

DEI VERBUM Dogmatic Constitution on Divine Revelation (Vatican II, 1965)

An orientation and quick review by way of questions and answers.

By Dennis Hamm, S.J., Professor emeritus of theology, Creighton University

Q. Why should I take time to study this church document?

At the heart of our Christian faith is the conviction that God has revealed Godself to human creatures, in the creation itself, but especially in the humanity of Jesus, understood as the eternal Son of God made flesh, and in the biblical testimony of sages, poets, historians and prophets and apostolic witnesses. This document is the most recent formal expression of the Christian community's understanding of this revelation. We believe in a revealing God, and this is how we have put that core part of our faith into words for our own time.

Q. Can't I find what I need to know about revelation from the *Catechism of the Catholic Church*?

The *Catechism* does a great job of summarizing the teaching of *Dei Verbum* within its account of the long tradition of the Church, especially in Part I, "The Profession of the Faith." It also integrates the teaching of *Dei Verbum* throughout the whole of the *Catechism*, citing or paraphrasing *DV* some 77 times. So one can pick up a lot of the this document's teaching by consulting the *Catechism* over the years. But the *Catechism* runs some 2865 paragraphs, and *DV*, as important as it is, is a relatively short document, running to only 26 numbered paragraphs. So there is a value in studying this document as a whole. It has its own integrity and power. And it has its own fascinating history of development during the four years of the sessions of Vatican II. Knowing the document as a whole, along with its back story and a half-century of responses and developments, enables one to understand any reference to *DV* in its original context.

Q. What elements of the "back story" are worth knowing?

Well, there are prior conciliar teachings that are helpful to know. Then there are some key mid-century documents that were highly influential. Finally, there is the story of the process of developing the document during the four sessions of Vatican II itself. Regarding prior ecumenical councils, remember that before Vatican II, there were only two councils of the Roman Catholic Church since the Renaissance—the Council of Trent (1546-53) and the First Vatican Council (1869-70). Trent did not take up revelation as a topic but established definitively what counted as Sacred Scripture (the canon, or normative list of 46 books for the Old Testament and 23 books for the New Testament), affirmed God as the ultimate "author," gave priority to the Latin Vulgate over the original languages, and unscored the Church as the definitive interpreter of the Bible. Against the Lutheran stress on "scripture alone" as sufficient, from Trent forward the Roman Catholic stressed *tradition* to forestall the errors that could arise

from private interpretation. This gave rise to the relative neglect of Bible study among the laity, and even many of the clergy, for the next four centuries. (I remember growing up thinking that private Bible reading was a Protestant thing and the we Catholics learned what we needed to know about the Bible from the Catechism and “Bible stories” available in other versions than the actual Bible.) And Vatican I affirmed these teachings. But, as we will see, Vatican II recast, renewed, and developed the theme of revolution calling for a robust return to Scripture in the life of the Church. [For much of what follows in these notes, I lean heavily on the fine, brief commentary of Ronald D. Witherup, *The Word of God at Vatican II: Exploring Dei Verbum* (Collegeville, MN: Liturgical Press, 2014).]

Q. And what about the three mid-20th-century documents you mentioned.

Three documents contributed conspicuously to the stream of ideas that found their way into *Dei Verbum*:

- *Providentissimus Deus* (Nov. 18, 1893), by Leo XIII, cautiously encouraged Catholic biblical scholars to take advantage of recent developments in the understanding of ancient Hebrew, Aramaic, Greek, and of the variety of literal forms in the cultural contexts, and also of Palestinian archeology in their translations and interpretations of literature. He also established the Pontifical Biblical Commission to take up special questions regarding the interpretation of Scripture.
- *Divino Afflante Spiritu* (Sept. 30, 1943) by Pope Pius XII, encouraged even more strongly the use of all available cultural and linguistic tools to illuminate and interpret the word of God precisely as words of human beings in their specific times and places.
- *Sancta Mater Ecclesia: An instruction on the Truth of the Gospels*. (April 21, 1964; i.e. about a year and a half before the final session of Vatican II). In other words, towards the end of the process of writing the text of *Dei Verbum*, the Pontifical Biblical Commission issued an important document on the history and tradition within the gospels. This document teaches that the four gospels each contain three different levels of tradition: (1) the oral teaching of Jesus in his public ministry, (2) the post-Easter preaching of the apostles recounting the deeds and words of Jesus, and (3) the written testimony of the four evangelists, who collected, organized, edited, and synthesized these oral and written traditions. This teaching is taken up into paragraph 12 of *Dei Verbum*. So the production of the gospels themselves was a matter of tradition. Jesus preached the kingdom and healed, died and was raised; the apostles remembered and preached about Jesus now understood as risen Lord; and the evangelists gave further narrative interpretations of Jesus’ words and works, he death and resurrection, the post-Easter emergence of the Church.

