. He is the director of the website www.whatgoodnews.org. Since 2014, he has been a member of the Pontifical Biblical Commission. His presentation is entitled ‘FOR A WORD OF WISDOM (Wisdom 18:14-16)’.

The second speaker at our meeting is **Adrian Taranzano**. Born in Balnearia (Argentina) in 1974, he is married and has one son. He currently teaches exegesis at the ISCR of the Faculty of Theology of the Catholic University of Valencia and is a research fellow at the Faculty of Theology of the Ludwig-Maximilian-Universität in Munich. The title of his presentation is ‘For a Word of Life (Colossians 3:5-17)’.

The series of speakers concludes with **Nicoletta Gatti**, born in Rovereto (Italy) in 1961, who has been living in Africa for thirty years. She currently lives in Ghana, where she teaches African hermeneutics and biblical theology at university level (Department for the Study of Religions, University of Ghana, Legon). The title of her talk is ‘For a Pastoral Use of the Word’ in the Ghanaian cultural context.

Concluding remarks and prospects for the future

by Ernesto Borghi

What we have heard from the words of three colleagues rich in technical expertise and educational passion has made it clear, I think, that we have no time to lose. What do I mean by this? That our relationship with the Word of God contained in the biblical Scriptures is too important a treasure not to be at the centre of Christian formation, at all ages and in every ecclesial environment. Too often, excessive energy and time are devoted to formation initiatives that are clearly surpassed by the spiritual and cultural challenges of our age. Today, we really need to ask ourselves what aspects of religious training and education have limited value or no value at all, and how we can effectively change the situation. Doctrinalism and moralism must be completely abandoned.

Educate people to love themselves and others through a serious and existential reading of biblical texts is a truly categorical imperative in our time. We have technological possibilities unlike any other historical period before us. We can also imagine considerable interfaith synergies. These are conditions that can allow us to

multiply the opportunities for comparison between the words of the Bible and the life of today and tomorrow.

Everything depends, however, on how seriously we intend to take, that is, to consider authoritative, the discourse that so many biblical passages propose on the expression of justice for all, beyond any form of selfishness and irresponsibility towards others and towards the natural environment.

Letting the Word of the God of Jesus Christ enter into us is not an easily reassuring choice. The author of the letter to the Colossians outlined an ethical framework that refers to a life of great relational intensity. Those who seek a quiet life, where believing means accepting without thinking anything that this or that religious or political authority proposes, are clearly not among those who have the Word of Christ within them.

Freedom of conscience, the search for spiritual values, attention to one's own economic development as well as that of others: these are some of the aspects of a life that is open to the divine words contained in the biblical Scriptures. Let us think about this on this seventh Sunday of the Word, an initiative desired by a bishop of Rome who made care for others, especially the poor and defenceless, one of the defining features of his ministry.

These are characteristics that we must strive to share as much as possible if we want to be truly credible believers in the God of Jesus Christ, both as individuals and as a church community.

Happy Sunday of the Word 2026 to everyone!