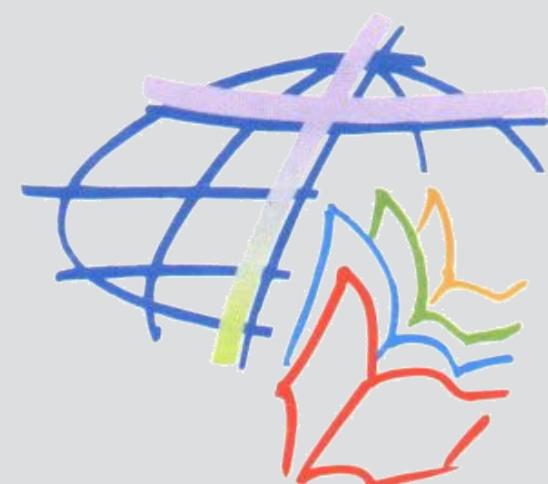


The Biblical Foundations of the Mission of the Church

A rereading from North America



Jan J. Stefanów SVD

Catholic Biblical Federation



Year of Mission Playbook

JULY 2024 – JUNE 2025

MISSION

To form Catholics to live out of their Eucharistic encounters with Jesus and to send them as credible witnesses to the joy of the Gospel; to encourage centers of mission (parishes, dioceses, religious communities, apostolates, etc.) to continue providing opportunities for encounter that lead to a deeper Eucharistic identity and sustain a Eucharistic life.

VISION

To raise up a company of Catholics from across the country who have been healed, converted, formed, unified, and sent out on Eucharistic mission for the life of the world.

Vatican II

The Church has always venerated the divine Scriptures just as she venerates the body of the Lord, since, especially in the sacred liturgy, she unceasingly receives and offers to the faithful the bread of life from the table both of God's word and of Christ's body. (DV 21)

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Aperuit illis (2019)

*(...) I hereby declare that the Third Sunday in Ordinary Time is to be devoted to the celebration, study and dissemination of the word of God. This **Sunday of the Word of God** will thus be a fitting part of that time of the year when we are encouraged to strengthen our bonds with the Jewish people and to pray for Christian unity. This is more than a temporal coincidence: the celebration of the Sunday of the Word of God has ecumenical value, since the Scriptures point out, for those who listen, the path to authentic and firm unity.*

The various communities will find their own ways to mark this Sunday with a certain solemnity. (No. 3)

Dei Verbum

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Vatican II

“(...) 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)