As we will see those three documents, especially the last two, fed into the final version of *Dei Verbum*.

Q. Is ‘revelation’ simply a synonym for ‘Scripture’ or the Bible?

No. The term revelation, as the fathers of Vatican II understood it, does not only refer to the written words of Scripture. Before we have the *written words* in Hebrew, Aramaic, and Greek, there was God’s *self-revelation* in deeds and spoken words. And first among the divine deeds is original creation itself and its continued developing existence. St. Paul refers to that “natural” revelation in the first chapter of his letter to the Christians in Rome. In the context of those cosmic deeds, we then have the emergence of life, and then the divine initiative of a covenant relationship with the people Abraham and his descendants. That relationship comes to verbal expression in the stories and laws of the Law (the first five books of the Old Testament) and the Prophets, and the rest of the books first called the Writings by the people of Israel. We Christians understand the eternal Word made flesh in Jesus, the Christ, as the fullness of divine revelation. The New Testament writers add further revelation in that they witness to and explain the life, teaching, death, and resurrection, and the emergence of the Church as the fulfillment of the Hebrew Scriptures. So revelation is not simply a collection of books; it is a process initiated by God, including deeds and words, and the further interpretation of those words and deeds in further words—with the Lord Jesus Christ as the major focus before, during, and after his earthly existence.

Q. I notice that most of the documents of Vatican II (nine of the sixteen) are called *decrees*, and three are called *declarations*, but four of them are called *constitutions*, and two of those are *dogmatic constitutions*. Why do the council fathers call *Dei Verbum* a “dogmatic constitution”? What does that label tell us?

You are smart to notice that labeling. Most people hardly notice. Those labels are cues to their relative importance and function. Four of the documents are constitutions (on the Church, on divine revelation, on the liturgy, and on the church in the modern world). These four are called constitutions because they are foundational. Since Pope John XXIII called the council for the purpose of the renewal of the Church, the church is obviously the main subject addressed by this assembly. And before one thinks about renewing the Church, one needs to understand the nature, purpose and structure of the Church. That is why that document is called a dogmatic constitution. And before one addresses the question of how the church relates to the modern world, one needs to clarify precisely the source and content what the Church has to communicate to the world. So divine revelation becomes the other dogmatic constitution among the sixteen documents. Once one realizes how foundational are the four constitutions, it becomes clear that the nine decrees are a spelling out of the practical implications of those four foundational constitutions, The nine decrees and the three declarations are applications of

the constitutions to key areas of the life and mission of the church, its worship and its relationship to the world: communications, ecumenism, eastern church, bishops, priestly formations, religious life, laity, the life and ministry of priests, missions, education, relations with non-Christians, and religious freedom. Sorting out the relationships of the four constitutions to the twelve other documents brings home the importance of learning well the dogmatic constitution on divine revelation. We Catholics claim we have been “taught by God”—by, creation, but God’s covenant with Israel, and finally through the person and teaching of Jesus Christ and the illumination and direction of the Holy Spirit.

Q. What do I need to know about the actual production of the document during the sessions of Vatican II? What is the “back story” of the discussions and the writing?

Well, the details about the major actors, the procedures, the high points of the public discussions are fascinating and they run the length of the four years. For the details, you need to go to a book like that of John O’Malley, S.J., *What Happened at Vatican II* (Harvard University Press, 2008). But we can take a moment here to note a few things about the persons, drafts, and procedures.

