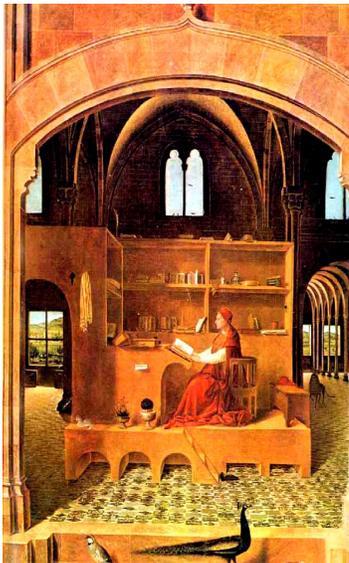


Veritas Scripturae

The Bulletin of the St. Jerome Biblical Guild

A publication that focuses upon the doctrines
of Biblical inspiration and inerrancy —
via Tradition and the Magisterium of the Catholic Church

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



From the Director: Choosing a Bible

The student of Scripture, at some point, will select a Bible for reading and research. English translations, generally speaking, follow one of three approaches: formal equivalence, dynamic equivalence, or the paraphrase. No single translation is perfect; each has strengths and weaknesses. Consider each approach.

The formal translation aims for a word for word (i.e., literal) rendering from the original Biblical languages of Hebrew, Aramaic, and Greek. A formal translation is advantageous for the sake of accuracy. An example of a formal text is the *Revised Standard Version Catholic Edition*.

The dynamic translation aims for a thought for thought (i.e., concepts) rendering. Such a text often adds clarity to an otherwise obscure passage. An example is the *Jerusalem*

Bible, which may be called a second generation text; English via French.

The paraphrase aims for an idiomatic (i.e., freer) rendering that is contemporary and understandable. This approach may provide insights because of its simpler terminology. An example is the *Living Bible: Catholic Edition*.

Bible translators usually encounter some difficulties in translating one language into another. Therefore, securing a variety of copies is helpful for comparing and contrasting verses. Look at Philippians 4:19. The *Revised Standard Version* says: “*And my God will supply every need of yours according to his riches in glory in Christ Jesus.*” The *Jerusalem Bible* has: “*In return my God will fulfill all your needs, in Christ Jesus, as lavishly as only God can.*”

The *Living Bible* reads: “*And it is he who will supply all your needs from his riches in glory, because of what Christ Jesus has done for us.*” All three texts contribute, to some degree, to Biblical scholarship.

Along these lines, here are some practical tips. During the research process, append to your Bible your own notes gleaned from reliable sources. Underline, circle, or highlight key words and phrases (pencil is erasable and neater than pen or marker). Make your Bible a multi-faceted book; a repository of information on all aspects of the Catholic Faith. Be sure to utilize any blank space or pages within your copy. Such steps will build a personal “study edition,” and insure one’s toils are recorded for future reference.

Godspeed,
Salvatore J. Ciresi

www.stjeromebiblicalguild.org

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St. Jerome (343–420) says:

“Read assiduously and learn as much as you can. Let sleep find you holding your Bible, and when your head nods let it be resting on the sacred page” (*Letter* 22.17.2; A.D. 384).

“Constantly read the Bible; in fact, have it always in your hands. Learn what you have got to teach” (*Letter* 52.7.1; A.D. 394).

“Ignorance of the Scriptures is ignorance of Christ” (*Commentary on Isaiah* bk. 18 prologue; A.D. 408–410).

“Love the Bible and wisdom will love you...” (*Letter* 130.20; A.D. 414).

Scripture Memorization & Exegesis: Matthew 5:17-18

“Think not that I have come to abolish the Law and the Prophets; I have come not to abolish them but to fulfil them. For truly, I say to you, till heaven and earth pass away, not an iota, not a dot, will pass from the Law until all is accomplished” (Mt 5:17-18).

