

Catholic Church Documents related to Biblical Studies

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Documents from Recent Ecumenical Councils:

- **SECOND VATICAN COUNCIL: *DEI VERBUM*** ("Dogmatic Constitution on Divine Revelation" - November 18, 1965)
 - [English translation](#) from the Vatican website; other copies in English also at [CIN](#)
 - [Spanish translation](#) and [several other languages](#) also available from the Vatican website
 - See also my [Outline of *Dei Verbum*](#), as compared to the biblical section of the *Catechism of the Catholic Church*
- **First Vatican Council: *Dei Filius*** ("Dogmatic Constitution on the Catholic Faith" - April 24, 1870)
 - Session III, see esp. Chapter II - "On Revelation"; Chapter III - "On Faith"; Canon II - "On Revelation"; and Canon III - "On Faith"
- **Council of Trent** (ed. J. Waterworth, 1848; another copy online at [EWTN Library](#)):
 - [Session IV, First Decree](#) ("Concerning the Canonical Scriptures" - April 8, 1546)
 - [Session IV, Second Decree](#) ("Concerning the Edition and Use of the Sacred Books" - April 8, 1546)
 - [Session V, Second Decree](#) ("Concerning Reform" - June 17, 1546)

Catechism of the Catholic Church (2nd edition; October 11, 1992 - from the Vatican website):

- **Part One:** The Profession of Faith; **Section One:** "I Believe" - "We Believe"; **Chapter Two:** God Comes to Meet Man
 - Article 1 (par. 51-73): ["The Revelation of God"](#)
 - Article 2 (par. 74-100): ["The Transmission of Divine Revelation"](#)
 - Article 3 (par. 101-141) ["Sacred Scripture"](#)
 - [Spanish translation](#) and [several other languages](#) also available from the Vatican website
 - [Article 1](#); [Article 2](#); [Article 3](#) also available in English at the ChristusRex website

Documents of the Pontifical Biblical Commission:

- **"The Interpretation of the Bible in the Church"** (April 23, 1993) - **one large file, or several smaller files for faster download**
 - Published in [Origins](#) 23.29 (Jan. 6, 1994) 497-524; another online copy available at the [EWTN Library](#)
 - See also ["Interpreting the Bible: Three Views"](#) - three analyses of this PBC document, from *First Things* Magazine
- **"Instruction on the Historical Truth of the Gospels"** (a.k.a. "*Sancta Mater Ecclesia*"; April 21, 1964)
 - See also J. Fitzmyer, ["The Biblical Commission's Instruction on the Historical Truth of the Gospels,"](#) *TS* 25 (1964) 386-408
 - A different English translation is also available in *CBQ* 26 (1964) 299-312.
- **All documents issued by the PBC** - listed in reverse chronological order, from the Vatican Website
 - See esp. ["The Jewish People and Their Sacred Scriptures in the Christian Bible"](#) (May 24, 2001)
 - See also Cardinal Joseph Ratzinger: ["On the Relationship between the Magisterium and Exegetes"](#) (May 10, 2003) - an address presented "On the 100th Anniversary of the Pontifical Biblical Commission"; another copy at [EWTN Library](#)

Papal Documents (most available from the Vatican Website):

- **Pope Leo XIII:**
 - Encyclical [Providentissimus Deus](#) ("On the Study of Holy Scripture" - November 18, 1893)
 - Apostolic Letter *Vigilantiae Studii* ("Instituting a Pontifical Commission for Biblical Studies" - October 30, 1902)
- **Pope Pius X:**

