

Scripture Memorization & Exegesis:	2
2 Peter 1:20-21	
Inerrancy Basics:	2
Thinking with the Church	
The Church Fathers & Scripture:	3
St. Irenaeus and Gospel Authorship	
St. Thomas Aquinas & Revelation:	3
The Literal Sense of Scripture	
The Magisterium Speaks:	4
Pope Pius IX's <i>Syllabus</i> & the Bible	
The Pontifical Biblical Commission:	4
An Introduction, Part II	
Addressing Bible Difficulties:	5
A Glance at Textual Criticism	
Featured Web Site:	5
The Roman Theological Forum	
Book Recommendation:	6
<i>The Haydock Bible</i>	

Veritas Scripturæ

The Bulletin of the St. Jerome Biblical Guild

A publication that focuses upon the doctrines
of Biblical inspiration and inerrancy —
via Tradition and the Magisterium of the Catholic Church

“Sanctify them in the truth; Thy word is truth” (Jn 17:17)



From the Director: Fine-tuning the Bulletin, and the 2008 Roman Synod

The warm reception given to the debut of *Veritas Scripturæ* (VS) is an encouragement. Readers will notice two main enhancements. The bulletin has added two sections, and expanded to six pages. Fear not; VS will not undergo a continual transformation. The plan is to keep the bulletin a brief newsletter.

The first new section is titled “Addressing Bible Difficulties.” This portion will identify common objections to Biblical inerrancy, and offer replies for consideration. There is ample Magisterial support for this kind of labor. Pope Leo XIII’s *Providentissimus Deus* II.D.4 (1893) urges the believer to engage “the branch of study most suitable to his circumstances, and endeavor to excel therein, and thus be prepared to repulse with credit and distinction the assaults on the Word of God.” Pope

Benedict XV’s *Spiritus Paraclitus* III (1920) commands those who “seek to discover new ways of explaining the difficulties in Holy Scripture, whether for their own guidance or to help others.” Pope Pius XII’s *Divino Afflante Spiritu* II.4.46 (1943) encourages the commentator to grapple “again and again with these difficult problems, hitherto unsolved, not only that he may refute the objections of the adversaries, but also may attempt to find a satisfactory solution...” Pope Benedict XVI implicitly encourages us with remarks for the October 2008 Roman Synod, “The Word of God in the Life and Mission of the Church”: “It is, therefore, becoming indispensable for Christians on every continent to be ready to reply to those who ask them to account for the hope that is in them (cf. 1 Pt 3:15), joyfully proclaiming the Word of God

and living the Gospel without compromises” (5 Oct 2008).

“Featured Web Site” is the second new section; it will highlight valuable internet sources. The “Web” is part of daily life; the Church Militant ought to employ such technology to spread Catholic truth.

Let us revisit the Synod: Biblical inspiration and inerrancy, two inseparable doctrines, were given attention. Many were alarmed because of the problematic sections on both doctrines in the pre-Synodal *Instrumentum Laboris* 15c. However, God is gracious and merciful; these dubious statements were not given the Synod’s approval. This is a significant victory, but only the beginning. Pray, fast, and do penance.

Godspeed,
Salvatore J. Ciresi

St. Jerome (A.D. 343-420) says:

“Read assiduously and learn as much as you can. Let sleep find you holding your Bible, and when your head nods let it be resting on the sacred page” (*Letter* 22.17.2; A.D. 384).

“Constantly read the Bible; in fact, have it always in your hands. Learn what you have got to teach” (*Letter* 52.7.1; A.D. 394).

“Ignorance of the Scriptures is ignorance of Christ” (*Commentary on Isaiah* bk. 18 prologue; A.D. 408-410).

“Love the Bible and wisdom will love you...” (*Letter* 130.20; A.D. 414).

Scripture Memorization & Exegesis: 2 Peter 1:20-21

“First of all you must understand this, that no prophecy of Scripture is a matter of one’s own interpretation, because no prophecy ever came by the impulse of man, but men moved by the Holy Spirit spoke from God” (2 Pet 1:20-21).

Last issue examined 2 Timothy 3:16-17; the fact of inspiration, Scripture’s divine origin. Now, 2 Peter 1:20-21 discloses the nature of inspiration; Scripture’s dual authorship, both divine and human. This Petrine section has a key context in 2 Peter 1:12—2:3. The highlights follow below.