As always in the convocation of major church meetings like synods and councils, agendas are created and schemas (“first drafts”) are composed to give the assembled bishops as a starting point. In the case of the schema that eventually became *Dei Verbum*, the process began with a dramatic move on the part of Saint John XXIII. When the assembly was presented with the schema called *De Fontibus Revelationis* (On the Sources of Revelation), a number of the council fathers spoke against the draft and called for it to be taken off the table and to be entirely reworked. On one of the *periti* (advisors to the bishops), Joseph Ratzinger, privately objected to negative tone of the document and its lack theological finesse. The response to the initial interventions provoked a “gridlock” in the process. There was neither the two-thirds vote necessary to pass the schema, nor was there the required two-thirds to remove it for redrafting. So Pope John did something he was rarely to do in the course of the council session: he intervened. He announced that it would be sent back for reworking and, to assure balance (and tension), he appointed as co-chairs of the re-write commission two men on opposite ends of the theological spectrum. The first was the head of Holy Office, Cardinal Afredo Ottaviani (1890-1979), who was also head of the Doctrinal Commission that had drafted the first schema! The other was German Cardinal Augustine Bea (1881-1968), head of the Secretariat for Promoting Christian Unity and a seasoned biblical scholar. This commission was able to work out a document more acceptable the council. As suggested earlier, these notes are not the place to get into the fascinating details of the commission’s work and the public exchanges, but a simple comparison of the title and chapter subtitles of the first and final drafts provides insight into the nature and scope of the revisions.

Q. Please spell that out for me.

Here, on the left column, is the outline of the original schema on revelation presented by the preparation committee to the council fathers; on the right, the outline of the final version:

The schema of the first draft <i>De Fontibus Revelationis</i> (On the Sources of Revelation)	Schema of the final document <i>Dei Verbum</i> (The Word of God)
	Prologue (numbered section 1)
Chap. 1 The Double Sources of Revelation	Chap. 1 Divine Revelation Itself (2-6)
Chap. 2 The Inspiration, Inerrancy, and Literary Form of Scripture	Chap. 2 Transmission of Divine Revelation (7-10)
	Chap. 3 Sacred Scripture: Its Divine inspiration and Interpretation (11-13)
Chap. 3 The Old Testament	Chap. 4 The Old Testament (14-16)
Chap. 4 The New Testament	Chap. 5 The New Testament (17-20)
Chap 5 Holy Scripture in the Church	Chap. 6 Sacred Scripture in the Life of the Church (21-26)

First, notice the *continuity* between the first and the final drafts:

- The topic of both versions is divine revelation
- The three final chapters of both drafts cover the same material—the Old Testament, the New Testament, and the function of Scripture in the Church.

Second, the *differences* in the title and in the initial chapters reflect significant development:

- The change in the title from ‘the *sources* of revelation’ to ‘the word of God’ show that the bishops recognized that the traditional treatment of Scripture and Tradition, which arose in Roman Catholic vs. Protestant debates, had oversimplified matters and failed to recognize that scripture and tradition are symbiotic, i.e., interdependent, and must be discussed as such.
- Since God’s self-disclosure in deeds and words is both prior to the writing of and sustained throughout the writing of Scriptures during the history of the covenant people of God, the council fathers by-pass two-source terminology and use the concept revelation to refer the single ultimate source revelation—God. So they call the first chapter “Divine Revelation Itself.”

- Since the council fathers recognize that divine revelation is an ongoing process entailing both God and humans as authors, they discuss the issues named in the first draft's chapter two's title but treat them in the larger context of their understanding of revelation. They do this not in one but in two chapters, one on the transmission of divine revelation before and after the writing of Biblical texts and the other on the specific issues of inspiration and interpretation. Knowing that the term 'inerrancy' has become associated with a fundamentalist notion that Scripture is inerrant even in matters of science and secular history they omit the term and say rather that Scripture is without error "with respect to truth necessary for salvation."