These two passages from St. Matthew throw light upon Our Lord’s view of Scripture; i.e., the Old Testament. Consider the background. The Savior’s early public ministry in Galilee (Mt 4:12, 18, 23) leads into Matthew 5:1—7:29; the setting and content of the ‘Sermon on the Mount.’ This oration starts with the beatitudes (Mt 5:3-12), then gives a description of believers as salt and light in the world (Mt 5:13-16). Next, Matthew 5:17-18 — a divine analysis of the Scriptures.

The rich phrase “Law and the Prophets” (*nomon ē tous prophētas*) signifies the entire Old Testament. Similar denotations are “Moses and all the Prophets” (Lk 24:27), and “the Law of Moses and the Prophets and the Psalms” (Lk 24:44). Matthew 5:17-18, we see, endorses God’s word revealed before the Incarnation. This is no surprise: the texts of former days (Heb 1:1) have the promised Messiah as their object. The Old Testament undergirds the Gospel of the New Testament.

This endorsement touches the relationship of Christ’s triple office (Prophet, Priest, King) to the older dispensation. He came to “fulfil” (*plērōsai*) the previous Testament, whereby all is “accomplished” (*genētai*) in accord with God’s salvific

designs. The Son of God’s divine mission was completed perfectly; to the letter (“iota”), and beyond (“dot”). The term *iōta*, transliterated for our English text, corresponds to *yod*; the smallest letter in the Hebrew alphabet. “Dot” (*keraiā*) might refer to the small extension that distinguishes Hebrew letters which look alike.

What is the application today of the Dominical words of Matthew 5:17-18? They motivate us to cherish and defend every utterance of the Old Testament; no less inspired and inerrant than the New. Investigate the crucial string of Matthean “fulfill” episodes, theologically dependent upon the Old Testament: Matthew 1:18-23; 2:13-23; 4:12-16; 8:14-17; 12:15-21; 13:10-35; 21:1-5; 26:47-56; and 27:3-10.



Inerrancy Basics: Inerrancy in the Theological Sphere

The following quotations pertain to the doctrine of Biblical inerrancy. The statements are taken from a variety of books, written for different purposes. The quotations are offered merely to show how inerrancy has been treated by orthodox Catholic writers.

A scholarly tome on Biblical studies: “But the constant and universal teaching of the Church on this point is perfectly clear, and all those who have admitted errors in Scripture have incurred, in the past, the charge of heresy” (A. Robert and A. Tricot, *Guide to the Bible: An Introduction to the Study of Holy Scripture* 1:21).

A popular work on the Bible: “Inerrancy means that the sacred books are totally free from error in all their statements” (P. Taguchi, *The Study*

of Sacred Scripture 26).

A technical treatise on inerrancy: “Since God is the principal author of Holy Scripture, it follows that Scripture can contain absolutely no error of any kind” (W. Most, *Free From All Error: Authorship, Inerrancy, Historicity of Scripture, Church Teaching, and Modern Scripture Scholars* 31).

A dogmatic theology textbook: “Inspiration, and hence inerrancy, do not extend only to matters of faith and of morals, but to everything that was affirmed in the original books, that is, to everything that the sacred author explicitly or implicitly reports as the word of God or makes his own” (A. Tanqueray, *A Manual of Dogmatic Theology* 1:185, italics in original).

An apologetics book: “So the

fact that in the early centuries the Gospels were never questioned by Jew, pagan or heretic, is a better witness to their truth than any other that can be brought forth” (M. Scott, *The Credentials of Christianity* 70).

A catechism: “69. Were the biblical writers protected from saying anything untrue? Yes, the Holy Spirit protected the biblical writers from writing any positive falsehood” (J. Hardon, *The Question and Answer Catholic Catechism* 38, italics in original).

The citations above lay some groundwork for what inerrancy is. Next issue, we will address what inerrancy isn’t. That is, what the doctrine does not require or demand. Such distinctions demonstrate the doctrine’s reasonableness, and counter misrepresentations.