The Word of God

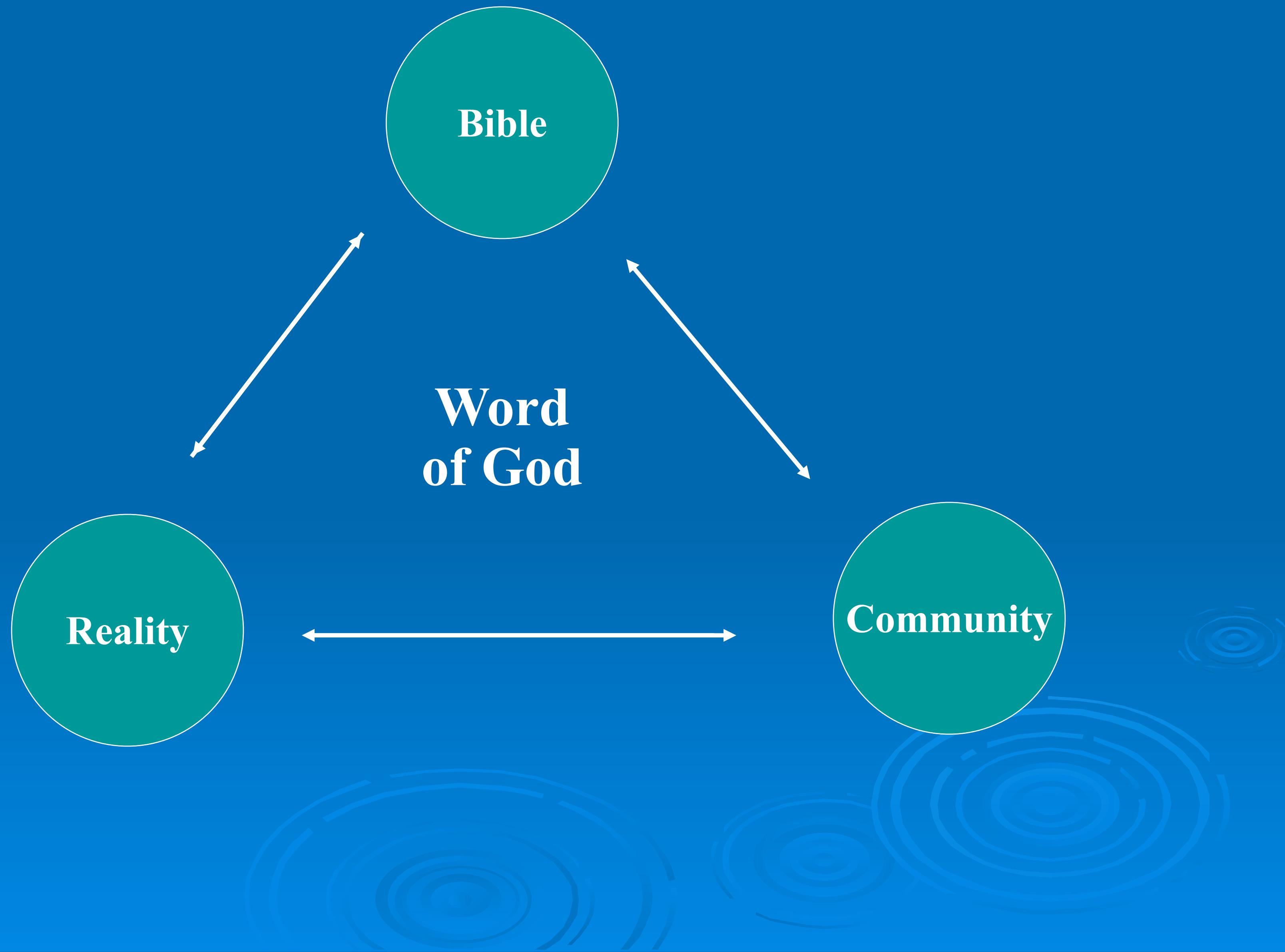
Pope Benedict XVI, Verbum Domini (2010)

As the Prologue of John clearly shows us, the Logos refers in the first place to the eternal Word, the only Son, begotten of the Father before all ages and consubstantial with him: the word was with God, and the word was God. But this same Word, Saint John tells us, “ became flesh ” (Jn 1:14); hence Jesus Christ, born of the Virgin Mary, is truly the Word of God who has become consubstantial with us. Thus the expression “ word of God ” here refers to the person of Jesus Christ, the eternal Son of the Father, made man.

Verbum Domini (No. 7)

While the Christ event is at the heart of divine revelation, we also need to realize that creation itself, the *liber naturae*, is an essential part of this symphony of many voices in which the one word is spoken. We also profess our faith that God has spoken his word in **salvation history**; he has made his voice heard; by the power of his Spirit “ he has spoken through the prophets ”.

God’s word is thus spoken throughout the history of salvation, and most fully in the mystery of the incarnation, death and resurrection of the Son of God. Then too, the word of God is **that word preached by the Apostles** in obedience to the command of the Risen Jesus: “ Go into all the world and preach the Gospel to the whole creation ” (Mk 16:15). The word of God is thus handed on in **the Church’s living Tradition**. Finally, the word of God, attested and divinely inspired, is **sacred Scripture**, the Old and New Testaments. All this helps us to see that, while in the Church we greatly venerate the sacred Scriptures, **the Christian faith is not a “ religion of the book ”: Christianity is the “ religion of the word of God ”, not of “ a written and mute word, but of the incarnate and living Word ”.**





Cappadocia - Cavusin

The Biblical Foundations of the Mission of the Church

*Why do we proclaim the Good
News of Christ to the world?*

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Christ to the world?*

The initiative comes from God - *Missio Dei*

Exodus 3:7-10

But the LORD said: I have witnessed the affliction of my people in Egypt and have heard their cry against their taskmasters, so I know well what they are suffering. Therefore **I have come down** to rescue them from the power of the Egyptians and lead them up from that land into a good and spacious land, a land flowing with milk and honey, the country of the Canaanites, the Hittites, the Amorites, the Perizzites, the Girgashites, the Hivites and the Jebusites.