These issues, as the bishops elaborate them in the final draft, will be explored further in these notes.

Q. Before I hunker down and study the text of *Dei Verbum*, can you give me some of the major ideas that are developed in this document?

We have already covered some of those ideas in discussing (1) *revelation*, (2) the fact that Sacred Tradition and Sacred Scripture are interrelated and have God as their ultimate source, (3) and the contributions of prior councils and (4) Pius XII's *Divino Afflante Spiritu* (1943) and the PBC's instruction "On the Truth of the Gospels" (1964). Those issues are developed in chapter one of *Dei Verbum*, "Divine Revelation Itself." Let's move on to how some of these topics are further elaborated in chapter two, "The Transmission of Divine Revelation" (paragraphs 7-10), where the council fathers distinguish the *what* of divine revelation from the *how* of its transmission. The following bullet points carry what I consider the big ideas of those four numbered paragraphs:

- Both the *reception* of tradition witnessing to the words and deed of God and also the ongoing *interpretation* of that tradition are, together, a process that is inspired by the Holy Spirit.
- The council fathers are content simply to assert that twofold process as divinely inspired. They know that *how* this collaboration between the divine and the human has provoked a long history of discussion entailing at least five ways of explaining how the Holy Spirit inspires: full verbal inspiration, limited verbal inspiration, inspiration of content, inspiration of the human authors, and inspiration of the early faith community. Aware that it was too soon to appear to resolved this mysterious relationship, they prudently remain content to affirm the consensus that the process is animated by the Holy Spirit (see 2 Tim 3:16).
- Tradition is not only a secure *deposit* bearing the whole of the gospel message; it is also alive and promotes insight and growth in the life and understanding of the Church through study, reflection and worship. John XXIII emphasized this when, in his

convocation of the council beginning, he used the now famous Italian word *aggiornamento* (“updating”) to urge “what is needed is that this certain and immutable doctrine, to which the faithful owe obedience, be studied afresh and reformulated in contemporary terms.”

- After 400 years of making too precise a distinction between scripture and tradition and fighting over it and quarreling with Protestants about it (as if scripture could exist without tradition and as if tradition had a life of its own independent of scripture), this council insisted that “tradition and scripture make up a single sacred deposit of the word of God, which is entrusted to the church.” Further, they affirmed, “It is clear . . . that 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” (par. 10).
- The council fathers insist that “this magisterium is not superior to the word of God, but is rather its servant” (par. 10).
- There is a circular, “chicken and egg” relationship here. The tradition of the church formed the canon of Scripture. Yet the canon of Scripture continues to form the church. As the 2008 synod of bishops on the word of God pointed out, and Benedict XVI affirmed, exactly how this circular relationship is to be explained is a matter of unfinished business for the magisterium.

Q. But finally, isn’t all this talk about revelation really about how to read the Bible?

Yes. But to approach that Bible correctly you need to have a sense of what it is that you are reading. That’s why, before the council fathers address the Old Testament and New Testament, they spend chapter three treating more generic issues about this written tradition under the heading of “**Sacred Scripture: Its Divine Inspiration and Its Interpretation**” (pars. 11-13).

Q. Great! What do they say that is new?

Well, as you can tell by the title, the council is now going deeper into a topic already mentioned. What is new is that some of the issues about divine inspiration and its interpretation are now being addressed for the first time by an ecumenical council.

- The first thing they do in chapter three is revisit the topic of divine inspiration. Without espousing any one of the five common theories of explaining the *how* of inspiration, the bishops simply insist that God is truly the “author” (ultimate source of the communication) and, at the same time, the human authors are also true authors, that is, “God chose certain men who, all the while he employed them in this task, made full use of their powers and faculties so that, though he acted in them and by them, it was as true authors that they consigned to writing whatever he wanted written, and not more”

(par. 11). It is a collaborative process somewhat analogous to the mystery of the incarnation, the reality that Christ is truly divine and truly human.

