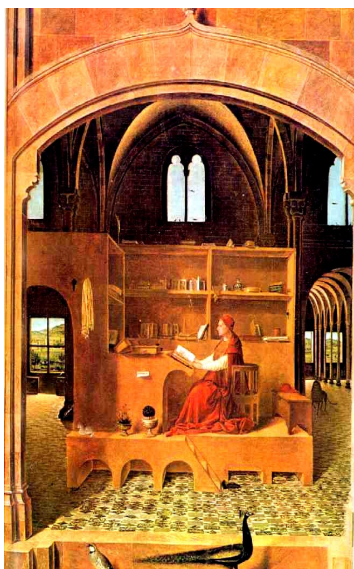


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# Veritas Scripturae

## The Bulletin of the St. Jerome Biblical Guild



A publication that focuses upon the doctrines of Biblical inspiration and inerrancy, and related Scriptural knowledge, in light of Tradition and the Magisterium of the Catholic Church

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



### From the Director: *Ite ad Thomam*

The internet, drawbacks and all, enables one to discover reliable information on the Catholic Faith. A student of the Bible should make wise and prudent use of such technology. One of the outstanding online sources is the blog, *Ite ad Thomam* (“Go to Thomas”).

Founded by Dr. Francisco J. Romero Carrasquillo (aka, Don Paco), *Ite ad Thomam* states it is “A Blog for the Restoration of Traditional Catholic Thought” on its masthead. A few minutes of searching on the blog will prove this abundantly. One finds an immense repository of Biblical, Traditional, Philosophical, and Magisterial topics. The interior life also gets needed attention.

Dr. Romero is a true Thomist, and his original pieces are clear and orthodox. When critiquing an opposing view, he remains fair and charitable. Besides the typical entries, *Ite ad Thomam* offers a host of links. The many classic, out-of-print works are a highlight of the blog. Please visit [iteadthomam.blogspot.com](http://iteadthomam.blogspot.com).

For research, there is nothing to replace a hardcover book, read before the Blessed Sacrament. Still, electronic advances should be used for spreading Catholic truth and refuting error. *Ite ad Thomam* is one source for the grasping of the Holy Scriptures.

Godspeed,  
Salvatore J. Ciresi, M.A.

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 and Exegesis from the Old Testament:

### Hosea 4:1-3

“Hear the word of the LORD, O people of Israel; for the LORD has a controversy with the inhabitants of the land. There is no faithfulness or kindness, and no knowledge of God in the land; there is swearing, lying, killing, stealing, and committing adultery; they break all bounds and murder follows murder. Therefore the land mourns, and all who dwell in it languish, and also the beasts of the field, and the birds of the air; and even the fish of the sea are taken away” (Hos 4:1-3).

The prophet Hosea was directed by God to speak to the Northern Kingdom; the ten tribes which retained the name “Israel” after the united monarchy split into north and south about 931 B.C. The Southern Kingdom, known as “Judah,” consisted of the two remaining tribes of Judah and Benjamin. Each kingdom had its seers.

Since its establishment under King Jeroboam I, the Northern Kingdom had descended into false religion. Jeroboam, in order to prevent a reunion with the Southern Kingdom, set up two false worship centers in Bethel and Dan. These alternate sites were to be a foil to the true worship site in the south at Jerusalem. This godless ruler, along such a path, ordained a non-Aaronic priesthood and revised the religious calendar. Israel also spiraled into Baal worship; with its immoral rites and ritual prostitution. This covenant breaking was comparable to an adulteress. Such marital imagery was employed by God via Hosea, who prophesied to the north during the mid to late Eight Century B.C. (cf. L. Richards, *The 365-Day Devotional Commentary*, pp. 527-532).



The first three chapters of Hosea give much attention to his life. The fourth changes the emphasis to the infidelity of Israel. Here are some observations.

Hosea 4:1's “controversy” (*rîv*) may be rendered “judgment” (*Douay-Rheims*), “suit” (*Knox Bible*), “indicts” (*Jerusalem Bible*), “grievance” (1970 *New American Bible*), “dispute” (2010 *New American Bible*), or “accusation” (*Good News Bible: Catholic Study Edition*). The array of translations coalesce toward one fact: a divine verdict on a guilty Northern Kingdom for its covenantal infidelity. Sin is no trifle to the holy God.

Hosea 4:2 names the transgressions which have brought down the ruling. The list of sins may be put into groups. Unlawful “swearing” (*’ālōh*) goes with “lying” (*w<sup>e</sup>khachēsh*). Then, there is “killing” (*w<sup>e</sup>rātsōach*) and the related “murder” (*w<sup>e</sup>dhāmîm* and *b<sup>e</sup>dhāmîm*). As well, “stealing” (*w<sup>e</sup>ghānōv*) and “adultery” (*w<sup>e</sup>nā’ōph*) have a linkage. The reason for the sins: “no knowledge of God” (*w<sup>e</sup>’ēn-da’ath ’ēlōhîm*). A lack of comprehension of divine things is a concern for the prophet, and in turn, God, as further testified in Hosea 4:6: “My people are destroyed for lack of knowledge.” Religious ignorance leads to societal evils — in every age.