Now indeed the outcry of the Israelites has reached me, and I have seen how the Egyptians are oppressing them.

Now, go! **I am sending you** to Pharaoh to bring my people, the Israelites, out of Egypt.

Deuteronomy 6:10-12

When the LORD, your God, brings you into the land which he swore to your ancestors, to Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, that he would give you, a land with fine, large cities that you did not build, with houses full of goods of all sorts that you did not garner, with cisterns that you did not dig, with vineyards and olive groves that you did not plant; and when, therefore, you eat and are satisfied, be careful not to forget the LORD, who brought you out of the land of Egypt, that house of slavery.

Exile

- ~~Land~~
- ~~King~~
- ~~Temple~~

Ezekiel 37 - dry bones

Post-Exile

- Deuteronomistic theology (Covenant -> Sin -> Punishment - > Conversion -> Covenant)
- Cultic stream
- Deutero-Isaiah
 - “Liberation theology”
 - Interior liberation (individual and national)
 - Outer liberation - return to the promised land
 - God for all the nations
 - Messianic hope

Isaiah 61:1-4

The spirit of the Lord GOD is upon me, because the LORD has anointed me; He has sent me to bring good news to the afflicted, to bind up the brokenhearted, to proclaim liberty to the captives, release to the prisoners, to announce a year of favor from the LORD and a day of vindication by our God; to comfort all who mourn; to place on those who mourn in Zion a diadem instead of ashes, to give them oil of gladness instead of mourning, a glorious mantle instead of a faint spirit. They will be called oaks of justice, the planting of the LORD to show his glory.

They shall rebuild the ancient ruins, the former wastes they shall raise up and restore the desolate cities, devastations of generation upon generation.

God's initiative - new Covenant

Galatians 4:4-5

But when the fullness of time had come, God sent his Son, born of a woman, born under the law, to ransom those under the law, so that we might receive adoption.

Jesus - the Sent One

Luke 4:16-20

He came to Nazareth, where he had grown up, and went according to his custom into the synagogue on the sabbath day. He stood up to read and was handed a scroll of the prophet Isaiah. He unrolled the scroll and found the passage where it was written:

The Spirit of the Lord is upon me,
because he has anointed me
to bring glad tidings to the poor.

He has sent me to proclaim liberty to captives
and recovery of sight to the blind,
to let the oppressed go free,

and to proclaim a year acceptable to the Lord.

Rolling up the scroll, he handed it back to the attendant and sat down, and the eyes of all in the synagogue looked intently at him.

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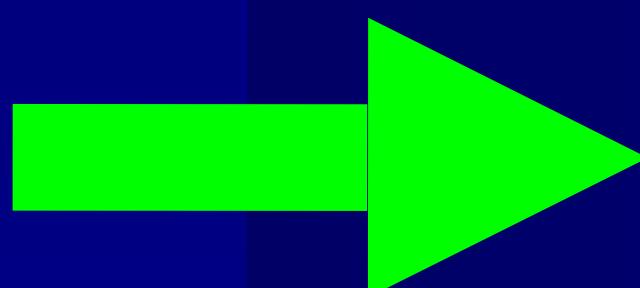
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God's initiative - new Covenant

Mark 1:14-15:

After John had been arrested, Jesus came to Galilee proclaiming the gospel of God:

“This is the time of fulfillment. The kingdom of God is at hand. Repent, and believe in the gospel.”

