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Veritas Scripturae

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: A Small Step for Catholic Erudition

St. Paul exhorts the Church Militant: “Look carefully then how you walk, not as unwise men but as wise, making the most of the time...” (Eph 5:15-16). The context in Ephesians 5:6-20 is clear: the faithful must conform their intellects, and direct their wills, to truth. One way is to commit Bible verses to memory. *Veritas Scripturae* aids this cause by its column, “Scripture Memorization and Exegesis.”

Memorizing Bible texts is a mental exercise found in Tradition. St. John Cassian’s *Conferences* 14.10.4, from the Fifth Century, record Abba Nesteros: “Hence the successive books of Holy Scripture must be diligently committed to memory and ceaselessly reviewed.” True, these words are directed to monks, but the advice has an application to all. We learn catechism questions and answers by heart (a

noble practice), so can do likewise with God’s inspired and inerrant word. Caveat: Satan quotes the Bible too (cf. Mt 4:1-11). Thus, such memory work is never isolated from the Magisterium or Tradition.

Here are some suggestions. Pray the “Novena to the Holy Ghost” and beg for grace. Then, start by memorizing the names (and correct spelling) of the 73 books of the Bible. This lone endeavor will yield a familiarity and confidence with Holy Writ. Begin with the New Testament, and move back to the Old.

Next, proceed to the actual Scripture passages. On an index card, write the reference (chapter and verse) on one side; on the other, write the actual passage with the reference. Break up the longer passages into short phrases, each on its own line. Read

the passage aloud, which will facilitate learning. Consult the cards the top of every day time hour (as needed). At a minimum, learn one passage per week. Review all mastered passages every Sunday, and keep a written record. Consider the fruits: 52 verses a year, 260 in five years, 520 in a decade. If possible, aim for two or three verses a week.

Which passages to learn? There is legitimate freedom for this activity. Some may lean to devotional texts, others to doctrinal passages.

During this mental exercise, the Triune God’s very words and deeds become one’s own. Such was the mindset of St. Jerome; the greatest Biblicalist, and a Doctor of the Church.

Godspeed,
Salvatore J. Ciresi

St. Jerome (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: Luke 1:1-4



“Inasmuch as many have undertaken to compile a narrative of the things which have been accomplished among us, just as they were delivered to us by those who from the beginning were eyewitnesses and ministers of the word, it seemed good to me also, having followed all things closely for some time past, to write an orderly account for you, most excellent Theophilus, that you may know the truth concerning the things of which you have been informed” (Lk 1:1-4).

Fr. Cornelius a Lapide's *Commentary* states St. Luke's inspired treatise was composed for two reasons: to confute false gospels issued in Syria and Greece at the time, and to cover the Savior's words and deeds passed over by the other Evangelists.

The preface to the Lukan Gospel, with respect to literary style, mirrors the prologues in works of history from the Hellenistic period (circa Fourth to Second Century B.C.). This likeness to a secular writing pattern could be considered the human aspect of the divine Scriptures.

Luke 1:4 reveals a catechetical aspect. Believers are to grasp the truth of the Gospel; they should attempt to be “informed” (*katēchēthēs*) of the Good News. Here is motivation, in view of one's state or vocation in life, to learn the rudiments of the Faith.

St. Luke addresses a real person: Theophilus. “Most excellent” (*kratiste*), a formal designation, is likewise used for governors Felix (Acts 24:2) and Festus (Acts 26:25) as a title of honor. This reveals a Gospel rooted in real history.

This preface is embedded with other rich terms. The phrase “delivered to us” (*paredosan hēmin*) indicates the key role played by oral tradition for handing on the Gospel. The Good News was a preached message first, a written message second.

The “eyewitnesses” (*autoptai*), it seems, would have included the Apostles and Our Lady. She, especially, was the best human source of information for the early years which surrounded Our Lord in Matthew 1-2 and Luke 1-2.

Lastly, the Evangelist's care as an historian is evident. He says he “closely” (*akribōs*) followed the crucial events. This was so because the issue at hand has eternal consequences: the Gospel is a matter of “truth” (*aspaleian*). The salvific proclamation is tied to St. Luke's veracity.