Vv. 16-18 contrasts the falsity of “myths” (*mythois*) with the truth of the Transfiguration, to which St. Peter was an eyewitness (cf. Mt 17:1-9; Mk 9:2-9; Lk 9:28-36). Next, St. Peter

in v. 19 points back to the “prophetic word” (*prophētikon logon*); either a specific reference to the Messianic prophecies, or a general reference to the Old Testament. Both readings, nonetheless, point to their fulfillment in the Lord Jesus Christ. This “word” draws upon the images of a “lamp” (*lychnō*), the dawning of a “day” (*hēmera*), and the “morning star” (*phōsphoros*). These things are a vivid picture of the word inscripturated (cf. Ps 119:105; Prov 6:23), and the Word Incarnate (cf. Num 24:17; Mt 2:2; Lk 1:78; Jn 8:12; 1 Pet 2:9; Rev 22:16). Finally, 2 Peter 2:1-3 warns against false prophets and teachers, with their deadly “heresies” (*hairesis*).

The above verses surround 2 Peter 1:20-21. “Prophecy of Scripture” (*prophēteia graphēs*) and the single term

“prophecy” (*prophēteia*), likely refer to the Old Testament, but lay down a perennial rule. Divine Revelation is not left, in the end, to one’s very fallible “interpretation” (*epilyseōs*). The Council of Trent’s *Decree Concerning the Canonical Scriptures* (1546) warns the one who “relies on his own judgment in matters of faith and morals...” This doesn’t exclude all private Bible reading; only private “popedom.” The Magisterium is the final judge on matters pertaining to the Catholic Faith.

This interpretative prohibition is so because Scripture did not originate from man’s own will or “impulse” (*thelēmati*). The Biblical writers, by God’s special charism, first had to be “moved” (*pheromenoi*). The Scholastics would say: God is the First Cause, man the instrumental cause. We will revisit “causality” next issue.

Inerrancy Basics: Thinking with the Church

Last issue identified three principles for the inerrantist’s toil for Holy Mother Church. Such work must (1) be done in union with Jesus Christ, (2) conform to the Magisterium of the Catholic Church, and (3) be permeated by the virtue of humility. This issue considers the second principle, which, in essence, means thinking with the Church.

A place to start is to read, in chronological order and cover to cover, the four major ecclesiastical pronouncements on Sacred Scripture. The texts are Pope Leo XIII’s *Providentissimus Deus* (1893), Pope Benedict XV’s *Spiritus Paraclitus* (1920), Pope Pius XII’s *Divino Afflante Spiritu* (1943), and Vatican II’s *Dei Verbum* (1965).

Next, one may consult the Pontifical Biblical Commission

statements; these address an array of topics that pertain to Biblical studies. Such statements were promulgated intermittently from 1905 to 1964 (subsequent texts are discussed elsewhere in this issue).

In addition, the following associated documents shed light on Divine Revelation: Pope Pius IX’s *Quanta Cura* with its *Syllabus of Errors* (1864), Vatican I’s *Dei Filius* (1870), Pope St. Pius X’s *Lamentabili Sane et Pascendi Dominici Gregis* (1907), and Pope Pius XII’s *Humani Generis* (1950).

Finally, one could supplement the above material with the applicable paragraphs from the *Catechism of the Catholic Church* 101-141 (1997), and *Compendium of the Catechism of the Catholic Church* 6-24 (2005). These two works discuss the basics from the

four major ecclesiastical pronouncements. Note well: later Magisterial texts must always be read in light of earlier texts.

No doubt, many more key pronouncements could be mentioned. As is, we have a large reading program. With consistent daily reading, one could complete all the texts in about a year. This endeavor lays a solid foundation for subsequent research.

Biblical motivation for such an intellectual undertaking is found in Deuteronomy 6:4-7; Joshua 1:8; 1 Kings 2:1-3; 2 Chronicles 1:7-12; Psalm 19: 7-11; Mark 12:28-30; Romans 12:1-2; 2 Peter 3:18; and 2 John 9. Let us make our own the words of the great Fr. Cornelius a Lapide, who spoke of the “martyrdom of study and writing.”