- Realizing that Scripture does not intend to teach science nor history (at least as we understand science and history today), the document takes up the issue of truth and error by asserting that “the books of Scripture, firmly, faithfully and without error, teach that truth which God, for the sake of our salvation, wished to see confided to the sacred scriptures” (par. 11). Notice that the council fathers avoid using the word ‘inerrancy’ as that word is historically tied to the theory that there is no error whatsoever in the Bible. The bishops are careful to say that Scripture is without error with respect to what is necessary for salvation.

Q. OK. If the Bible is the word of God written in human words, what does it mean practically to take seriously the humanness of the words?

Well, let’s take an example. Take a letter written by Paul—the letter to Philemon, say. You could open our Bible to that letter and approach it with the question, What is God saying to me in this letter? Given that we consider that letter, like every other text in the Bible, the word of God, that approach is not unreasonable. But unless you first read it first as an ancient letter written by a leading Christian evangelist and “community organizer,” writing in Greek to an old friend and leader of one of the first Christian communities in what we now call Greece, you won’t really hear what he is saying. We are familiar with the literary form of the letter; we know it is a message written by one party to a designated recipient or group. Regarding letters by Paul, we know that he is always addressing fellow Christians, usually as a group. Since he is writing to a slave owner regarding a slave who has become a Christian, we need to know about what it meant to be a slave in the Roman Empire in the first century AD. When we read someone else’s mail, we recognize that we are out of the loop and have to do some clever guessing to figure out the situation implied by this letter. Since most of us have not studied Greek, we need the help of scholars who read Greek to put the letter into current English, to hear what Paul was saying to this Christian community in the middle of the first century. Aware that the Church has included this letter in the canon of Sacred Scripture and thereby claimed it as the Word of God for us, once we have listened for what Paul was saying *then* to the slave owner Philemon and to the Christian community that meets at his house, then we can ask, How is God speaking through this letter to us *now* as we struggle to live the same faith in the early years of the third Christian millennium? What I have said by way of this example conveys, I hope, what Vatican II says in section 12 of *Dei Verbum*. This is what Catholic biblical scholarship tries to do. This is what good preachers do when they interpret Scripture for a worshipping community. That the word of God should come to us in such human words is what *Dei Verbum* calls a “marvelous condescension” of a loving God, something analogous to the incarnation itself (par. 13).

Q. Now that we are actually talking about the Bible, what you say is easy to understand regarding the Christian writings, but what does *Dei Verbum* say about the Hebrew Bible, which is written before Christ?

That's what chapter four takes up. Three short paragraphs make three important points:

- Despite a perennial temptation (following the heretic Marcion [A.D. 85-165] to dismiss the Old Testament as irrelevant for Christians), *Dei Verbum* re-asserts the understanding of the Church that the Old Testament is the inspired word of God, of permanent value to Christians as well as Jews, and essential a proper understanding of the New Testament. Appropriately, the document quotes Romans 15:4: "For whatever was written in former days was written for our instruction, so that by steadfastness and by the encouragement of the Scriptures we might have hope."
- The Old Testament is to be valued for its own sake as well as for its role in illuminating the New Testament. Besides preparing for and proclaiming in prophecy the coming of Christ and his kingdom, the Old Testament speaks important truths regarding the relationship of God and humanity, and it is a "wonderful treasury of prayers."
- *Dei Verbum* paraphrases a basic principle of St. Augustine (354-430): "The books of the Old Testament, all of them given a place in the preaching of the Gospel, attain and display their full meaning in the New Testament . . . and, in their turn, shed light on it and explain it" (par. 16).

The brief treatment of the Old Testament in *Dei Verbum*, chapter four, will be expanded greatly in the PBC document *The Jewish People and their Sacred Scriptures in the Christian Bible* (2002).

Q. OK. And what does *Dei Verbum* say about the New Testament?

When the council fathers pass from the Old Testament to the New Testament, they make it clear that they are continuing the story of God's revelation, which climaxes in the incarnation, the Word made flesh, and its consequences—the life death and resurrection of Jesus, the outpouring of the Holy Spirit. The writings of the New Testament do not convey abstract truths. Rather, they "Stand as a perpetual and divine witness" to realities that occurred in human history, with the words and deeds of Jesus at the center.