Inerrancy Basics: Union with Jesus Christ

This is the final installment on three recommended principles for the labor of the inerrantist. 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. We are down to the first principle: union with Jesus Christ. This union entails many obvious points such as grace, the work of the Triune God, and prayer. Listen to the wisdom of the finest Catholic minds on this union:

Venerable Louis of Granada: “In brief, the Father has given us the Son, and the Son has made us worthy to receive the Holy Ghost, and the Holy Ghost has united us to the Father and the Son, the Source of every grace and blessing” (*The Sinner's Guide*, 34).

St. Francis de Sales: “... just as little children learn to speak by listening to their mothers and lisping words with them, so also by keeping close to our Savior in meditation and observing His words, actions, and affections we learn by His grace to speak, act, and will like Him” (*Introduction to the Devout Life*, 81).

St. John Vianney: “The life of a saint is just the imitation of Jesus Christ” (*Thoughts of the Curé D' Ars*, 13).

St. Therese of Lisieux: “Everything is a grace!” (*Story of a Soul*, 266).

Blessed Abbot Marmion: “To abide in Christ is to be identified with Him in all that relates to our intelligence, our will, our activity” (*Christ the Life of the Soul*, 283).

Fr. Adolphe Tanquerey: “We

keep Jesus in our heart by drawing into our soul the dispositions of His own heart, His purity of intention, His fervor, in order to perform our actions in the spirit in which He performed His” (*The Spiritual Life*, 80).

Dom Jean-Baptiste Chautard: “Now for a man, in his practical conduct, to go about his active works as if Jesus were not his one and only life principle, is what Cardinal Mermilliod has called the 'HERESY OF GOOD WORKS'” (*The Soul of the Apostolate*, 10).

Assisting at Mass, attending Eucharistic Adoration, frequent confession, praying the Rosary, wearing the Scapular, and using Holy Water will put into practice the advice from the spiritual masters. In sum: the inerrantist's toil starts by God's grace.

Assisting at Mass, attending Eucharistic Adoration, frequent confession, praying the Rosary, wearing the Scapular, and using Holy Water will put into practice the advice from the spiritual masters.

The Church Fathers & Scripture: St. Papias & Gospel Authorship

We continue to survey the Patristic testimonies to Gospel authorship. We now add St. Papias of Hierapolis. He is identified in St. Irenaeus' *Against Heresies* 5.33.4 as a hearer of St. John the Apostle, and friend of St. Polycarp of Smyrna.

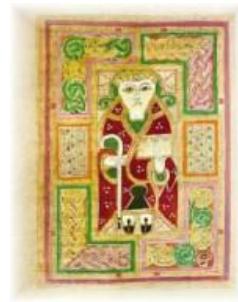
St. Papias, an Apostolic Father, relays the following: "When Mark became the interpreter of Peter, he wrote down accurately whatever he remembered, though not in order, of the words and deeds of the Lord. He was neither hearer nor follower of the Lord; but such he was afterwards, as I say, of Peter, who had no intention of giving a connected account of the sayings of the Lord, but adapted his instructions as was necessary. Mark, then, made no mistake, but wrote things

down as he remembered them; and he made it his concern to omit nothing that he had heard nor to falsify anything therein... Mathew, indeed, composed the sayings in the Hebrew language; and each one interpreted them to the best of his ability" (*Explanation of the Sayings of the Lord*).

This citation is a fragment in Eusebius' *History of the Church* 3.39.15-16 (A.D. 300-325). *Explanation* is not extant, but its composition date is generally settled among Patristic scholars. F. Cayre says about A.D. 125 (*Manual of Patrology* I:77), J. Quasten about A.D. 130 (*Patrology* I:82). Thus, *Explanation* is valuable evidence from before the mid Second Century; one of the earliest Patristic witnesses to Gospel authorship.

Consider St. Papias' quote. St. Mark is linked to St. Peter, which dovetails with 1 Peter 5:13. The Markan Gospel was composed "accurately": by one who "made no mistake" and didn't "falsify anything." The inerrantist will appreciate these words.

St. Matthew's Gospel is connected to a non-Greek text, described as "sayings in the Hebrew language." There is much debate on this fragment, and with this particular phrase. Consult the Pontifical Biblical Commission's *On the Author, Date of Composition, and Historical Truth of the Gospel According to St. Matthew* (1911). As well, see the pertinent chapters in R. Bauckham's *Jesus and the Eyewitnesses: The Gospels as Eyewitness Testimony* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2006).