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The Church Fathers & Scripture: St. Irenaeus and Gospel Authorship

St. Irenaeus of Lyons (A.D. 130-200) was the bishop of Gaul, and one of the famed “Apologists” of the Second Century. He had been a student of St. Polycarp of Smyrna; he a listener of St. John the Apostle. Note the link back to an actual Apostle: Irenaeus to Polycarp to John. This is significant, in view of the following words from St. Irenaeus: “Matthew also issued a written Gospel among the Hebrews in their own dialect, while Peter and Paul were preaching at Rome, and laying the foundations of the Church. After their departure, Mark, the disciple and interpreter of Peter, did also hand down to us in writing what had been preached by Peter. Luke also, the companion of Paul, recorded in a book the Gospel preached by him. Afterwards, John, the disciple of the Lord,

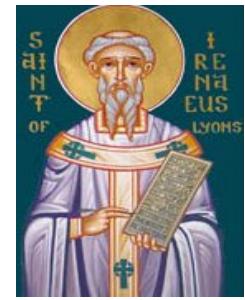
who also had leaned upon His breast, did himself publish a Gospel during his residence at Ephesus in Asia” (*Against Heresies* 3.1.1; A.D. 180-199).

Against Heresies is a monumental treatise from the Patristic age. The tome covers a variety of doctrinal topics (e.g., the Gnostic heresy), and illuminates God’s written word.

Look at our citation from the “third book.” This extract answers the common chatter that claims the four canonical Gospels “evolved” from the “early faith community.” This is a popular assertion today — the Gospels were not really written by Ss. Matthew, Mark, Luke, or John. Instead, it is alleged, the Gospels were redacted (i.e., edited) by others, in the “name” and “spirit” of the Apostles.

St. Irenaeus’ citation helps us counter this assertion. Furthermore, his “Luke” named elsewhere in *Against Heresies* 1.27.2; 2.22.5; 3.9.1; 4.6.1; and 5.21.2 is mentioned as if he were the very same person of Colossians 4:14; 2 Timothy 4:11; and Philemon 24. As well, Vatican II’s *Dei Verbum* 18 (1965) footnotes *Against Heresies* 3.11.8 when discussing Gospel authorship. This footnote (1) confirms the traditional view of Gospel authorship, (2) aligns with our references from St. Irenaeus, and (3) agrees with the Pontifical Biblical Commission responses of 1907, 1911, and 1912.

Who is in a better position to know the true identity of the Gospel authors: St. Irenaeus of the Second Century, or critics of the Twenty-First?



St. Thomas Aquinas & Revelation: The Literal Sense of Scripture

Catholic Biblical hermeneutics recognizes two main senses of Scripture: the literal and spiritual. The spiritual sense is subdivided into allegorical, moral, and anagogical. Sometimes, the senses are numbered generally as four.

St. Thomas Aquinas, in many tomes, expounds the senses. *Quodlibet Seven* reads: “There are four senses of Sacred Scripture: history, which speaks of things done; allegory, in which one thing is understood from another; tropology, that is, moral discussion, in which is treated the ordering of habits; and anagogy, through which, in order to treat of the highest and heavenly things, we are led upward” (q. 6, a. 2). The *Commentary on Galatians* 4:24 says: “For that signification by which the words signify

something pertains to the literal or historical sense. But the signification whereby the things signified by the words further signify other things pertains to the mystical sense.” *Literal Exposition on Job* contains: “the literal sense is that which is primarily intended by the words, whether they are used properly or figuratively” (1:6). The *Summa Theologiae* states: “All others senses of Sacred Scripture are based on the literal” (I, 1, 10, ad 1).

For now, consider the Common Doctor and the literal sense. This is the objective, formal, and direct meaning intended by Scripture’s words; authored by both God and man (cf. J. Weisheipel and F. Larcher, *Aquinas Scripture Series, Vol. 4: Commentary on the Gospel of St. John*, 10).

The literal sense is the meaning conveyed by these key “surface” words. This letter is normative, and the basis for all theological argumentation (cf. T. Weinandy, et al., *Aquinas on Scripture*, 8).

Per Thomas, one must begin with the actual words on the sacred page; individual terms are crucial. Think of Jesus Christ at the Last Supper: “this is my body” (Mt 26:26; Mk 14:22; Lk 22:19) is a far cry from “this represents my body.” One word separates the Real Presence from the real absence. Yes; single words do matter. Furthermore, the literal (or “historical”) sense is the foundation, a necessity, for drawing out the treasures of the spiritual (or “mystical”) sense.