Hosea 4:3 indicates that even the “land” (*hā’ārets*) suffers under a decline of morality. Dr. Merrill F. Unger writes: “Beasts and birds would famish, streams would dry up and fish perish. Such a drought was viewed as one of the predicted punishments of apostasy (Deut. 11:11-17)” (*Unger’s Commentary on the Old Testament*, p.1713).

# Scripture Memorization and Exegesis from the New Testament:

## John 15:1-8

"I am the true vine, and my Father is the vinedresser. Every branch of mine that bears no fruit, he takes away, and every branch that does bear fruit he prunes, that it may bear more fruit. You are already made clean by the word which I have spoken to you. Abide in me, and I in you. As the branch cannot bear fruit by itself, unless it abides in the vine, neither can you, unless you abide in me. I am the vine, you are the branches. He who abides in me, and I in him, he it is that bears much fruit, for apart from me you can do nothing. If a man does not abide in me, he is cast forth as a branch and withers; and the branches are gathered, thrown into the fire and burned. If you abide in me, and my words abide in you, ask whatever you will, and it shall be done for you. By this my Father is glorified, that you bear much fruit, and so prove to be my disciples" (Jn 15:1-8).

The Gospel of St. John is frequently structured as follows: John 1—12 is the "Book of Signs," and John 13—21 is the "Book of Glory." The latter section is a turning point in Our Lord's public ministry; He sets out toward Jerusalem: "Jesus knew that His hour had come to depart out of this world to the Father" (Jn 13:1). At this time, He is to begin His Sacred Passion. Within the context of John 13:1—17:26 (the Last Supper) is the "Christ the Vine" discourse.

This is the last among the seven "I am" sayings in the Fourth Gospel. On these maxims, Fr. H. Van den Bussche comments: "In calling himself 'I am,' Jesus affirms himself to be the full realization of what Yahweh had promised Israel in the revelation of his name" (*The Gospel of the Word*, p. 107).

With that background, our exposition is John 15:1-8. Consider three points.

Firstly, John 15:1's "vine" (*ampelos*) and "vinedresser" (*geōrgos*); 15:2's "branch" (*klēma*) and "fruit" (*karpon*) which the Heavenly Father "prunes" (*kathairei*); 15:6's "withers" (*exēranthē*) and "fire and burned" (*pyr kai kaietai*), are terms for a horticultural illustration easy to comprehend by the Apostles in their landscape of Palestine. Moreover, Israel is often depicted as a "vine" in the Old Testament (Is 5:1; Jer 2:21; Ez 15:2). This faithless vine is contrasted with one who is "true" (*alēthinē*) per John 15:1 (cf. C.C. Martindale, *Stonyhurst Scripture Manuals: The Gospel According to Saint John*, p. 123).



Secondly, John 15:4's "Abide in me" (*meinate en emoi*) and like phrases (Jn 15:5-7) from the Master, teach the Christian's absolute dependence upon God's grace for the interior life. There are parallels in Ephesians 1:1-13; St. Paul speaks nearly a dozen times on living "in Him" or "in Christ." The same theme is found in Romans 6:1-4.

Thirdly, John 15:2's "takes away" (*airei*); and 15:6's "cast forth" (*ēblēthē exō*) and "thrown into the fire" (*eis to pyr ballousin*), leave no doubt on the possibility of eternal perdition.

Fr. Charles Callan's exegesis on John 15:1 sums up the whole pericope: "As the branches draw their life and nourishment from the vine or trunk of the tree, so must the Apostles and all just souls, by faith in and love for Christ, draw their spiritual life and nourishment from Him" (*The Four Gospels and the Acts of the Apostles* 1:503).

St. Jean Vianney remarked: “*Whatever the priest may be, he is always the instrument which God uses to spread His word*” (B. Nodet, *The Heart of the Curé of Ars*, p. 89). In view of this fact, *Veritas Scripturae* has the honor of being read by several men ordained to the sacerdotal priesthood. Many are friends of the bulletin’s editor. Such subscribers and friends are a privilege. If it were possible to suggest to each one an outline for preaching a series of sermons on the crucial topic of Biblical inerrancy, then the following plan would be offered for consideration.

Open with Revelation. One may cover its nature, and the distinction between Natural Revelation and Supernatural Revelation. After these rudiments, the necessity of Revelation is then given attention. Later, explain things such as reason, faith, and mystery. The relation between the former two is essential.

With the basics understood, proceed to the doctrine of Biblical inspiration. The three main pericopes of 2 Timothy 3:16-17; 2 Peter 1:20-21; and John 10:22-39 warrant a detailed exegesis. The Pauline texts could highlight God as the Divine and Primary Author. The Petrine verses might cover men as the human and secondary authors. The Johannine extract may finish with the effect of inspiration: inerrancy.

The teaching on inerrancy, and all its fine points, could now undergo a deep examination. What inerrancy is, and what inerrancy is not, will dispel many misunderstandings. As well, the Bible and its proper relation to the natural sciences, will need an explanation.

Moving ahead, the concept of truth will require elucidation. This will naturally lead to a discussion of miracles and prophecy; two credentials of Revelation (also called motives of credibility).

Tradition should be brought forward as a witness, most especially found via the Fathers and Doctors of the Church, for the main subjects covered thus far. A brief survey of the key Magisterial documents will then confirm what’s been addressed to this juncture. The study may be closed with inerrancy’s influence upon the devotional life.