εὐαγγέλιον - Good News (Gospel)

1. Jesus as Good News (Mk 1:1)

- *The beginning of the gospel of Jesus Christ [the Son of God].*

2. Content of Jesus' teaching (Mt 4:23)

- *He went around all of Galilee, teaching in their synagogues, proclaiming the gospel of the kingdom, and curing every disease and illness among the people.*

3. Good News about Jesus (Rm 15:19)

- *from Jerusalem all the way around to Illyricum I have finished preaching the gospel of Christ.*

εὐαγγέλιον - εὐαγγελίζω

	Evangelize	Gospel
Matthew	1	4
Mark	-	8
Luke	10	-
Acts	15	2
John	-	-
Letters of John	-	-
Paul	21	60
Deuteropaulines	2	12
Hebrews	2	-
1 Peter	3	1
Revelation	2	1

Mission of Paul

Galatians 1:11-12

Now I want you to know, brothers, that the gospel preached by me is not of human origin. For I did not receive it from a human being, nor was I taught it, but it came through a revelation of Jesus Christ.

1 Corinthians 9:16

If I preach the gospel, this is no reason for me to boast, for an obligation has been imposed on me, and woe to me if I do not preach it!

Mission of the Church

Matthew 10:7-8

As you go, make this proclamation: ‘The kingdom of heaven is at hand.’ Cure the sick, raise the dead, cleanse lepers, drive out demons. Without cost you have received; without cost you are to give.

Matthew 28:18-20

“All power in heaven and on earth has been given to me. Go, therefore, and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the holy Spirit, teaching them to observe all that I have commanded you. And behold, I am with you always, until the end of the age.”*



Year of Mission Playbook

JULY 2024 – JUNE 2025

Pillar 1: Eucharistic Encounter

Pillar 2: Eucharistic Identity

Pillar 3: Eucharistic Life

Pillar 4: Eucharistic Mission

Missionary disciple's way

(Aparecida Document No. 278)

- Encounter with Jesus Christ
- Conversion
- Discipleship
- Communion
- Mission

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Missionary disciple's way

Encounter with Jesus Christ

Letter to the Romans 10:13-17

For “*everyone who calls on the name of the Lord will be saved.*” But how can they call on him in whom they have not believed? And how can they believe in him of whom they have not heard? And how can they hear without someone to preach? And how can people preach unless they are sent? As it is written, “*How beautiful are the feet of those who bring [the] good news!*”

But not everyone has heeded the good news; for Isaiah says, “*Lord, who has believed what was heard from us?*” Thus faith comes from what is heard, and what is heard comes through the word of Christ.

General Assembly CELAM

Aparecida (2007)

247. We encounter Jesus in Sacred Scripture read in the church. Sacred scripture, "Word of God written by inspiration of the Holy Spirit," is, along with tradition, source of life for the Church and soul of its evangelizing action. To be ignorant of scripture is to be ignorant of Jesus Christ and to fail to proclaim him. Hence Benedict XVI's invitation:

At the beginning of this new phase that the missionary Church of Latin America and the Caribbean is preparing to enter, starting with this Fifth General Conference in Aparecida, an indispensable pre-condition is profound knowledge of the word of God. To achieve this, we must train people to read and meditate on the word of God: this must become their staple diet, so that, through their own experience, the faithful will see that the words of Jesus are spirit and life (cf. Jn 6:63). Otherwise, how could they proclaim a message whose content and spirit they do not know thoroughly? We must build our missionary commitment and the whole of our lives on the rock of the word of God.