“Since God is the principal author of Holy Scripture, it follows that Scripture can contain absolutely no error of any kind”

(W. Most, *Free From All Error*)

The Church Fathers & Scripture: *The Muratorian Fragment & the Gospels*

We continue to look at the Patristic testimony on Gospel authorship. Consider *The Muratorian Fragment*, which reads in part: “The third book of the gospel: according to Luke. After the ascension of Christ, Luke the physician, whom Paul had taken along with him as a legal expert, wrote [the record] down in his own name in accordance with [Paul’s] opinion. He himself, however, never saw the Lord in the flesh and therefore, as far as he could follow [the course of events], began to tell it from the nativity of John. The fourth Gospel is by John, one of the disciples.”

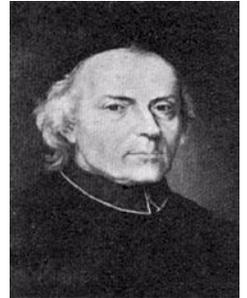
The Muratorian Fragment is named after Fr. Ludovico Antonio Muratori (d. 1750), who discovered and published the fragment in 1740. The text, copied in the Seventh or

Eighth Century, was found in a codex lodged in the Ambrosian Library in Milan, Italy.

Questions remain whether the original was composed in Latin or Greek. The fragment, about 85 lines of poor Latin, opens and closes with a mutilated sentence. The text is considered anonymous because of the lack of definitive evidence. For a date, scholars offer a late Second or early Third Century composition, with Roman provenance. An alternative date is the Fourth Century, with a provenance from Syria or Palestine. The former date seems more likely, which means *The Muratorian Fragment* may be the oldest extant canon list of the New Testament. The list is incomplete (absent Heb, Jas, 1 and 2 Pet. Mt and Mk are implied in the mutilated intro).

The fragment identifies “Luke the physician” as St. Paul’s “legal expert.” This title echoes the Roman provincial administration, and denotes St. Luke is deputized with Pauline apostolic authority. Such a title corroborates Acts 16:10-17; 20:5—21:18; 27:1—28:16; Colossians 4:14; 2 Timothy 4:11; and Philemon 24. We also read of “John, one of the disciples.” This must be the Beloved Apostle (cf. Jn 13:23; 19:26; 20:2; 21:7, 20). Lastly, Tradition is vindicated: the Lukan Gospel is the “third,” the Johanian tome is “fourth.”

Introductions to the fragment are found in F. F. Bruce’s *The Canon of Scripture* 158-169 (which furnished our translation), D. Freedman, et al, *The Anchor Bible Dictionary* IV:928-929, and J. Quasten’s *Patrology* II:207-209.



St. Thomas Aquinas & Revelation: Insights on a Locus Classicus

The Angelic Doctor’s wise remarks on 2 Timothy 3:16-17 are found in C. Baer, trans. and ed., *Commentaries on St. Paul’s Epistles to Timothy, Titus, and Philemon* (South Bend: St. Augustine’s, 2007) 136-137. Thomas, in eleven brief paragraphs, draws from St. Paul the many benefits of Scripture. It is unfortunate that space limitations prevent both pages from Baer being cited; here are some highlights.

Aquinas tells us the Scriptures are “not to be despised for they are profitable” as “the way to salvation.” Such writings have a threefold commendation “by reason of its principle, by reason of its profitable effect, and by reason of its ultimate fruit and success.”

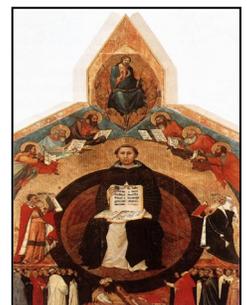
On principle, “it is privileged over all other writings: all others were handed down by human reason, but Sacred Scripture is divine.” The Angelic Doctor here doesn’t shun non-Biblical works, but simply makes the distinction that God “instructs the understanding both immediately through the Sacred Scriptures and mediately through other writings.”

On profitable effect, His word “teaches man to know the truth and persuades him to work justice.” This effect is fourfold: “regarding the speculative reason, to teach the truth and to reprove falsity; regarding the practical reason, to free one from evil and to lead him to the good.”

On ultimate fruit, the Bible

“leads men to perfection. For it does good not in whatever manner, but it perfects.” This is so because Holy Writ prepares the believer for works: “not only for those which are necessary for salvation but also for those which are of supererogation.”