The outline above could be sermon material for successive Sundays at the Holy Sacrifice of the Mass. Weekday Mass is another option. No doubt, the Sacred Liturgy is a fitting backdrop for hearing, learning, and pondering God’s Word. If not feasible to be preached from the pulpit, then another alternative is a parish series. This has less time constraints, and affords a question and answer session. Whatever the setting, the goal is to teach the faithful about Holy Scripture’s freedom from all error.

This outline is only a suggestion, and one may prefer a different sequence for presenting the topics. The order in this column is dependent mainly upon Fr. C. Coppens’ *A Systematic Study of the Catholic Religion*, pp. 2-9.

The priest of God, with souls under his care, will want to catechize his flock on the doctrine of Biblical inerrancy. Here is some more wisdom and motivation from the Curé of Ars: “*The divine word is one of the greatest gifts which God can give us*” (Nodet, p. 89).

“The priest of God, with souls under his care, will want to catechize his flock on the doctrine of Biblical inerrancy.”

## The Church Fathers and Scripture:

### Their Authority for Biblical Exegesis

Fr. Bernard Schmid's textbook, *Manual of Patrology*, offers the Bible student much guidance for reading the Fathers of the Church. These great men, who lived during the first eight centuries of the Catholic Faith, remain essential for our day for comprehending the Sacred Page.

Addressing the Patristic epoch and their level of influence, Schmid writes, in part, that "the unanimous explanation of Holy Scripture given by the Fathers, is of the same authority as that of the Church herself. It is therefore unlawful to depart or differ from it. St. Leo says, 'It is not lawful to understand Scripture otherwise than the blessed Apostles and our Fathers have learnt or taught'" (*Manual of Patrology*, p. 36). The citation is from Pope St. Leo the Great, *Epistle* 8.1 (A.D. 455).

Schmid continues this point: "Again, the Council of Trent gives the following warning: 'Let no one, trusting to his own wisdom, in matters appertaining to faith or morals, and the building up of Christian doctrine, dare, by twisting the Sacred Scriptures to his own sense, to interpret them against the unanimous consent of the Fathers'... And the Vatican Council not only renewed this Tridentine decree, but also explained thus its full sense and bearing: 'In matters of faith and morals appertaining to the building up of Christian doctrine, that is to be held as the true sense of Scripture which holy Mother Church has held and holds, whose office it is to judge of the true sense and interpretation of the Holy Scriptures; and, therefore, no one is allowed to interpret that same Sacred Scripture against this

sense, or against the unanimous consent of the Fathers'" (*Manual of Patrology*, p. 37). The citations are from the Council of Trent's *Decree Concerning the Edition and Use of the Sacred Books*, session 4 (1546); and the First Vatican Council's *Dogmatic Constitution on the Catholic Faith*, session 3, chapter 2 (1870). The interested reader may find the conciliar quotations in H. J. Schroeder's *Canons and Decrees of the Council of Trent*; and J. Broderick's *Documents of Vatican Council I, 1869-1870*.

Now, keeping in mind the expression "unanimous consent of the Fathers," in Latin, *unanimem consensum Patrum*, Schmid explains: "From these decrees of the Church we may deduce the following principles: (1) If the Fathers, in expounding a passage, do not agree, it is lawful to explain it according to one's own well-grounded opinion. (2) The concordant explanation of Scripture by the holy Fathers is binding only in subjects of faith and morals, but not in other scientific questions... (3) The degree of authority to be given to a Father in the explanation of Holy Scripture, is in proportion to his learning, sanctity, and the honor or approbation accorded to him by the Church... To St. Jerome belongs very special distinction and authority, for the Church speaks of him as her greatest teacher in the exposition of Holy Scripture" (*Manual of Patrology*, pp. 37-38).

Subsequent pronouncements by the Magisterium follow this line of teaching on the Fathers in their relation to Holy Writ. (Extracts from Schmid have been reformatted slightly in places).



## St. Thomas Aquinas and Revelation:

### 1 Corinthians 13:4-7

“Charity is patient, is kind: charity envies not, deals not perversely, is not puffed up, is not ambitious, seeks not her own, is not provoked to anger, thinks no evil: Rejoices not in iniquity, but rejoices with the truth: Bears all things, believes all things, hopes all things, endures all things” (1 Cor 13:4-7, *Douay-Rheims Bible*).

St. Thomas Aquinas is renowned as a theologian and philosopher. However, he is also a sure guide for the interior life. Consider his comments from the extract on 1 Corinthians 13:4-7.

The Angelic Doctor says of St. Paul, in part, that he “shows that charity drives away inordinate passions in regard to three things.

First, indeed, as to pride, which is a disarranged desire for one’s own excellence. One seeks his own excellence in a disarranged manner, when it does not satisfy him to be contained in that station which has been established for him by God. Therefore it is said: *the beginning of man’s pride is to depart from the Lord* (Sir 10:12). This happens when a man does not wish to be contained under the rule of God’s arrangement. And this is opposed to charity, by which one loves God above all things: *puffed by without reason by this sensuous mind and not holding fast to the head* (Col 2:18).

It is right to compare pride to arrogance. For that which is puffed up does not have solidity but its appearance; so the proud seem to themselves to be great, while they really lack true greatness, which cannot exist without the divine order: *he will dash them speechless to the ground* (Wis 4:19).