Forms and methods

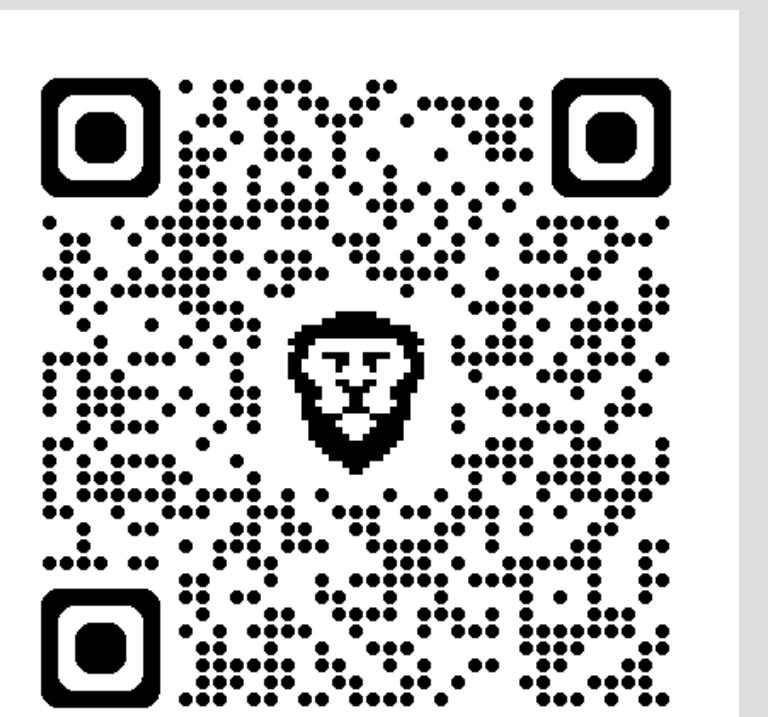
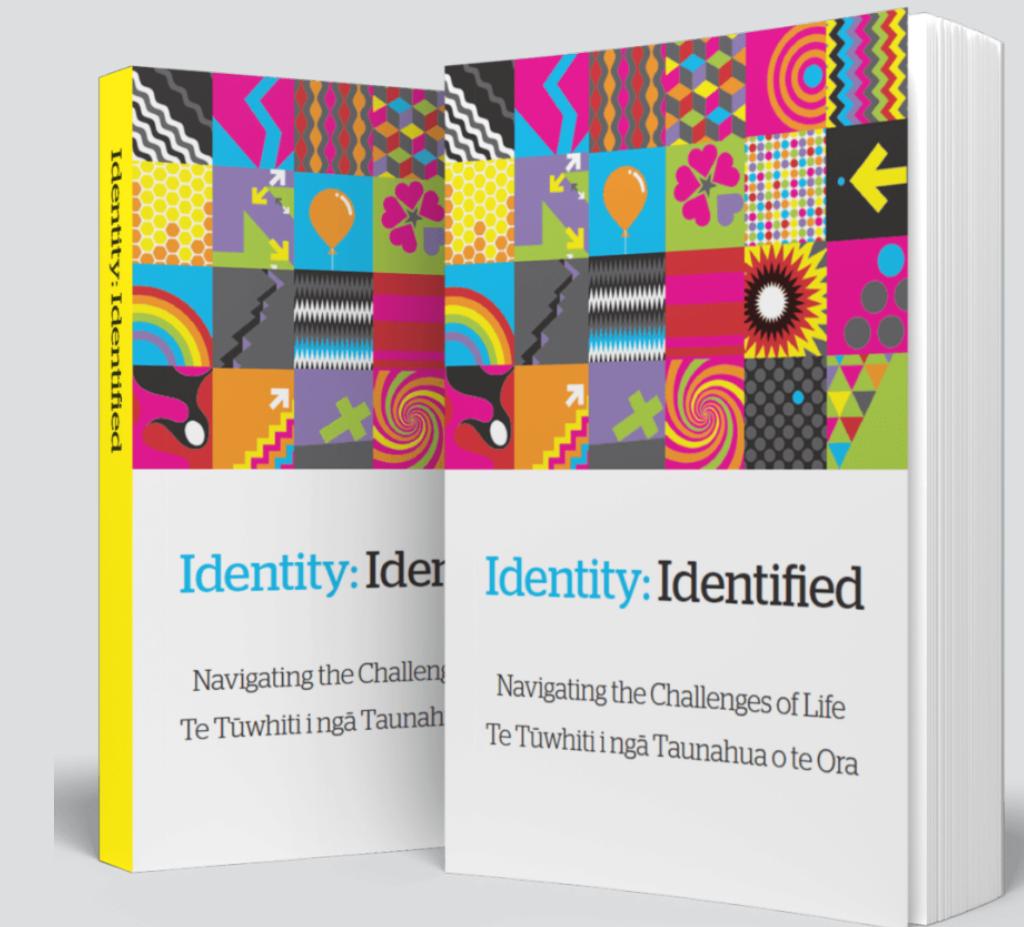
Different forms of the proclamation of the Word (adapted to the context)

- Missions
- Creation of Bible groups
- Bible and art
- Bible and music

“Customized” editions of the Bible

- Bible in native languages
- Youth Bible
- Family Bible
- Bible and migration
- ID Identified