The Angelic Doctor and the senses continue next issue.



The Magisterium Speaks: Pope Pius IX's *Syllabus* & the Bible



Pope Pius IX (r. 1846-1878) promulgated *Quanta Cura*, with the attached *Syllabus of Errors*, in 1864. This pair of documents was promulgated to identify a plethora of errors in the Nineteenth Century. Many of these errors are alive and well today. Consider #7 of the *Syllabus*, which condemns the following: **"The prophecies and miracles set forth and recorded in the Sacred Scriptures are the fiction of poets, and the mysteries of the Christian faith the result of philosophical investigations. In the books of the Old and the New Testament there are contained mythical inventions, and Jesus Christ is Himself a myth."**

The views above are a danger to the Catholic Faith; each is proscribed by the Pontiff. Conversely, three main points are highlighted by the Pontiff.

The first point safeguards prophecies and miracles: two "motives of credibility." In Apologetics, these motives are proofs or aids which facilitate belief. Prophecy and the miraculous are embedded into Sacred Scripture; an undermining of either motive will damage the entire contents of revealed religion.

The second point defends the relationship between the two Testaments — the unity of Holy Writ. The Bible student doesn't isolate the Old Testament from the New; he reads both in tandem. As a matter of fact, certain New Testament books such as Romans and Hebrews, are practically incomprehensible without some familiarity of the Old Testament. St. Augustine is right: **"The New is hidden in the Old, and the Old is made manifest**

in the New" (*Questions on the Heptateuch* 2.73; A.D. 419).

The third point is myth, as it pertains to Divine Revelation. The *Syllabus* is one link in a long chain of Magisterial texts that speak pejoratively of the term myth: Vatican I's *Dei Filius* intro (1870); Pope Leo XIII's *Providentissimus Deus* II.A (1893); the Pontifical Biblical Commission's *On the Historical Character of the First Three Chapters of Genesis* q. 2 (1909); Pope Pius XII's *Humani Generis* 39 (1950); and the Commission's *The Historicity of the Gospels* II.2.

The *Syllabus* #7 is a useful standard for determining orthodoxy in a Biblical commentary. Each point could be expanded into a lengthy article, or even a book. Pope Pius IX delivers a timeless warning in defense of God's word.

The Pontifical Biblical Commission: An Introduction, Part II



Pope Paul VI reconstituted the Pontifical Biblical Commission (PBC) via the 1971 Apostolic Letter, *motu proprio, Sedula cura* (New Laws Regulating the Pontifical Biblical Commission). This restructured PBC is a commission of scholars, working with the Congregation for the Doctrine of the Faith. The former PBC had been an organ of the Magisterium; the present PBC is a kind of advisory committee. This consultative body, in special cases granted the liberty to seek out the expert opinions **"of those who are not Catholics"** (7), should not be equated with the Magisterium.

Five main texts have been released since the Pauline reconstitution: *The Bible and Christology* (1984); *Unity and Diversity in the Church* (1988); *The Interpretation of the Bible*

in the Church (1993); *The Jewish People and their Sacred Scriptures in the Christian Bible* (2001); and *The Bible and Morality: Biblical Roots of Christian Conduct* (2008).

Joseph Cardinal Ratzinger, in his preface to the 1993 text, *The Interpretation of the Bible in the Church*, reiterates the new PBC is **"not an organ of the teaching office, but rather a commission of scholars who, in their scientific and ecclesial responsibility as believing exegetes, take positions on important problems of Scriptural interpretation..."**

This is a reminder of the downgraded role of this new PBC. Fr. Donald Senior, a current member of the PBC, gives a telling quote in a piece carried by the Catholic News Service September 4, 2008.

Fr. Senior says because the PBC is a consultative body, its documents produced are **"like a (government) white paper: If they decide to publish it, it's fine; if they decide to shelf it, we really cannot complain."**

What do such quotes on the status of the PBC imply for the Church Militant? Catholics ought to render the proper respect to the PBC, but aren't bound to assent, *de fide*, to pronouncements from this reconstituted body. Its work should be read and valued — but in view of Scripture, Tradition, and the perennial Magisterium.