Such extracts indicate how skillfully the Common Doctor combines the theological with the practical. He draws out the doctrinal significance of Scripture, but always with a view to their place in the real world for the faithful. The Biblical inerrantist should follow this same Thomistic method: uphold Scripture’s veracity, and at the same time, show how this teaching has pastoral implications for Catholic life. Let Aquinas be our guide.



The Magisterium Speaks: Vatican I and Revealed Truth

The First Vatican Council (1869-1870), halted while in progress, nonetheless offers an indispensable statement on Divine Revelation: "The complete books of the old and the new Testament with all their parts, as they are listed in the decree of the said Council [Trent] and as they are found in the old Latin Vulgate edition, are to be received as sacred and canonical. These books the Church holds to be sacred and canonical not because she subsequently approved them by her authority after they had been composed by unaided human skill, nor simply because they contain revelation without error, but because, being written under the inspiration of the Holy Spirit, they have God as their author, and were as such committed to the Church" (*Dei Filius* III.2; 1870).

This extract was later quoted verbatim in Pope Leo XIII's *Providentissimus Deus* II.D.3a (1893). Two points stand out from *Dei Filius*.

The books of Holy Writ, with respect to their God-breathed origin, are described as "complete" and "with all their parts." These terms describe inspiration in a manner that theologians call plenary (i.e., the whole of Scripture), and verbal (i.e., the portions of Scripture). This language safeguards both Testaments generally, and the Biblical words specifically. This is to say, it is not enough to claim inspiration for Holy Writ in a broad fashion; one must also attribute inspiration to Scripture's very terminology. This plenary and verbal aspect of inspiration is suggested, often with the same language of *Dei*

Filius, in Pope St. Pius X's *Lamentabili Sane* 11 (1907), Pope Benedict XV's *Spiritus Paraclitus* III.1 (1920), Vatican II's *Dei Verbum* 11 (1965), and the *Catechism of the Catholic Church* 105 (1997).

Alongside the doctrine of inspiration, inerrancy is given attention at this twentieth Ecumenical Council. *Dei Filius* underscores the holy and canonical status of the Biblical writings, and states in passing that such books "contain revelation without error." This nod to inerrancy is easy to overlook; it's mentioned immediately after a rejected and erroneous "subsequently approved" theory of inspiration.

The First Vatican Council is a neglected act of the Solemn Magisterium. Any defense of inerrancy is made stronger by using *Dei Filius*.



The Pontifical Biblical Commission: The Two Responses of 1905

The texts are substantially reproduced from *Rome and the Study of Scripture* (1964). Both 1905 responses require no commentary. *On the Tacit Quotations Contained in Holy Scripture*: "In order to establish a guide for students of Holy Scripture the following question has been proposed to the Biblical Commission: Whether it is allowable for a Catholic commentator to solve difficulties occurring in certain texts of Holy Scripture, which apparently relate historical facts, by asserting that we have in such texts tacit or implied quotations from documents written by a non-inspired author, and that the inspired author by no means intends to approve of these statements or make them his own, and that these statements cannot, in consequence, be regarded as free

from error. Answer: To this the Commission judged proper to reply: In the negative; except in the case when, subject to the mind and decision of the Church, it can be proved by solid arguments, first, that the sacred writer really does cite another's sayings or writings; and secondly, that he does not intend, in so doing, to approve them or make them his own, in such a way that he be rightly considered not to speak in his own name" (February 13, 1905).

Concerning the Narratives in the Historical Books Which Have Only the Appearances of Being Historical: "The Biblical Commission answers the following question: Whether we may admit as a principle of sound exegesis the opinion which holds that those books of Holy Scripture which are

regarded as historical, either wholly or in part, sometimes narrate what is not history properly so-called and objectively true, but only have the appearance of history and are intended to convey a meaning different from the strictly literal or historical sense of the words. Answer: In the negative; excepting always the case — not to be easily or rashly admitted, and then only on the supposition that it is not opposed to the teaching of the Church and subject to her decision — that it can be proved by solid arguments that the sacred writer did not intend to give a true and strict history, but proposed rather to set forth, under the guise and form of history, a parable or an allegory or some meaning distinct from the strictly literal or historical signification of the words" (June 23, 1905).