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

The last issue of *Veritas Scripturae* stated that Catholic Biblical hermeneutics recognizes two main senses of Scripture: the literal and spiritual. St. Thomas Aquinas and the literal sense were given attention. Now we move to the Angelic Doctor and the spiritual sense.

Let us repeat the relevant sections from two Thomistic quotations. *Quodlibet Seven* reads in part: "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). *Commentary on Galatians* 4:24 says: "But the significa-

tion whereby the things signified by the words further signify other things pertains to the mystical sense."

The Angelic Doctor uses the phrase "mystical sense" as a synonym for "spiritual sense." The word "mystical" has been hijacked in our day. But the word is sound, and points to classic Catholic contemplation on the mysteries of the Faith.

In other words, Aquinas is following the Tradition of the Church Fathers: Scripture's words are to be analyzed beyond their historical milieu and grammatical setting (without neglecting these two areas). The spiritual sense, then, considers the realities and events beyond the Bible's actual words; an appreciation of the different layers of meaning. Fr. Michael Seisenberger

is on the mark: "The meaning of the text must not everywhere be limited to the literal meaning, as underlying the letter many a mystery is often concealed" (*Practical Handbook for the Study of the Bible*, 450).

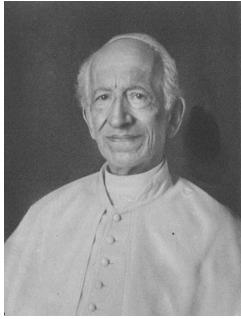
Recall the spiritual sense is subdivided into allegorical, moral, and anagogical. Thomas uses the terms "allegory," "tropology," and "anagogy."

The allegorical sense recognizes Scripture's words and actions in view of Jesus Christ. The moral or tropological sense considers Holy Writ as a guide to Christian living. The anagogical sense ponders the Bible's significance for the Last Things.

St. Thomas Aquinas' Thirteenth Century wisdom on the Biblical senses is ever new.



The Magisterium Speaks: The Leonine Axiom on Inspiration



Pope Leo XIII (r. 1878-1903) promulgated the first major papal encyclical dedicated to Sacred Scripture: 1893's *Providentissimus Deus* (The Study of Sacred Scripture). Paragraph II.D.3a provides a classic statement on Biblical inspiration: "Hence, because the Holy Spirit employed men as His instruments, we cannot, therefore, say that it was these inspired instruments who, perchance, have fallen into error, and not the Primary Author. For, by supernatural power, He so moved and impelled them to write — He so assisted them when writing — that the things which He ordered, and those only, they, first, rightly understood, then willed faithfully to write down, and finally expressed in apt words and with infallible truth. Otherwise, it could not be said that He was the Author of the

entire Scripture." Leo's quote rounds out our earlier study on 2 Peter 1:20-21 and causality.

The Pontiff follows St. Thomas Aquinas and calls the Biblical writers "instruments." The Angelic Doctor wrote six centuries earlier in the *Summa Theologiae*: "In prophetic revelation the prophet's mind is moved by the Holy Ghost, as an instrument that is deficient in regard to the principal agent" (II-II, q. 173, art. 4).

We may say God is the Principal Efficient Cause of inspiration, man is the instrumental efficient cause. This means God acts by His own power; man acts not by his own power but in so far as he is moved by God. This language of causality explains the fact that Scripture has two authors: God the Primary Author, by means of a secondary

human author. Note well: "instrument" doesn't mean robot. Throughout the process of inspiration, the human writer was acting in a free and intelligible manner. Such action employs the intellect and will of the hagiographer. This is evident from the rich variety of literary styles and modes of expression within Holy Writ (cf. G. Smith, *The Teaching of the Catholic Church* I:170-179).

While addressing this matter of authorship, Leo XIII also defends inerrancy. He rebuts the Modernist tactic of imputing error to the human author, while simultaneously giving lip service to the errorless nature of the Divine Author. The Pope connects the doctrine of inspiration to the doctrine of inerrancy: one must follow the other; both are inseparable.