- Apostolic Letter *Quoniam in re biblica* ("On the Study of Scripture in Seminaries" - March 27, 1906)
- Encyclical [*Pascendi Dominici Gregis*](#) ("On the Doctrines of the Modernists" - September 8, 1907) - another copy at [CIN](#)
- Apostolic Letter [*Praestantia Scripturae Sacrae*](#) ("On the Decisions of the Biblical Commission" - November 18, 1907 - from EWTN Library)
- **Pope Benedict XV:**
 - Encyclical [*Spiritus Paraclitus*](#) ("On St. Jerome" - September 15, 1920)
- **Pope Pius XI:**
 - Apostolic Letter *Bibliorum Scientiam* ("On Academic Standards for Teachers of Scripture" - April 27, 1924)
- **Pope Pius XII:**
 - Encyclical [*DIVINO AFFLANTE SPIRITU*](#) ("On the Most Opportune Way to Promote Biblical Studies" - September 30, 1943) - another copy from [CIN](#)
 - Encyclical [*Humani Generis*](#) ("On Certain False Opinions Threatening to Undermine the Foundations of Catholic Doctrine" - August 12, 1950) - see esp. paragraphs 21-25 & 35-39
- **Pope Paul VI:**
 - Apostolic Letter *Sedula Cura* ("On New Laws Regulating the Pontifical Biblical Commission - June 27, 1971)
 - [Address to the Members of the Pontifical Biblical Commission](#): "On the Ecclesial Role of Biblical Studies" (March 14, 1974) - *in French only*
- **Pope John Paul II:**
 - [Apostolic Constitution *Scripturarum Thesaurus*](#): "Promulgating the Neo-Vulgate Edition of the Holy Bible" (April 25, 1979) - Latin text from the Vatican Website; [English Translation](#) at EWTN Library
 - [Address to the Members of the Pontifical Biblical Commission](#): "On the Biblical Sciences and the Teaching Office of the Church" (April 26, 1979) - *original French text*; Italian translation also available on the Vatican Website
 - Address Commemorating the 25th Anniversary of *Dei Verbum* (Dec. 14, 1990)
 - Address to the Members of the Pontifical Biblical Commission: "On the Nature of Catholic Interpretation of the Bible" (April 11, 1991)
 - [Address on the Interpretation of the Bible in the Church](#) (April 23, 1993) - *in Italian only*
 - [Address to the Pontifical Academy of Sciences](#): "Truth Cannot Contradict Truth" (October 22, 1996) - from the New Advent website
 - [Address to the Members of the Pontifical Biblical Commission](#): "On the Role of the Old Testament for Knowing Jesus" (April 11, 1997) - Italian text and Portuguese translation from Vatican website; [English translation](#) at EWTN Library
 - [Address to a Conference on Biblical Language and Media](#) (Sept. 28, 1998) - brief welcoming address
 - [Address to the Members of the Pontifical Biblical Commission](#) (April 29, 2003) - brief welcoming address
 - [Address to the Members of the Pontifical Biblical Commission](#) (April 20, 2004) - brief welcoming address
- **Pope Benedict XVI:**
 - [Address to the Participants in the International Congress Organized to Commemorate the 40th Anniversary of the Dogmatic Constitution on Divine Revelation "Dei Verbum"](#) (Sept. 16, 2005) - brief welcoming address
 - [Weekly Angelus Message](#) (Nov. 6, 2005) - brief comments focusing on Dei Verbum and the Sacred Scriptures
 - [Address to the Members of the Pontifical Biblical Commission](#) (April 27, 2006) - brief welcoming address
 - [General Audience](#) (Nov. 7, 2007) - focusing on fourth-century biblical scholar St. Jerome (part 1)
 - [General Audience](#) (Nov. 14, 2007) - focusing on fourth-century biblical scholar St. Jerome (part 2)

Neo-Vulgate Bible:

- [Nova Vulgata Bibliorum Sacrorum Editio](#) - entire Latin text, from the Vatican website - another copy at [Domus Ecclesiae](#)

Other Biblically-Related Writings:

- ["The Word of God in the Life and Mission of the Church"](#) - the "Instrumentum Laboris" of the XII Ordinary General Assembly of the Synod of Bishops (meeting in Rome on Oct. 5-26, 2008)
- [Liturgiam authenticam](#) (Fifth Instruction "For the Right Implementation of the Constitution on the Sacred Liturgy of the Second Vatican Council"); from the Congregation for Divine Worship and the Discipline of the Sacraments (March 28, 2001)

- [Latin Text](#); [English Translation](#); [Vatican Press Release](#)
- Responses from the Catholic Biblical Association of America: [Letter to the U.S. Bishops](#); [Presentation by Fr. Richard Clifford, S.J.](#)
- [Biblical Fundamentalism: What Every Catholic Should Know](#) - a short book by biblical scholar Ronald Witherup, S.S. (Liturgical Press, 2001)
- ["The Fundamentalist Challenge"](#) - a four-page flyer, by biblical scholar Raymond E. Brown, S.S. (May 1990, Catholic Update series)
- ["Toward Your Happiness: Catholicism and Fundamentalism: A Contrast"](#) - A Pastoral Letter to Catholics in Mississippi and Alabama (June 29, 1989)
- ["A Pastoral Statement for Catholics on Biblical Fundamentalism"](#) - from the U.S. bishops' Ad Hoc Committee on Biblical Fundamentalism (Washington: USCCB, 1987)
- ["The Proclamation of the Birth of Christ"](#) - a.k.a. the Christmas Proclamation; published by the USCCB; here is my own comparative analysis of Old and New Translations

Published Collections of Church Documents (some out-of-print by now, but still available in good libraries):

- **Best Recent Collection:** Béchard, S.J., Dean P., ed. [The Scripture Documents: An Anthology of Official Catholic Teachings](#). Collegeville, MN: The Liturgical Press, 2002.
- **Another Good Edition:** Lysik, D., ed. *The Bible Documents. A Parish Resource*. Chicago: Liturgy Training Publications, 2001.
- **Excellent Survey Article:** Raymond E. Brown, S.S., and Thomas Aquinas Collins, O.P., "Church Pronouncements," in: *The New Jerome Biblical Commentary* (Englewood Cliffs, NJ: Prentice Hall, 1990) 1166-74.
- Denzinger, Heinrich, and Adolf Schönmetzer. *Enchiridion symbolorum definitionum et declarationum de rebus fidei et morum*. 37th edition. Freiburg, Basel, Rome & Vienna: Herder, 1991.
- Megivern, James J. *Official Catholic Teachings: Biblical Interpretation*. Wilmington, NC: Consortium Books, 1978.
- *Rome and the Study of Scripture: A collection of papal enactments on the study of Holy Scripture together with the decision of the Biblical Commission*. 7th edition. St. Meinrad, IN: 1962.
- *Enchiridion Biblicum: documenta ecclesiastica Sacram Scripturam spectantia*. 4th edition. Naples & Rome, 1961.
- Most of the above documents are also on a CD, "[Welcome to the Catholic Church](#)," by [Harmony Media, Inc.](#) <http://www.harmonymedia.com/cdrom/welcome/welcome.htm>