Addressing Bible Difficulties: New Testament Replication, Part II

Recall the three sources that guide the replication of the New Testament: Greek manuscripts, translations made from them, and quotations of the New Testament by the Church Fathers. Last issue examined the first source, Greek manuscripts, and their four main classes: papyri, uncials, minuscules, and lectionaries. We pick up the last class: lectionaries.

Lectionaries are those texts that were employed in Christian worship; the liturgical books used for the Holy Sacrifice of the Mass. There was an Old Testament custom of using Biblical readings in the synagogues, and to a degree, this custom was retained for Mass in the Catholic Church. These liturgical books were either readings from the Gos-

pels, readings from the Acts and Epistles, or readings from both. Such lectionaries are written as uncials or semi-uncials, and denoted by the letter *I* followed by Arabic numerals. Example: *I* 1575 contains 1 Peter 5:1-5.

Now, consider the overall numbers of the Greek manuscripts. Note well: the figures often have slight variations in academic circles, and inevitably will be adjusted with new discoveries or assessments. One text lists 109 papyri, 307 uncials, 2,860 minuscules, and 2,410 lectionaries — a total of 5,686 partial and complete Greek manuscripts (cf. J. McDowell, *The New Evidence that Demands a Verdict* 34). Another text estimates almost 100 papyri, some 300 uncials, over 2,800 minuscules, and 2,000 lectionaries — over

5,200 (cf. S. Hahn, gen. ed., *Catholic Bible Dictionary* 902-903).

Look at one piece of evidence: the John Rylands Fragment, labeled P⁵². This papyrus scrap, roughly two inches by three inches, may be the earliest copy of part of the New Testament. The piece was found in Egypt, where it may have circulated in Fayum and Oxyrhynchus. Some date the fragment before A.D. 100, which substantiates an earlier autograph (from farther away, Asia Minor). The fragment is written on both sides; portions of five verses from St. John's Gospel: John 18:31-33, 37-38. Consult P. Comfort and D. Barrett, eds., *The Complete Text of the Earliest New Testament Manuscripts* 355-358.

Part III: other translations, and Patristic quotations.



Featured Web Site: BookFinder

The Christian, in view of his state or vocation, ought to own orthodox books for learning and living the Catholic Faith. This applies, within degrees, to the credentialed scholar as well as the first communicant. True, the Web is a good source for research, but insufficient by itself for studying dogma and doctrine. (As an aside, one wonders about possible health damage from excessive mouse usage or constant staring at a computer screen). In the final analysis, books are here to stay. On this score, a notable tool is BookFinder.

BookFinder describes itself as “a one-stop ecommerce search engine that searches over 150 million books for sale — new, used, rare, out-of-print, and textbooks. We save you time and money by

searching every major catalog online, and letting you know which booksellers are offering the best prices and selection. When you find a book you like, you can buy it directly from the original seller; we never charge a markup.” The site claims to present sellers drawn from over 50 countries. For the bibliophile, this may be the closest thing to the beatific vision this side of the grave.

The search engine is easy to use. Titles may be entered in full, or with key words. Author inquiries may be done merely with the author's last name, although a first name or its initial draws out a more precise search. As well, there is also an ISBN space for input.

In the “old days,” one usually drove to book selling outlets, or waited for catalogues to arrive in the mail. With Book-

Finder, one may shop in the comfort of one's home; saving both time and money. The best prices, from among new or used texts, are displayed on the search engine.

One of the benefits of BookFinder is the access to texts unknown to the searcher. If one is seeking books on “Biblical inerrancy,” a search will inevitably display works unknown or gems out of print. As well, searching related words (“authority,” “veracity,” “truthfulness”) will often bring up worthwhile sources.

One needs prudence on this site; money is spent easily and quickly. Still, BookFinder is an aid to Catholic erudition, and is one of the benefits of modern technology.

www.bookfinder.com



Ad Majorem Dei Gloriam

J. M. J.

"You shall love the Lord your God with all your heart, and with all your soul, and with all your mind" (Mt 22:37).