This raises a question: What is the current status of the pre-1971 PBC pronouncements? This question is not without controversy. It is also a matter of confusion. We will address this point next issue.

Addressing Bible Difficulties: A Glance at Textual Criticism

There are no extant original manuscripts, called "autographs," of the Hebrew Old Testament or Greek New Testament. Nonetheless, we have a variety of subsequent copies, called "apographs," transmitted through the centuries. During this manual process, copyist errors have inevitably taken place. The discipline of establishing a text as near as possible (or even probable) to the originals is called "textual criticism." Another name is "lower criticism."

This is a valuable discipline, as St. Jerome recognizes, in part, back in the A.D. 380s: "I am not, I repeat, so ignorant as to suppose that any of the Lord's words is either in need of correction or is not divinely inspired; but the Latin manuscripts of the Scriptures are proved to be faulty by the

variations which all of them exhibit, and my object has been to restore them to the form of the Greek original" (*Letter 27.1*). Textual criticism has made necessary and helpful progress since Jerome's epoch. This field is beneficial for the inerrantist. Some copy errors are below.

"Haplography" is writing once, a letter or word, which should have been written twice.

"Dittography" is writing twice, a letter or word, which should have been written once.

"Metathesis" is transposing the proper order of words or letters.

"Fusion" is combining the last letter of a word with the word that follows.

"Fission" is the improper separation of one word into two.

"Homophony" is confusing words that sound alike, such as 'beat' and 'beet.'

"Homoeoteleuton" is a Greek term that means "similar ending." This error is the skipping from one letter or word, to the same letter or word, farther down the page.

"Homoeoarkton" is a Greek term that means "that which has a similar beginning." This error is a loss of words, as a copyist jumps from one beginning to another.

These terms merely scratch the surface. Two consulted works that go into greater detail are David Alan Black's *New Testament Textual Criticism: A Concise Guide* 59-61, and Gleason L. Archer's *Encyclopedia of Bible Difficulties* 32-44. We will look again at textual criticism next issue.



Featured Web Site: The Roman Theological Forum

The web site of the Roman Theological Forum (RTF) states it labors "for the advancement of theology and philosophy within the tradition of the Roman Catholic Church." The RTF "addresses contemporary questions of theology and philosophy, beginning from a Thomistic point of view," with a focus on the "neo-Patristic approach to the interpretation of Sacred Scripture."

The RTF is a plain yet appealing site, constructed in a professional manner, without distracting graphics. Navigating through the RTF is easy because of its simple design. These are notable features, but the real value is the subject matter.

Articles on Dogma, Scripture, Apologetics, and the Liturgy are posted at the RTF via their

scholarly organ: *Living Tradition*. This publication is archived back to January 1987. The topics covered are consequential to every Catholic.

Many will be drawn to the Scripture articles. One discovers a goldmine of scholarly (yet readable) material, which explains and defends the Magisterial doctrines of inspiration and inerrancy. Many articles are "must read," and will be referenced time and time again. The following are a brief sample: "The Truth and Salvific Purpose of Sacred Scripture According to *Dei Verbum*, Article 11;" "The Encyclical *Spiritus Paraclitus* in its Historical Context, Parts I and II;" "Pope Paul VI and the Truth of Sacred Scripture;" "Rationalism in the Historical-Criticism of Hermann Gunkel;" "Modernism in the Demytholog-

izing of Rudolf Bultmann;" "Regarding Father Raymond Brown's Form-Critical Approach to the Virginal Conception of Jesus," and "Some Rationalist Presuppositions of the Historical Critical Method, Parts I and II."

The RTF also offers a fine "Study Program" (28 lessons to date), which promotes the ageless Patristic exegesis, and covers other aspects of Theology. These lessons will benefit the beginner or advanced student.

The RTF, under the able leadership of Msgr. John McCarthy and Fr. Brian Harrison (the authors of most of the articles), is a worthy repository of information on the Catholic Faith. The individual who desires to develop a *sensus Catholicus* need look no further than www.rtforum.org.



Ad Majorem Dei Gloriam

J. M. J.

"You shall love the Lord your God with all your heart, and with all your soul, and with all your mind" (Mt 22:37).

"Jesus said to them, 'Is not this why you are wrong, that you know neither the Scriptures nor the power of God?'" (Mk 12:24).