The chief daughter of pride is ambition, through which one seeks to be foremost; which charity also excludes, seeking rather to serve: *through love be servants of one another* (Gal 5:13). Therefore, he adds: *is not ambitious*, i.e., makes a man avoid ambition: *do not seek from the Lord the highest office nor the seat of honor from the king* (Sir 7:4).” Pride is usually the first vice listed among the “seven deadly sins.”

“Second, he shows how charity excludes the disorder of cupidity, when he says: *seeks not her own*. This is understood precisely, i.e., it does not neglect the good of others. For one who loves others as himself seeks the good of others just as his own. Hence the Apostle said above: *not seeking my own advantage, but that of many* (1 Cor 10:10). Against which it is said of some: *they all look after their own interests, not those of Jesus Christ* (Phil 2:21).” This is an implication of the First Commandment’s second half.

“Third, he shows how charity excludes the disorder of anger, saying: *it is not provoked to anger*... For anger is an inordinate desire for revenge. But it pertains to charity rather to forgive offenses than to seek revenge beyond measure: *forbearing one another, if one has a complaint against another* (Col 3:13); *the anger of man does not work the righteousness of God* (Jas 1:20).” This does not exclude righteous anger (cf. Jn 2:13-17; Mt 21:12-13).

The quotations, reformatted in places, are from Aquinas’ *Commentary on the Letters of Saint Paul to the Corinthians*, pp. 294-295 (trans. F. Larcher, et al.).

## The Magisterium Speaks:

### Excerpts from the *Schema Constitutionis Dogmaticae de Fontibus Revelationis*

There is a long history which led to the Second Vatican Council's *Dei Verbum* ("Dogmatic Constitution on Divine Revelation") promulgated in 1965. Sources which put the occasion in perspective are Romano Amerio's *Iota Unum*; Michael Davies' *Pope John's Council*; Roberto de Mattei's *The Second Vatican Council*; and Fr. Ralph Wiltgen's *The Rhine Flows into the Tiber*.

Here is a brief chronology of events:

1960: After reviewing inputs from a world-wide consultation, a sub-commission of the Preparatory Theological Commission takes the results and produces a summary outline.

1960—1961: A sub-commission of the Preparatory Theological Commission generates a full draft from the summary outline.

1961: The whole Preparatory Theological Commission reviews the full draft, then sends an approved text for review to the Central Preparatory Commission.

1962: The text undergoes revision by the Central Preparatory Commission, receives approval by them and Pope John XXIII, and is sent as the *Schema Constitutionis Dogmaticae de Fontibus Revelationis* for discussion to the Council Fathers.

Much transpires from the discussions of 1962 to the *Dei Verbum* of 1965. True, the early *Schema* is not part of the Magisterium. But the draft remains a testimony to the Catholic description of Biblical inspiration and inerrancy.

Here are two key paragraphs from the *Schema* for review (each paragraph's single footnote has been omitted for the sake of brevity):

#### "11. *The Extent of Inspiration.*

Similarly, since God himself by the inspiring Spirit is the Author of all Holy Scripture and, as it were, the writer of everything produced in it by the hagiograph's hand, it follows that all and each of the parts of the sacred books, even the slightest parts, are inspired. Therefore, everything stated by the hagiograph must be considered to have been stated by the Holy Spirit.

#### 12. *Inerrancy as a Consequence of Inspiration.*

Because divine Inspiration extends to everything, the absolute immunity of all Holy Scripture from error [PTC had said 'the infallibility and inerrancy'] follows directly and necessarily. For we are taught by the ancient and constant faith of the Church that it is utterly forbidden to grant that the sacred author himself has erred, since divine Inspiration of itself as necessarily excludes and repels any error in any matter, religious or profane, as it is necessary to say that God, the supreme Truth, is never the author of any error whatever."

To reiterate: the *Schema* of 1962 is not an official document. Nonetheless, it contributes to the study of God's Word. The *Schema* translation from Latin into English, and its background details, is indebted to Fr. Joseph A. Komonchak. The draft is available online, and is accessible by using any standard search engine.



## The Pontifical Biblical Commission:

### *On the Author, Time of Composition, and Character of the Psalms*

"1: Whether the terms *Psalms of David*, *Hymns of David*, the *Book of the Psalms of David*, the *Davidic Psalter*, which in the old collections and even in the Councils are used to designate the Old Testament Book of 150 psalms, as also the opinion of many Fathers and Doctors who held that absolutely all the psalms of the Psalter were to be attributed to David alone, are of such force that we have to consider David as the sole author of the entire Psalter.

Answer: In the negative.

2: Whether, from the agreement of the Hebrew text with the Alexandrian Greek text and with other old versions, we can rightly conclude that the titles prefixed to the psalms in the Hebrew text are of older date than the aforesaid LXX version, and that consequently they are due, if not directly to the authors of the psalms, at least to very ancient Jewish tradition.

Answer: In the affirmative.

3. Whether the aforesaid titles, witnesses to the Jewish tradition, can be prudently called in question except when there is no solid reason against their genuine character.

Answer: In the negative.

4. Whether, considering the not infrequent testimonies in the Bible to David's natural skill, a skill further illumined by the special gift of the Holy Spirit, for the composition of religious odes; whether, considering too, the arrangement drawn up by him for the liturgical chanting of the psalms; the attributions also, both in the Old Testament and the New, of psalms to him, as also in the actual inscriptions anciently affixed to the psalms; whether, considering, moreover, the common opinion of the Jews, and of the Fathers and Doctors of the Church, it can be prudently denied that David was the principal author of the odes contained in the Psalter. Whether, on the other hand, it can be maintained that only a few of these odes are to be attributed to the Royal Psalmist.