The bishops then underscore the importance of the four Gospels "because they are our principal source for the life and teaching of the incarnate Word, our Savior" (par. 18).

Paragraph 19, which, in the Latin original, begins with the word *Sancta mater Ecclesia* ("Holy mother church"), alludes to the decree of the Pontifical Biblical Commission (1994) of the same name, which taught that the four Gospel teach the history of Jesus' words and

deeds in a process that entails three stages in the transmission of the biblical traditions about Jesus (1) the stage of Jesus' own teaching, (2) the apostles' preaching and oral proclamation, and (3) the period of collecting, sorting, editing, organizing the oral and written traditions about Jesus. Mentioning Paul explicitly, the fathers move on to assert that all of the New Testament writings were inspired by the Holy Spirit. The promised ongoing presence of the risen Jesus and the Holy Spirit assures the truth of these writings.

Q. Where does the rubber hit the road? Did Vatican Council II give us a new role of Scripture in the life of the Church?

It seems that the council fathers knew you would ask that question. We have to admit that during the past four centuries it was almost a mark of the Catholic Church that we were *not* a Bible-reading or Bible-quoting denomination. Clearly, it was time to turn that around, and the bishops devoted the last six chapters to that "so what?" question. What follows are some of the highlights:

- "The church has always venerated the divine scriptures as it has venerated the Body of the Lord, in that it never ceases, above all in the sacred liturgy, to partake of the bread of life and offer it to the faithful from the one table of the word of God and the Body of Christ" (par. 21). Given the experience of most Catholics alive today, that is a stunning statement. We have to admit that this way of viewing Scripture is not what we have seen in practice in our lifetime. Yet that reverence for the Bible has indeed found expression from time to time in the teaching and practice over the centuries. Augustine taught that parallel reverence for both the Eucharistic presence and for the Spirit's presence in the reading of Scripture. That teaching is echoed in another dogmatic constitution, *Lumen Gentium*, 7. In our current liturgical practice of honoring the book of the Gospels, we are beginning to recover that kind of reverence for the word of God.
- *Dei Verbum* also insists that "all the preaching of the church, as indeed the entire Christian religion, should be nourished and ruled by sacred scripture" (par. 21).
- "Access to sacred scripture ought to be widely available to the Christian faithful" (par. 22). The council speaks of the long tradition of making the Bible available through translations, starting with the rendering of the Hebrew Bible into Greek (c. 250 BC) to serve Jews scattered in the Diaspora around the Mediterranean, then into Latin, especially Jerome's version (called the "Vulgate"), and with the rise of modern languages and the invention of moveable type, into most of the tongues of the human family. Given that the Scriptures are the common heritage of all Christians, the council encourages collaboration among the various Christian denominations.

- Paragraph 23 encourages the whole Church to use all of our resources to enable all to come to a more profound understanding of Scripture: the fathers of the early church, the work of professional contemporary scholars, the study of the church's liturgies, and the training of "ministers of God's word."
- Paragraph 24 reminds us that the sacred scriptures are "the very soul of theology" and urges those mandated to teach and ordained to preach to make the Scriptures the primary source of their work.
- Leaning on the powerful words of Augustine (you first have to *listen* to the word of God in order to preach it) and Jerome ("Ignorance of Scripture is ignorance of Christ"), Paragraph 25, underscores the responsibility of everyone—priests, deacons, catechists, *all the faithful*—to immerse themselves in the study of Scripture. Study helps, especially study Bibles with good notes are crucial tools in this process. Obviously, this exhortation signals a cultural shift in Roman Catholicism, which for centuries minimized the place of Bible study for anyone other than those professional trained in biblical studies.

Q. Next year, 2015, will mark the 50th anniversary of the promulgation of *Dei Verbum*. Has it made a difference in the life and ministry of the Church?