The Pontifical Biblical Commission: An Introduction, Part III



Msgr. John Steinmueller was a consulter to the Pontifical Biblical Commission (PBC) from 1947-1971, and a *peritus* at Vatican II. Writing in 1969, he observes the PBC texts are (1) neither infallible nor unchangeable, (2) enjoy the same authority as the Sacred Congregations, (3) require external and internal consent, (4) rate an assent that need not be absolute and irrefutable, and (5) have as the formal object the safeguarding of revealed doctrine by declaring certain interpretations are unproven, untimely, or may weaken Church teaching (cf. *A Companion to Scripture Studies* I:300).

In 1971, under Pope Paul VI, the PBC was reconstituted to a kind of advisory committee to the Congregation for the Doctrine of the Faith (cf. the

Apostolic Letter, *motu proprio, Sedula cura*). Henceforth, the PBC is no longer an organ of the Magisterium. What, then, is the status today of the pre-1971 pronouncements? Some claim the texts have been revoked; others do not.

Steinmueller, writing again in 1986, says in part, "I never heard any intimation that any decrees of the Commission were ever revoked. At most they were clarified (cf. Letter to Cardinal Suhard of Paris, 1948). Recently some Catholic scholars have asserted that the decrees were implicitly revoked by *Divino afflante Spiritu* (1943) and that this is confirmed by two articles written in 1955 by A. Miller and A. Kleinhans, who seem to restrict the scope of the decrees to matters of faith and morals (cf. *Jerome Biblical Commen-*

tary, Vol. II, p. 629). The articles referred to were *unauthorized* and were condemned by the voting Cardinal members of the Commission. A. Miller and A. Kleinhans were to be brought before the Holy Office because of the articles, but were saved from this ordeal through the personal intervention of Cardinal Tisserant before the Holy Father. It was my friend, Father Miller, O.S.B., who told me the whole story before his return to Germany. Decisions of this Pontifical Biblical Commission were sent to the Holy Father, who ratified them or sent them back for further consideration. The official decisions were published only at his command" (*The Sword of the Spirit* 7-8, fn. 1).

An official, specific Magisterial clarification is needed today.

Addressing Bible Difficulties: New Testament Replication, Part I

There is enough evidence to replicate the Bible, substantially, without the extant autographs. True, the originals alone were inspired, not the apographs. Nonetheless, the copies are sufficient for reproducing the originals.

Fr. J. Arendzen tells us three sources guide the replication of the New Testament: Greek manuscripts, translations from these texts, and quotations of the New Testament by the Church Fathers (cf. *The Bible: Its History, Authenticity and Authority*, 36-56). Consider the Greek manuscripts.

Msgr. J. Steinmueller identifies four main classes of the Greek manuscripts: papyri, uncials, minuscules, and lectionaries (cf. *A Companion to Scripture Studies I*:171-183). Each class deserves attention.

Papyri take their name from the papyrus plant. The fibrous pith inside the stem was cut open, laid flat, and often double-layered (running perpendicular) for strength. Papyrus was a widely used writing surface in the Mediterranean world; from the Fourth Century B.C. to the A.D. 600s. Papyri are considered the earliest Greek New Testament manuscripts. They are denoted by the symbol P, followed by a numeral. Example: P¹ contains Matthew 1:1-9,12,14-20.

Uncials (or majuscules) are based on a formal style of handwriting of large rounded letters, each one separated from the next, similar to capital letters. The uncials appear on Third to Tenth Century codices (i.e., bound books) of parchment or vellum. Uncials are denoted by numbers, pre-

ceded by a 0. The first 45 retain an older designation with Latin and Greek capital letters, and the Hebrew letter aleph. Examples: B or 03 is the *Codex Vaticanus*, and 0162 contains John 2:11-22.

Minuscules are small letters made up of cursive or running script. This became the norm for manuscript production after the Ninth Century, and lasted to the time of the invention of printing. Minuscules constitute over 9/10 of all known manuscripts. They are denoted by Arabic numerals. Example: 2053 entails the Apocalypse.

Consulted works were Kurt and Barbara Aland's *The Text of the New Testament*, A. Patzia and A. Petrotta's *Pocket Dictionary of Biblical Studies*, and R. Soulen's *Handbook of Biblical Criticism*. Part II will continue this vital topic.



