



The Burning Bush—Online article archive

It's official! — Roman Catholics do not read the Bible regularly



The "Catholic News Service" issued a report on Bible reading which indicates that the pope's flock are not devoted Bible readers and God's Word plays little part in the life of the Roman Catholic.

The report reads:

"VATICAN CITY (CNS) — While it may be a best-seller, the Bible still is not regularly read, nor has it become an integral part of many Catholics' lives, said a panel of biblical experts.

"Unfortunately, it must be said, there is still little Bible in the lives of the faithful," said Italian Bishop Vincenzo Paglia, president of the Catholic Bible Federation.

Recent research conducted in Italy, Spain and France found that many Catholics consider the sacred Scriptures as something "reserved for the clergy" rather than as an accessible resource for them to draw upon for truth and inspiration in their own lives, he said.

Bishop Paglia, together with a number of biblical experts, spoke at a Vatican press conference Sept. 8 to present an upcoming international congress commemorating the 40th anniversary of "Dei Verbum," the Second Vatican Council document on Scripture and divine revelation.

The five-day conference, scheduled Sept. 14-18, was to gather more than 400 biblical experts from all over the world. Its aims included pinpointing the current challenges and problems in making people aware of the importance of the Bible.

The event is sponsored by the Pontifical Council for Promoting Christian Unity and the Catholic Bible Federation, which was founded in 1969 to promote the reading of the Bible. Bishop Paglia said all Christians have "the right to a Bible in their own language," but that handing them out should not be reduced to "the consignment of a product like the Bibles sitting in hotel drawers."

Hypocrisy

What hypocrisy! The official teaching of Rome on the Bible and the reading of it by Roman Catholics in their own tongue is stated in the Council of Trent (1545-63). It upheld an earlier decree, that of Valencia in 1229, which stated: "We prohibit also the permitting of the laity to have the books of the Old and New Testament, unless any one should wish, from a feeling of devotion, to have a psalter or breviary for divine service, or the hours of the blessed Mary. But we strictly forbid them to have the above-mentioned books in the vulgar tongue." This decree was issued at the time that the Waldensians were engaged in spreading the gospel in areas neighbouring their native mountains.

That Council of Trent also decreed that the Bible was only of the same authority as the traditions of the church. That is quite contrary to what the Bible says of itself. "For I testify unto every man that heareth the words of the prophecy of this book, If any man shall add unto these things, God shall add unto him the plagues that are written in this book: and if any man shall take away from the words of the book of this prophecy, God shall take away his part out of the book of life, and out of the holy city, and from the things which are written in this book," Revelation 22: 18-19. The Bible alone is the Christian's authority. Christ rejected the traditions of men and declared the Word of God to be the ultimate authority in matters of faith and practice, Matthew 15: 1-9.