

Biblical-Pastoral Course
for Ministers of the Word of God

DEI VERBUM

July 4 – August 31, 2023

Ad Gentes Center, Nemi (Rome), Italy

A Short Look on the Past of the Dei Verbum Course

The original idea for the Dei Verbum course was to start a biblical-formation program for those engaged in the Biblical apostolate. Fr. Ludger Feldkämper SVD was thinking of the shores of Lake Gennesaret in the Holy Land as the setting for the course, but for practical reasons it was changed to Italian Lake Nemi in whose vicinity the present Center “Ad Gentes” (CAG) is located.

The first Dei Verbum Biblical-Pastoral Course was launched on August 9, 1987, with Fr. John Füllenbach SVD its director. It lasted for 18 weeks and 28 participants took part in it. From the very beginning the course was opened for lay people, religious and priests from all over the world.

As a joint venture between the Society of the Divine Word (SVD) and the Catholic Biblical Federation (CBF), the course was organized – with few exceptions – every year until 2015. Altogether 27 batches prepared the total of 616 alumni, among them 147 SVDs, 131 diocesan priests, 237 other religious, and 101 lay people for work in the biblical apostolate in their respective life-situations.

In 2019 a reshaped edition has started with 24 participants from 16 countries of origin / work. Now it is to be organized again in 2021 focusing the invitation of Jesus addressed to the first disciples who came to him from John the Baptist and were enquiring more about him. “Come, and you will see” (John 1:39) resounds to disciples of today who would like to deepen their knowledge of the truth of the Incarnate Word and to learn the skills of its communication to others.

Present Objectives of the Dei Verbum Course

The inspiration of the specific objectives draws from the address of John Paul II given on April 7, 1986 to the CBF Executive Committee: *“There is a great need for the solid formation of ministers of the Word of God, of all who teach and preach the Gospel of salvation... Ministers of God’s Word – priests, deacons, and other lay-people – should be immersed in the Scriptures through constant reading and diligent study, accompanied by prayer. As far as possible, they should be acquainted with the insights of modern biblical scholarship”*.

The course thus looks to provide three main objectives:

- (1) accompany in attentive **reading** and diligent study of the Scripture in order to understand it properly;
- (2) enable **interiorizing** of the Word of God, through introduction into some selected themes, daily common liturgical biblical prayer, sharing and functions;
- (3) inspire to find suitable ways in **communicating** the Word of God in today’s world.

The focus is on developing practical skills and insights. Also the written project which is to be prepared by the participants toward the end of the course serves both as integration of knowledge, skills and insights gained during the course, and preparation for the service in their own local Church.

For Whom It Is

The course is opened for all who are / will be engaged in biblical apostolate ministry (priests, religious, and laity – both men and women). Its specific aim is the formation of ministers of the Word.

Conditions for Acceptance

The basic requirements are (1) good command of English, (2) bachelor's degree or its equivalent, (3) basic orientation in theology and (4) age under 60 years. Since the course is primarily for the training of leaders in biblical apostolate ministry, the **formal recommendation** of a bishop / major religious superior / director of a Catholic Church institution who wants to make effective use of the participant's training for future ministry is required.

Fee

The total fee is **€ 4.380,-** for board and lodging, as well as course expenses. It does not include any personal expenses. Provided funds are available, a limited number of partial scholarships can be granted for those particularly in need.

Contact Address for Applicants and Info

Fr. Marek Vanus SVD: deiverbumcourse@gmail.com

Deadline for Registration

All applications must be submitted **latest January 31, 2021**.