"And beginning with Moses and all the Prophets, He [Christ] interpreted to them in all the Scriptures the things concerning Himself" (Lk 24:27).

"Now Jesus did many other signs in the presence of the disciples, which are not written in this book; but these are written that you may believe that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God, and that believing you may have life in His name" (Jn 20:30-31).

www.stjeromebiblicalguild.org

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The St. Jerome Biblical Guild is an educational apostolate founded and directed by Mr. Salvatore J. Ciresi. The Guild explains and defends Sacred Scripture in view of Tradition and the Magisterium of the Catholic Church. The apostolate takes its name from St. Jerome, "The Father of Biblical Studies," and labors by God's grace to accomplish the following: (1) explain the various Bible study tools and academic resources; for individual research or parish groups, (2) present studies from Scripture on specific books such as the Gospel of St. Luke, or general themes such as the Biblical roots of home-schooling, (3) promote the classic exegetical methods and insights found within Tradition; with attention to the Church Fathers and St. Thomas Aquinas, and (4) support the Magisterial doctrines of Biblical inspiration and inerrancy; the latter the main focus of the apostolate. The Guild places itself under the Sacred Heart of Jesus and Immaculate Heart of Mary. The Guild also seeks the intercession of St. Jean-Marie Vianney and St. Thérèse of Lisieux for favors and protection. In all things, the apostolate seeks the greater glory of God (cf. 1 Chr 28:9; Ps 37:5; Jer 9:23-24; Jn 15:5; Col 3:17; Jas 4:13-15).

Mr. Salvatore J. Ciresi served two tours in the U.S. Marine Corps and now works in the aviation sector. He earned his M.A. in Theological Studies, with a Scripture concentration, from the Notre Dame Graduate School of Christendom College, where he serves on the adjunct faculty. His ecclesiastical activities include past co-host of Cross Talk, a Catholic radio program in VA; a contributor on behalf of the Arlington Diocese to the 2005 revision to the *National Directory for Catechesis*; a former board member for a private Catholic school; a past columnist for the *Arlington Catholic Herald*; a contributor to *The Latin Mass: The Journal of Catholic Culture and Tradition*; and founder and director of the St. Jerome Biblical Guild. Mr. Ciresi resides with his wife and children in VA.

Book Recommendation: *The Haydock Bible*

Some older, yet enduring tools for studying God's word, are being reprinted today. One such boon is Fr. George Leo Haydock's massive set, popularly known as *The Haydock Bible*.

Three books encompass this soft cover reprint from Catholic Treasures in Duarte, CA (1-800-257-4893): *The Old Testament of the Holy Catholic Bible* (1859), *The New Testament of Our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ* (1859), and *An Illustrated and Comprehensive Catholic Bible Dictionary and A Comprehensive History of the Books of the Holy Catholic Bible* (1881). The set is now available in a convenient one volume hard-cover edition, of burgundy leather, with beautiful gold embossing on the cover. This 8½" by 11" book is not cumbersome, and could serve as one's everyday Bible. It currently lists for \$125, and is worth every penny.

Fr. Haydock, in the latter half of the 1800s, compiled the insights of the Fathers, Doctors, and notable exegetes for the commentary. Trustworthy footnotes, a testimony to Catholic Tradition, take up nearly one-half to two-thirds of each page. In a bigger 12 point font, one has the reliable Douay-Rheims translation.

Beside the footnotes, many valuable study aids abound. There is a list of each of the cited commentators. There are tables on Biblical weights, measures, coins, and time. There are chronological charts to both secular and Scriptural history, plus a detailed Bible timeline. The *Dictionary* covers major Biblical terms in both Testaments. The *History* offers rich introductions to each inspired book. The whole set contains beautiful pictures.

Consider this succinct comment from part of the footnote to John 3:5: "The ancient Fathers, and particularly S. Aug. in divers places, from these words, prove the necessity of giving baptism to infants: and by Christ's adding water, is excluded a metaphorical baptism. See also Acts viii.36. and x.47. and Titus iii.5."

As a complement to Scripture study (and doctrinal and apologetical research), this Bible is well equipped for devotional reading. The home school, both teacher and student, could develop a regular study plan based on Fr. Haydock's tome.

The set could use supplementation in places. Nonetheless, *The Haydock Bible* is a golden monument to God's word.

Please pray for the repose of the soul of Fr. Haydock.