Answer: In the negative to both questions.

5: Whether we can in particular deny the Davidic origin of the psalms which, in both the Old and New Testaments, are expressly cited under David's name, especially such as Psalm 2, *Why have the Gentiles raged*; Psalm 15 [16],

*Preserve me, O Lord*; Psalm 17 [18], *I will love Thee, O Lord, my strength*; Psalm 31 [32], *Blessed are they whose iniquities are forgiven*; Psalm 68 [69], *Save me, O God*; Psalm 109 [110], *The Lord said to my Lord*.

Answer: In the negative.

6. Whether we can admit the view held by some, namely, that certain psalms, whether by David or by other authors, have, for liturgical or musical reasons, or through the carelessness of copyists, or for other unexplained reasons, been divided or even welded together. Further, whether we can hold that some psalms, e.g., the *Miserere*, in order to be better adapted to historical circumstances or Jewish festivals, have been slightly remolded or modified, either by the removal or addition of one or two verses, without detriment to the inspiration of the whole sacred text.

Answer: In the affirmative to both questions.

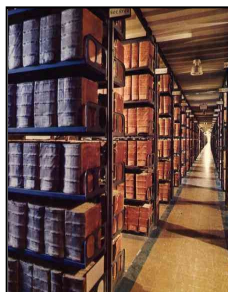
7. Whether we can maintain with any real probability the opinion of those recent writers who, basing their views only upon internal grounds or upon an unsound interpretation of the sacred text, strive to demonstrate that not a few psalms were composed after the date of Esdras and Nehemias, nay, even in the Machabean age.

Answer: In the negative.

8. Whether, judging by the repeated testimonies of the Books of the New Testament, the unanimous consent of the Fathers, in agreement, too, with Jewish writers, we must hold that some psalms are to be recognized as prophetic and Messianic, i.e., as foretelling the coming of a future Redeemer, His kingdom, His priesthood, His passion, death, and resurrection. And whether we must in consequence, reject the opinion of those who, perverting the prophetic and Messianic character of the psalms, limit these oracles, concerning Christ, to mere predictions of the future lot of the chosen people.

Answer: In the affirmative to both questions.

May 1, 1910."



Luke 2:1-7 states: "In those days a decree went out from Caesar Augustus that all the world should be enrolled. This was the first enrollment, when Quirinius was governor of Syria. And all went to be enrolled, each to his own city. And Joseph also went up from Galilee, from the city of Nazareth, to Judea, to the city of David, which is called Bethlehem, because he was of the house and lineage of David, to be enrolled with Mary, his betrothed, who was with child. And while they were there, the time came for her to be delivered. And she gave birth to her first-born son and wrapped Him in swaddling clothes, and laid Him in a manger, because there was no place for them in the inn."

The Lukan pericope on the Savior's birth gives the political situation, the Messianic claim tied to Bethlehem, and the modest circumstances (cf. T. Longman III and D. Garland, gen. eds., *The Expositor's Bible Commentary, Revised Edition* 10:74-77). Some doubt the historicity of the census. Five main **objections** and proposed solutions (based upon D. Bock, *Baker Exegetical Commentary on the New Testament: Luke 1:1—9:50*, pp. 201-210, 903-909) are below.

**1. There is no known general, empire-wide census in the time of Caesar Augustus.**

Solution: Luke 2:1's "decree" (Gk., *dogma*) may point not to one census, but many, over a period of time and at different places. The extra-biblical records bear out censuses and tax assessments linked to Caesar Augustus (cf. Tacitus, *Annals* 1.11, 31, 33; and Dio Cassius, *Roman History* 53.30.2). A general census may have had several components.

**2. St. Joseph would not have been required to go to Bethlehem for a Roman census.**

Solution: The Roman authorities may have allowed their event to be conducted via local custom. Thus, in Jewish culture, this was an ancestral registration. Rome had already permitted other Jewish practices such as tax exemptions every seven years, and the sabbath observance (cf. Josephus, *Antiquities* 14.10.6 and 14.10.20).

**3. There would not have been a census in Palestine at the time of Herod the Great.**

Solution: Herod had great authority during his reign. Nonetheless, it was still possible for an imperial representative to register the citizens of the Roman Empire under a Herodian rule (cf. Tacitus, *Annals* 2.42 and 6.41).

**4. The Jewish historian Josephus writes about a census of Quirinius only in A.D. 6; an innovation that caused an uprising, and hence worthy of mention in Acts 5:37 (cf. *Antiquities* 18:1.1). Josephus is silent on an alleged earlier census in Luke 2:1.**

Solution: The census in Luke 2:1 may not have been deemed necessary to mention by Josephus. On the other hand, Acts 5:37's census was recounted because of its palpable revolt; likely from a perceived imposition of Roman sovereignty, which was tolerated by the unpopular figurehead Archelaus.