"Jesus said to them, 'Is not this why you are wrong, that you know neither the Scriptures nor the power of God?'" (Mk 12:24).

"And beginning with Moses and all the Prophets, He [Christ] interpreted to them in all the Scriptures the things concerning Himself" (Lk 24:27).

"Now Jesus did many other signs in the presence of the disciples, which are not written in this book; but these are written that you may believe that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God, and that believing you may have life in His name" (Jn 20:30-31).

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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 parish groups, (2) present studies from Scripture on specific books such as the Gospel of St. Luke, or general themes such as the Biblical roots of home-schooling, (3) promote the classic exegetical methods and insights found within Tradition; with attention to the Church Fathers and St. Thomas Aquinas, and (4) support the Magisterial doctrines of Biblical inspiration and inerrancy; the latter the main focus of the apostolate. The Guild places itself under the Sacred Heart of Jesus and Immaculate Heart of Mary. 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).

+ + +

Mr. Salvatore J. Ciresi, founder and director of the St. Jerome Biblical Guild, served two tours in the U.S. Marine Corps and now works in the aviation sector. He earned his M.A. in Theological Studies, with a Scripture concentration, from the Notre Dame Graduate School of Christendom College, where he serves on the adjunct faculty. His ecclesiastical activities include past co-host of Cross Talk, a Catholic radio program in VA; a contributor on behalf of the Arlington Diocese to the 2005 revision to the *National Directory for Catechesis*; a former board member for a private Catholic school; a past columnist for the *Arlington Catholic Herald*; and a contributor to *The Latin Mass: The Journal of Catholic Culture and Tradition*. Mr. Ciresi resides with his wife and children in VA.



Book Recommendation: *The Faith of the Early Fathers*

One way to understand Sacred Scripture is to examine some of its greatest commentators. A good place to begin is William A. Jurgens, trans., *The Faith of the Early Fathers: Volumes 1-3* (Collegeville: Liturgical Press, 1970, 1979, 1979) 450 pp., 298 pp., 430 pp.

Fr. Jurgens' soft-cover set is a selection of passages from the Patristic era, which spans the Apostolic Age to circa A.D. 750. The blurb on the back cover of each volume states: "Preceding each selection is a brief introduction treating the authorship, date and place of composition, and the purpose of the work from which the selection is taken." One discovers the earliest Christian minds, outside the Biblical writers, who explain, organically develop, and defend the Catholic Faith. Vol. 1 offers Pope St. Clement of Rome, St. Ignatius of Antioch, St.

Justin Martyr, St. Irenaeus, Tertullian, Origen, St. Cyprian, Eusebius, St. Athanasius, and St. Cyril of Jerusalem. Vol. 2 provides St. Basil, St. Gregory of Nazianz, St. Gregory of Nyssa, St. John Chrysostom, St. Ambrose, and St. Jerome. Vol. 3 presents St. Augustine, Pope St. Innocent I, St. Prosper of Aquitaine, St. John Cassian, Theodoret of Cyr, Pope St. Leo I, Pope St. Gregory I, and St. John Damascene. Many other names are included in the three volumes.

Outstanding features of the set are the Scriptural and doctrinal indices, and a cross reference system keyed to the three volumes. Such tools bolster research for every discipline that touches faith and morals, and testifies to the essential unity between East and West. The Bible student will cherish these

indices, which help one grasp how the Fathers handled certain Scripture passages and dealt with topics such as inspiration, inerrancy, the senses, the canon, etc. The set could also serve as a devotional guide: the Fathers have much to contribute to the interior life.

More context would have been beneficial to some of the extracts, often taken from longer tomes that are difficult to track down. As well, the endnote and verse numbering format could stand improvement.

The set lists for about \$50 from the publisher (less from other sellers). As a stand alone collection, or point of departure for further research, *The Faith of the Early Fathers* is a worthy anthology for all things theological. Please pray for the repose of the soul of Fr. Jurgens.