Featured Web Site: Pugio Fidei

Pugio Fidei ("the dagger of faith") takes its name from the work of Raymond Martini; a Dominican of the Thirteenth Century. This medieval theologian provided the standard manual for his fellow Dominican missionaries at the time. Under this influence, "Pugio Fidei's intent is to present the reader's intellect with Logos, understood both as Sacred Scripture and as the transcendent principle of rationality," in view of the "the Person of Christ..." One sees in this intent the bridge of two popular texts: Ephesians 6:17 and Hebrews 4:12 (both displayed on the home page). Here we see reason joined to faith; for use in the real world.

Pugio Fidei has a focus on Apologetics; the explanation and defense of the Faith. However, the web site covers

many other fields which aid the student of Holy Writ. Some pages of interest are "Scripture," "Modernism," and "Protestantism." The Bible is employed throughout such material, and this handling of God's word admirably serves the Catholic Faith. There is a very helpful "Links" page. The site is easy to negotiate, and displays some great pictures (e.g., Pope St. Pius X and Fr. Reginald Garrigou-Lagrange).

The material on the Scripture page will be of special interest. One discovers forgotten scholarship that will go far in upholding Biblical inerrancy. Two essays worth mentioning are "The Book of Tobias" in the *Irish Ecclesiastical Record* (1886), and "The Prophecy of Jonah: History or Parable?" in *Razon y Fe* (1918). One finds the early responses of the

Pontifical Biblical Commission, which are rare on the Internet (the Vatican web site lists the titles only). Finally, what may be the most important piece: a critique and response to the footnotes and translation of the *New American Bible*. This may be the web site's most valuable contribution to the Catholic Faith. Pray this piece, a work in progress, reaches completion soon.

It appears that Pugio Fidei is updated about once a month. This gives visitors sufficient time to digest the material. The bulk of the posted info comes from two friends of *Veritas Scripturae*; Messrs. Ben Douglass and Ed Snyder. Had they been enemies, their site would still get a recommendation.

www.pugiofidei.com



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).

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Book Recommendation: *The Church and the Bible*

The faithful draw doctrinal and spiritual sustenance by reading the official pronouncements of the Catholic Church. A large selection of material is found in libraries or posted on the Internet, but many documents remain unavailable. One reference book that fills some of the void: Dennis J. Murphy, MSC, ed., *The Church and the Bible: Official Documents of the Catholic Church, Revised and Enlarged Second Edition* (USA: St. Pauls/Alba, 2007) 1048 pp.

Fr. Murphy's book possesses a sturdy cover, quality paper, and readable print. There are three helpful indices: "Scripture Texts," "Subjects and Names," and "Latin Titles of Documents." These add clarity to the hardback's contents.

The Church and the Bible offers a collection of various documents; beginning with the Patristic epoch, and ending with Pope Benedict

XVI. The material is taken from both levels of the Magisterium; the Ordinary and Extraordinary. Also present is unofficial but laudable extracts not part of the Church's Magisterium: pieces such as *The Muratorian Fragment*, St. Cyril of Jerusalem's *Catechesis IV*, and St. Athanasius' *Letter 39*. Thus, the authority of each writing within the book varies. The reader, following the classic Thomistic method, will need to make distinctions.

Fr. Murphy's anthology has texts that are applicable to every aspect of Biblical studies: inspiration, inerrancy, authorship, canonicity, hermeneutics, etc. There are the major encyclicals on Divine Revelation, such as Pope Benedict XV's *Spiritus Paraclitus* (1920). There are the pertinent Ecumenical Council

documents, such as Florence's *Cantate Domino* (1442). There are the significant local Council or Synod statements, such as Toledo IV (663). There are illuminating decrees, such as the Holy Office's *Utrum Tuto Negari* (1927). There are the pre-1971 Pontifical Biblical Commission texts (1905-1964); scarce in hard copy, and worth the price of the book (about \$30).

One must disagree with some of the editorial opinions expressed in *The Church and the Bible*. Nonetheless, the book is a helpful panorama of Divine Revelation within the Church's life. This aids all Catholics; the scholar doing heavy research, or the home-schooling mother trying to instruct her brood. This collection could be read cover to cover. *The Church and the Bible* belongs in the library of every Christian.

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.