**5. Quirinius could not have been a governor of a census during the time of the Lord's birth; Quirinius is unmentioned in records of governors in that era (cf. Tacitus, *Annals* 3.48 and Josephus, *Antiquities* 17.13.5).**

Solution: The expression behind Luke 2:2's "governor" (Gk., *hēgemoneuontos*) may have a looser meaning of "administrator." Thus, the reigns of Saturninus (9-6 B.C.) and Varus (7 B.C.-A.D. 4) as legates in Syria, during their transition overlap, could have been assisted by Quirinius acting in some leadership task during the census enrollment. This possibility takes account of the secular records and meshes with Luke 2:1-2. Quirinius, later, was a legate in Syria A.D. 6-9, and involved with another census; that of Acts 5:37 (cf. G. Archer, *Encyclopedia of Bible Difficulties*, pp. 365-366; C. Blomberg, *Jesus and the Gospels*, p. 222).

More information may be found in S. Hahn and C. Mitch, *Ignatius Catholic Study Bible: New Testament*, pp. 108-109; H. Hoehner, *Chronological Aspects of the Life of Christ*, pp. 13-23; C. Lapse, *Commentary on the Gospels: Luke*, pp. 227-248; and R. Stein, *Jesus the Messiah*, pp. 68-69.



### The River Jordan

“It was the biblical river above all others — the Holy Scripture speaks of it more than two hundred times — that Jordan which had shared in so much of Jerusalem’s history and which was still to share in Christ’s,” says Henri-Daniel Rops (*Daily Life in the Time of Jesus*, p. 11). The River Jordan has received stanzas in hymns, been the subject of paintings, and remains a cherished destination of pilgrims to the Holy Land. This renowned body of water holds a special role within God’s Word.

The “Jordan” (Hebrew *yardēn* and Greek *Iordánēs*) is regarded as the “largest and most important river in Palestine” (D. Freedman, et al., *Eerdmans Dictionary of the Bible*, p. 732). Consider some of the unforgettable events from Sacred History which include the Old Testament and the Jordan:

- Lot chose its plains (Gen 13:10-11).
- Israel’s crossing (Josh 3:14-17).
- Elijah and Elisha parting its waters (2 Ki 2:6-14).
- Naaman healed of leprosy from a washing there (2 Ki 5:9-14).
- Elisha’s retrieval of a lost axe head from the Jordan (2 Ki 6:1-7).

Proceeding to Sacred History within the New Testament, one may highlight:

- John the Baptizer’s ministry was based at the Jordan (Mt 3:1-6).
  - Christ Jesus’ public life was launched from there (Mk 1:9-15).
  - The Savior’s first disciples were called from the Jordan (Jn 1:19-51).
- Divine Providence is evident in these key episodes connected to this river (cf. L. Berrett, *Discovering the World of the Bible*, pp. 275-277).



The Jordan River has four sources for its waters. They come mainly from the slopes of Mount Hermon, which is about 9,232 feet above sea level. The Hasbani flows from the western slope. The Baniyas from the southwest. The Liddani comes from Dan. The Bareight from the northwest. The sources join about 5 miles south of Dan, then move as a lone stream about 10 miles into Lake Huleh, 220 feet above sea level. Around 10 miles south of the Huleh region, the Jordan River runs into the Sea of Galilee. The Jordan then goes southbound, descending to the surface of the Dead Sea and dropping to nearly 1,308 feet below sea level. From the Sea of Galilee to the Dead Sea, it is about a straight line of 65 miles. The River, overall, flows in a sinuous route via a bed of nearly 200 miles (cf. H. Vos, *Beginnings in Bible Geography*, pp. 30-32).

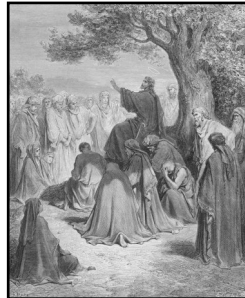
Situated to the Jordan (which varies in depth), empty mountain ranges sit to the west in Samaria and Bethel, and to the east in the Gilead. The River was a boundary for Canaan (cf. J. Packer, et al., *Nelson’s Illustrated Encyclopedia of Bible Facts*, p. 189).

Dr. Wolfgang Pax writes: “The Jordan is a very special river. It twists and turns as it winds its way through the deepest valley on earth. In spite of its ample waters, the river had no economic significance in antiquity; but neither was it a great natural barrier, hardly interfering with passing traffic. Especially in summertime it can be forded quite easily. But from a religious point of view it holds a unique position” (*In the Footsteps of Jesus*, p. 78).

A tome on Christian asceticism states: "Nothing is sweeter and more precious than the name of Jesus. Even if the things pertaining to it were repeated over and over a thousand times, they would not be tiresome to the man who understands, for the holy name will always yield new meanings" (Adolph Kestens, *Spiritual Guidance* 1:400). This wise counsel is one incentive to survey the names and the titles for the Second Person of the Blessed Trinity recorded in the New Testament.

