



CATHOLIC BISHOPS CONFERENCE of Papua New Guinea and Solomon Islands

COMMISSION ON DOCTRINE, MARRIAGE & LAW

30 Jul. 2020
DML20-2 On Biblical Formation

The 2nd Sunday of August is Bible Sunday while the whole month of August is celebrated as Bible month in Papua New Guinea and the Solomon Island. After celebrating Catechetical Month in July, it is right and proper for us to celebrate Bible Month since the Bible is the first book of catechesis and the very source of evangelization. As Pope Francis says, "All evangelization is based on the word of God, listened to, meditated upon, lived, celebrated and witnessed to ... Consequently, we need to be constantly trained in hearing the word" (EG 174). "It is essential that the revealed word radically enrich our catechesis and all our efforts to pass on the faith. Evangelization demands familiarity with God's word, which calls for dioceses, parishes and Catholic associations to provide for a serious ongoing study of the Bible, while encouraging its prayerful individual and communal reading" (EG 175).

The Dogmatic Constitution on Divine Revelation (DEI VERBUM) is the decree of Vatican II that provided the basis for a true and genuine biblical renewal in the Church. This Conciliar document became also the Magna Carta of the Biblical Apostolate in our present times.

Following are some of the teachings from Dei Verbum:

1. This present Council wishes to set forth authentic doctrine on divine revelation and how it is handed on, so that by hearing the message of salvation the whole world may believe, by believing it may hope, and by hoping it may love (DV 1)
2. In His goodness and wisdom God chose to reveal Himself and to make known to us the hidden purpose of His will by which through Christ, the Word made flesh, man might in the Holy Spirit have access to the Father and come to share in the divine nature. Through this revelation, therefore, the invisible God out of the abundance of His love speaks to men as friends and lives among them, so that He may invite and take them into fellowship with Himself. (DV 2)
3. "The obedience of faith is to be given to God who reveals, an obedience by which man commits his whole self freely to God, offering the full submission of intellect and will to God who reveals", and freely assenting to the truth revealed by Him. To make this act of faith, the grace of God and the interior help of the Holy Spirit must precede and assist, moving the heart and turning it to God, opening the eyes of the mind and giving "joy and ease to everyone in assenting to the truth and believing it" (DV 5)

4. The Church does not draw her certainty about all revealed truths from the Holy Scriptures alone. The task of giving an authentic interpretation of the Word of God, whether in its written form or in the form of Tradition, has been entrusted to the living teaching office of the Church alone ... In the supremely wise arrangement of God, sacred tradition, sacred Scripture and the Magisterium of the Church are so connected and associated that one of them cannot stand without the others. (DV 10)
5. The divinely revealed realities, which are contained and presented in the text of sacred Scripture, have been written down under the inspiration of the Holy Spirit ... They have God as their author, and have been handed on as such to the Church herself ... thus "all Scripture is inspired by God, and profitable for teaching, for reproof, for correction and for training in righteousness, so that the man of God may be complete, equipped for every good work" (2 Tim. 3:16-17)
6. Since God speaks in sacred Scripture through men in human fashion, the interpreter of sacred Scripture, in order to see clearly what God wanted to communicate to us, should carefully investigate what meaning the sacred writers really intended, and what God wanted to manifest by means of their words. To search out the intention of the sacred writers, attention should be given, among other things, to "literary norms." (DV 12)
7. But, since holy Scripture must be read and interpreted in the same spirit in which it was written, no less serious attention must be given to the content and unity of the whole Scripture if the meaning of the sacred texts is to be correctly worked out. The living tradition of the whole Church must be taken into account along with the harmony which exists between elements of the faith. (DV 12)
8. Like the Christian religion itself, all the preaching of the Church must be nourished and regulated by sacred Scripture. For in the sacred books, the Father who is in heaven meets His children with great love and speaks with them; and the force and power in the word of God is so great that it stands as the support and energy of the Church, the strength of faith for her sons, the food of the soul, the pure and everlasting source of spiritual life. (DV 21)
9. Easy access to sacred Scripture should be provided for all the Christian faithful ... But since the Word of God should be accessible at all times, the Church by her authority and with maternal concern sees to it that suitable and correct translations are made into different languages, especially from the original texts of the sacred books.
10. Therefore, all the clergy must hold fast to the sacred Scriptures through diligent sacred reading and careful study, especially the priests of Christ and others, such as deacons and catechists who are legitimately active in the ministry of the Word. This is to be done so that none of them will become "an empty preacher of the word of God outwardly, who is not a listener to it inwardly" (DV 25)

A handwritten signature in black ink, reading "R. C. Santos". The signature is written in a cursive style with a large, looped initial "R" and a distinct "S" at the end.

+Rolando C. Santos, CM
Bishop Deputy on Doctrine, Marriage & Law