Digital world



Missionary disciple's way

Conversion

General Assembly CELAM

Aparecida (2007)

248. It thus becomes necessary to offer the Word of God to the faithful as gift of the Father for the **encounter with living Jesus Christ**, path of “authentic conversion and of renewed communion and solidarity.” This proposal will mediate encounter with the Lord if the revealed Word contained in scripture is presented as source of evangelization. Disciples of Jesus yearn to be nourished with the bread of the Word: they want to have access to proper interpretation of the biblical texts, to use them as mediation of dialogue with Jesus, and that they be the soul of evangelization itself and of proclamation of Jesus to all. Hence, the importance of a “**biblical ministry**” **understood as a biblical impetus to pastoral ministry**, that it serve as school of interpretation or knowledge of the Word, of communion with Jesus, or prayer with the Word, and of inculturated evangelization or proclamation of the Word. This demands that bishops, priests, deacons, and lay ministers of the Word approach sacred scripture in a way that is not merely intellectual and instrumental, but with a heart “hungry to hear the Word of the Lord” (Am 8:11).

Missionary disciple's way

Discipleship

“Verbum Domini” (2010)

“(...) the Synod called for a particular pastoral commitment to emphasizing the centrality of the word of God in the Church’s life, and recommended a greater “ biblical apostolate ”, not alongside other forms of pastoral work, but as a means of letting the Bible inspire all pastoral work ”. This does not mean adding a meeting here or there in parishes or dioceses, but rather of examining the ordinary activities of Christian communities, in parishes, associations and movements, to see if they are truly concerned with fostering a personal encounter with Christ, who gives himself to us in his word. Since “ ignorance of the Scriptures is ignorance of Christ ”,²⁵⁵ making the Bible the inspiration of every ordinary and extraordinary pastoral outreach will lead to a greater awareness of the person of Christ, who reveals the Father and is the fullness of divine revelation.” (VD 73)

The Bible, source of catechesis

Directory for Catechesis (2020)

Catechesis draws its message from the **Word of God**, which is its main source. Therefore, “it is essential that the revealed word radically enrich our catechesis and all our efforts to pass on the faith. Sacred Scripture, which God has inspired, reaches the depths of the human spirit better than any other word. **The Word of God is not exhausted in Sacred Scripture, because it is a living, active and effective reality.** God speaks and his Word is manifested in creation and in history. In the last days, “he has spoken to us by a Son” (Heb 1:2). The only-Begotten of the Father is the definitive Word of God, who was in the beginning with God, was God, presided over creation being born of woman by the power of the Holy Spirit in order to dwell among his own. Returning to the Father, he brings with him the creation that he redeemed, which was created in him and for him. (DC 91).

Bible study circles

The biblical circle is a gathering of friends or acquaintances whose purpose is the formation of all, for action, through mutual teaching, taking as the basis of their study the Holy Scriptures.

They are, therefore, a means of catechesis. Their primary finality is to make the faith of the participants mature and operative through orderly study and mutual instruction.

They can take various forms and use various methods.

The biblical prayer spaces

- Lectio Divina Groups
- Retreats and Bible exercises (Lectio Divina).
- Schools of Biblical prayer
- Prayer of Vespers

Biblical Weeks and Days

It is a particular time that a diocese, a parish or a group dedicates to promote in various ways the knowledge, the taste and the fruitful reading of the Bible.

Its purpose is eminently pastoral: it is intended to bring everyone (even those “far away” from the Church) closer to the biblical text, and for this reason it is necessary to know the level of biblical initiation in the places where the week or day is to be celebrated.

Missionary disciple's way

Communion

Directory for Catechesis (No. 286)

“In the dynamism of evangelization, a person who accepts the Gospel as the Word which saves normally translates it into the following sacramental acts.” (VD 93). In this regard, having overcome the contrast between word and sacrament, it becomes clear that the ministry of the Word is also indispensable for the ministry of the sacraments. St. Augustine writes that “one is born in the Spirit through the word and the sacrament.” Their interweaving reaches its greatest efficacy in the liturgy, above all in the Eucharistic celebration, which reveals the sacramental significance of the word of God.