This column will be limited to the main designations found in the Synoptic Gospels of Ss. Matthew, Mark, and Luke (cf. H. Lockyer, *All the Divine Names and Titles in the Bible*, pp. 93-104). One reference will be given for each appellation, which often have multiple occurrences in the Gospels:

"my beloved Son" (Mt 3:17)  
"bridegroom" (Mk 2:19)  
"the carpenter's son" (Mt 13:55)  
"the child Jesus" (Lk 2:27)  
"Christ" (Mt 1:16)  
"Christ the Lord" (Lk 2:11)  
"the Christ" (Mk 12:35)  
"the Christ of God" (Lk 9:20)  
"the Christ of God, His Chosen One" (Lk 23:35)  
"the Christ, the King of Israel" (Mk 15:32)  
"the Christ, the Son of the Blessed" (Mk 14:61)  
"the Christ, the Son of the living God" (Mt 16:16)  
"the consolation of Israel" (Lk 2:25)  
"Emmanuel" (Mt 1:23)  
"first-born son" (Lk 2:7)  
"the Holy One of God" (Mk 1:24)  
"horn of salvation" (Lk 1:69)  
"Jesus" (Mt 1:16)  
"Jesus Christ" (Mk 1:1)  
"Jesus the Galilean" (Mt 26:69)



"Jesus the King of the Jews" (Mt 27:37)  
"Jesus of Nazareth" (Mk 1:24)  
"Jesus, Master" (Lk 17:13)  
"Jesus, Son of David" (Mk 10:47)  
"Jesus, Son of the Most High God" (Mk 5:7)  
"Joseph's son" (Lk 4:22)  
"king" (Mt 21:5)  
"King of Israel" (Mt 27:42)  
"King of the Jews" (Mk 15:18)  
"the King who comes in the name of the Lord" (Lk 19:38)  
"Lord" (Mt 8:2)  
"the Lord Jesus" (Mk 16:19)  
"the Lord's Christ" (Lk 2:26)  
"Lord of the harvest" (Mt 9:38)  
"Lord of the sabbath" (Lk 6:5)  
"Lord, Son of David" (Mt 15:22)  
"Master" (Mk 9:5)  
"a Nazarene" (Mt 2:23)  
"the Nazarene, Jesus" (Mk 14:67)  
"a prophet" (Lk 24:19)  
"a great prophet" (Lk 7:16)  
"the prophet Jesus" (Mt 21:11)  
"a ruler" (Mt 2:6)  
"a Savior" (Lk 2:11)  
"my servant" (Mt 12:18)  
"the shepherd" (Mk 14:27)  
"the Son" (Lk 10:22)  
"the son of Abraham" (Mt 1:1)  
"Son of David" (Mt 9:27)  
"Son of Man" (Lk 6:22)  
"son of Mary" (Mk 6:3)  
"Son of the Most High" (Lk 1:32)  
"Son of God" (Mt 4:3)  
"the very stone" (Mk 12:10)  
"Teacher" (Mt 8:19).

Each one of the designations reveal particular truths about the God-man. They aid research, contemplation, and sanctity. Knowing the names and titles helps us to answer the crucial question: "Do you really know Jesus Christ as He appears and reveals Himself in the Gospel?" (M. Crawley-Boevey, *Jesus, King of Love*, p. 115).

## Book Recommendation (out-of-print):

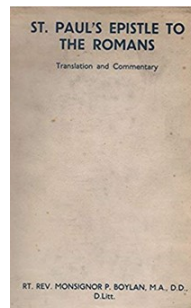
### *St. Paul's Epistle to the Romans: Translation and Commentary*

Patrick Boylan. *St. Paul's Epistle to the Romans: Translation and Commentary*. Dublin: M.H. Gill and Son, 1947, 306 pages.

Rt. Rev. Msgr. Boylan was a teacher of distinction within Biblical scholarship in the English-speaking world during the last century. A consultor to the early Pontifical Biblical Commission, as well as professor of various languages and Sacred Scripture, Boylan left behind several timeless commentaries. One among them is *St. Paul's Epistle to the Romans: Translation and Commentary*.

Boylan states in the preface: “This work is intended primarily for students of Theology, but it is hoped that it will be useful to all who are interested in the teaching of St. Paul. In the Commentary no attempt has been made to supply materials for a history of the exegesis of the Epistle to the Romans. The chief purpose of the Commentary is to set forth as clearly as possible the thought of St. Paul.”

The book of Romans is considered by many to be the Apostle Paul's most important, and most difficult, to grasp. Boylan addresses all the requisite subjects to equip one for a proper study. The “Introduction” (pp. vii—xxxii) has subtitles for Date, Place of Composition, Occasion, Purpose, The Church at Rome, Authenticity, Integrity, Summary, and The Text. These topics are followed with a Bibliography, which was current at that time of publication (pp. xxxiii-xxxvii). After the Commentary proper (pp. 1—261), Boylan includes his own Translation of Romans (pp. 265—306). His rendering is readable and accurate; a complement to today's popular translations.



The heart of Boylan's opus is his exegesis. Here is a pair of extracts.

The first snippet is for Romans 1:16: “The Gospel is not a mere set of maxims or formulæ, nor a philosophical system: there is in it a divine power which is experienced in the grace imparted to the believer, and that power produces σωτηρία — the rescuing of men from the death of sin, and the quickening of them unto the life of grace” (p. 10).

The second excerpt overviews Romans 5:12-21: “In verses 1-11 Paul has shown that through Christ we have been reconciled with God, and given a sure hope of eternal life. He now proceeds to show the greatness of Christ's redemptive work by contrasting the restoration made by Christ with the destruction wrought by Adam. The source of man's ruin was one man — the head of the human race: the source of man's restoration is also one Man — Who is the Head of all the redeemed. In verses 12-14 Paul works out the similarities between the deeds of Adam and those of Christ; in verses 15-17 he notes the differences in the nature and outcome of their activities, and in 18-21 he summarizes the details of the parallel Adam — Christ. Throughout, Paul assumes without proof that Adam is the type of Christ. The whole section, 12-21, supplies a further ground for the confidence of the Christian Hope” (pp. 81-82).