Yes, in many ways. Let me touch on a few highlights:

- Hundreds of Catholic men and women—lay, religious, and clerical—have earned advanced degrees in biblical studies.
- Scripture study now plays a larger role in the training of priests.
- Ecumenical and inter-religious (i.e. Jewish and Christian) collaboration in the making of translations has grown rapidly. The membership of the Catholic Biblical Association now numbers Protestants and Jews.
- Publications on Scripture, both scholarly and popular, have increased noticeably over the past 50 years.
- The expanded array of biblical readings in the new lectionaries have increased biblical literacy in the worldwide Catholic church.

Q. You made the point several times that the *Dei Verbum* clarified a number of issues but also left a lot of "loose ends," pending further discussion. Has formal church teaching advanced some of these open questions?

Actually, yes! In the recent commentary on *Dei Verbum*, Father Ronald Witherup, P.S.S., reminded us of seven examples of formal church teaching on revelation that have emerged during the past 49 years, to which can now be added an eighth:

1. "Scripture and Christology," Pontifical Biblical Commission [PBC] (1984)
2. "The Interpretation of the Bible in the Church," PBC (1993). It examines and evaluates the whole spectrum of methods of biblical studies up to that year.
3. *Catechism of the Catholic Church* (2nd ed.) par. 101-141, John Paul II (1997). A convenient summary of the teaching on revelation and Scripture.
4. "The Jewish People and Their Sacred Scriptures in the Christian Bible," PBC (2002).
5. "The Bible and Morality: Biblical Roots of Christian Conduct," PBC (2008).
6. *Verbum Domini*, Benedict XVI (2010), the apostolic exhortation commenting on 2008 the synod bishops on the Word of God. It is a development of the final chapter of *Dei Verbum*.
7. *Evangelii Gaudium*, Pope Francis (2013). This apostolic exhortation following upon the 2012 bishops synod on the New Evangelization. Though not specifically on Sacred Scripture, this document draws upon Scripture throughout and includes a powerful section on the preparation of biblically based homilies.
8. "The Inspiration and Truth of Sacred Scripture," PBC (2014). Benedict XVI had asked the PBC to examine in detail this question.

I would also include the two great pastoral letters of the U.S. Conference of Catholic Bishops—"The Challenge of Peace" (1983) and "Economic Justice for All" (1986). Besides exemplifying a broad process of consultation, both documents make a rich contextual use of the Old and New Testaments.

In Creighton University's four-year celebration of the 50th anniversaries of four sessions of Vatican Council II, the presentations this fall on Creighton's campus will focus on "*Dei Verbum* and its Descendants." The 'descendants' we focus on are "The Interpretation of the Bible in the Church," "The Jewish People and Their Scriptures in the Christian Bible," and *Verbum Domini*.

The three events are:

THE FALL SEMESTER 2014

A series on *Dei Verbum* and its Descendants—*The Interpretation of the Bible in the Church* (PBC, 1993), *The Jewish People and their Sacred Scriptures in the Christian Bible* (PBC, 2001), *Verbum Domini* (the post-synodal exhortation of Benedict XVI, 2010)

September 13, 2014, Saturday morning. 8:30-12:30. Harper Center, Ahmanson Ballroom, Creighton University.

Ronald D. Witherup, PSS, speaks on *Dei Verbum* ('The Word of God') Dogmatic Constitution on Divine Revelation, Vatican II, 18 November 1965. Tentative title: "*Dei Verbum*: Its Roots and its

Legacy.” Two presentations followed by interactive discussions: one at 9 a.m. on the roots and development of *DV*, the other at 10 a.m. on the effects of *DV*, especially *Verbum Domini*.

October 3, 2014, a Friday, 3:00-5:00, Harper Center, Hixon-Lied Auditorium, Creighton University.

Thomas D. Stegman, S.J. “The Meaning of Scripture, Then and Now: *Interpreting the Bible in the Church* (Pontifical Biblical Commission, 1993).”

November 2, 2014, a Sunday. 3:00-5:00. Harper Center, Ahmanson Ballroom, Creighton University.

Amy-Jill Levine and John Clabeaux address *The Jewish People and their Sacred Scriptures in the Christian Bible* (Pontifical Biblical Commission, 2001).