“Word and Eucharist are so deeply bound together that we cannot understand one without the other: the word of God sacramentally takes flesh in the event of the Eucharist. The Eucharist opens us to an understanding of Scripture, just as Scripture for its part illuminates and explains the mystery of the Eucharist.” (VD 55)

Missionary disciple's way

Mission

Evangelii Gaudium (2013)

"Not only the homily has to be nourished by the word of God. All evangelization is based on that word, listened to, meditated upon, lived, celebrated and witnessed to. **The sacred Scriptures are the very source of evangelization.** Consequently, we need to be constantly trained in hearing the word. The Church does not evangelize unless she constantly lets herself be evangelized. It is indispensable that the word of God "be ever more fully at the heart of every ecclesial activity". God's word, listened to and celebrated, above all in the Eucharist, nourishes and inwardly strengthens Christians, enabling them to offer an authentic witness to the Gospel in daily life. We have long since moved beyond that old contraposition between word and sacrament. The preaching of the word, living and effective, prepares for the reception of the sacrament, and in the sacrament that word attains its maximum efficacy." (EG 174).

“

Jesus' sacrifice on the cross is nothing else than the culmination of the way he lived his entire life. Moved by his example, we want to enter fully into the fabric of society, sharing the lives of all, listening to their concerns, helping them materially and spiritually in their needs, rejoicing with those who rejoice, weeping with those who weep; arm in arm with others, we are committed to building a new world.

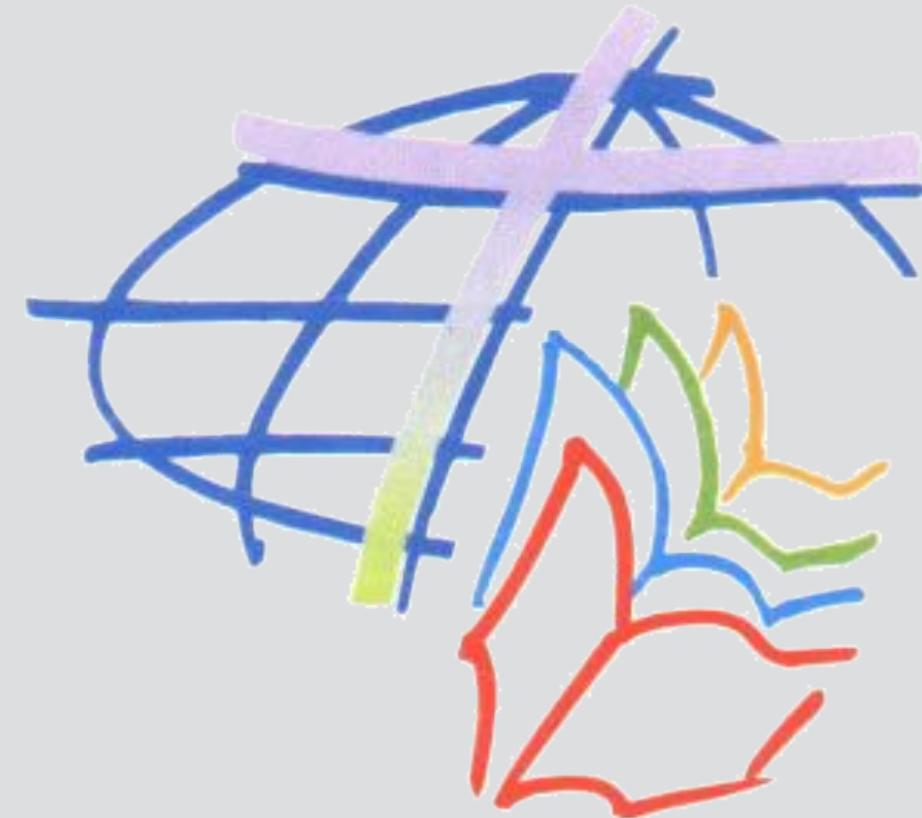


POPE FRANCIS
EVANGELII GAUDIUM NO. 269



<https://www.eucharisticrevival.org/year-of-mission>





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