The two quotes are typical Boylan: first-class scholarship that illuminates the devotional life. *St. Paul's Epistle to the Romans: Translation and Commentary* is available online, and accessible by using any standard search engine.

## Book Recommendation (in-print):

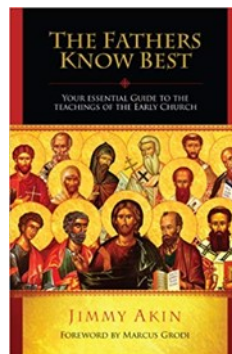
### *The Fathers Know Best: Your Essential Guide to the Teachings of the Early Church*

Jimmy Akin. *The Fathers Know Best: Your Essential Guide to the Teachings of the Early Church*. Foreword by Marcus Grodi. San Diego: Catholic Answers, 2010, 452 pages.

The Church Fathers receive attention in every issue of *Veritas Scripturae*. These theologians, moral teachers, and spiritual guides from the opening eight centuries of the Catholic Church are a boon to the reader of Holy Writ. Every student of the Bible should have some familiarity with this decisive era of the Faith. One introduction to this key epoch is Jimmy Akin's *The Fathers Know Best: Your Essential Guide to the Teachings of the Early Church*.

Akin explains in his first paragraph: "This is a handbook designed to help you learn about the role of the Church Fathers, the world in which they lived, who they were, and what they taught on various subjects. It is divided into two main parts. Part One provides background on the Fathers, and Part Two provides excerpts from their writings, arranged by topic" (p. 15). Akin points out that the work need not be read in its entirety, but may be referenced for whatever is found to be of interest (the reading of the book, cover to cover, is still a worthwhile exercise). Consider both main parts.

Part One serves as a primer to anyone new to Catholic dogma and doctrine, and ecclesiastical history. This section is also a convenient review for those familiar with such fields. After stating some background to the production of the book, Akin introduces some basics for reading and studying the Fathers. This portion (pp. 15-32) lays down the method for his whole work.



Next, one reads about the world of the Fathers. Convenient maps, detailed but not excessively so, provide clarity on the geographical setting at the time (pp. 33, 35, 38, 42, 46, 49). There is an overview of the expanding Catholic Church in Jerusalem, Turkey, Greece, Rome, the Far West, and North Africa (pp. 33-52). Then, brief biographies of varied lengths are listed alphabetically: St. Abercius of Hierapolis through St. Vincent of Lerins (pp. 53-74). Moving ahead, Councils of this era are given a section (pp. 74-77). Further, the many writings of uncertain authorship receive some attention (pp. 78-84). Part One closes with sketches about the active heresies during this age (pp. 84-93).

Part Two is arranged by subject matter. The main headings (with individual subdivisions) are God (pp. 97-142), Creation (pp. 143-158), The Sources of Faith (pp. 159-174), The Church and the Pope (pp. 175-224), Morality (pp. 225-255), Sacraments and Worship (pp. 256-336), Mary, the Saints, the Miraculous (pp. 337-371), and the Last Things (pp. 372-418).

Three appendix-type chapters end the book: Translations Used, Documents Used, and a Scripture Index. Each will be welcomed by the researcher.

The rear cover of Akin's book states: "It flings open the doors of the crucial but little-known age covering the birth of Christianity and the triumphant march of the gospel throughout the ancient world." A knowledge of this period will aid the explanation and defense of the inerrancy of Scripture. *The Fathers Know Best: Your Essential Guide to the Teachings of the Early Church* is an interesting and useful resource.

**A.M.D.G.**

**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).

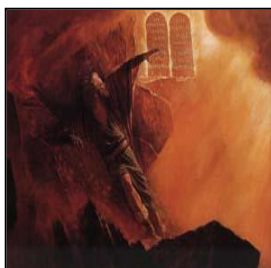
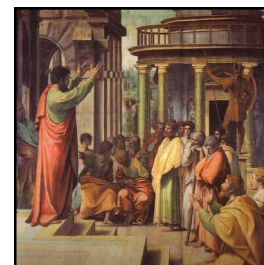
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The St. Jerome Biblical Guild is an educational apostolate that explains and defends Sacred Scripture via Tradition and the Magisterium of the Catholic Church. The apostolate takes its name from St. Jerome, "The Father of Biblical Studies," and labors by God's grace to accomplish the following: (1) explain the various Bible study tools and academic resources; for individual research or study 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) defend 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. As well, the Guild 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).

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Mr. Salvatore J. Ciresi, founder and director of the St. Jerome Biblical Guild, served two tours in the U.S. Marine Corps and is now employed 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 faculty. His other ecclesiastical activities include past co-host of 'Cross Talk,' a Catholic radio program in Virginia; a contributor on behalf of the Arlington Diocese to the 2005 revision to the *National Catechetical Directory*; a former board member for a private Catholic school; a past columnist for the *Arlington Catholic Herald*; and a contributor to *The Latin Mass: The Journal of Catholic Culture and Tradition*. Mr. Ciresi resides with his wife and children in Virginia.



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