



The Holy See

***ADDRESS OF HIS HOLINESS JOHN PAUL II
TO THE MEMBERS
OF THE CATHOLIC BIBLICAL FEDERATION***

Monday, 21 June 1993

*Your Excellency,
Dear Friends,*

"Hearing the word of God with reverence and proclaiming it confidently" (*Dei Verbum*, 1).

1. In these words, which begin the Second Vatican Council's Dogmatic Constitution on Divine Revelation "*Dei Verbum*", the Fathers of that Sacred Synod remind us of two activities which form the foundation of the great work of evangelization: first the Church is called to listen attentively to the Good News of eternal life, and then she shares with all mankind the word spoken to her, "so that by hearing the message of salvation the whole world may believe; by believing, it may hope; and by hoping, it may love" (*Dei Verbum*, 1). You the members of the *Catholic Biblical Federation*, seek to make a special contribution to the Church, so that she may ever more effectively fulfil her role in God's saving plan through her preaching of "the gospel to the whole creation" (Mk. 16: 15). I extend to you a warm welcome today, and I assure you of my prayerful good wishes that your efforts will be made fruitful by a fresh outpouring of the Holy Spirit.

2. Your Federation was founded in order to help implement the directives of the Second Vatican Council concerning Sacred Scripture in the life of the Church, and it finds the basic elements of its programme in the sixth chapter of "*Dei Verbum*".

There the Council Fathers express a particular concern that "easy access to Sacred Scripture should be provided for all the Christian faithful" (*Dei Verbum*, 22), for "in the sacred books, the Father who is in heaven meets his children with great love and speaks with them" (Ibid. 21). To provide the members of the Christian community with the Scriptures and to open their minds to

what the Spirit says there to the churches (Cf. Rev. 2: 7) are perennially necessary means for building up the Body of Christ.

The Blessed Virgin Mary is the type and model of the Church's reception of God's revelation. Full of grace (Cf. Lk. 1: 28), she was led both to ponder his marvellous deeds (Cf. ibid. 2: 19) and generously to accept her part in them (Cf. ibid. 1: 38). The Church at prayer over the Sacred Scriptures seeks to imitate the Mother of God both by lovingly contemplating this record of God's saving design and by selflessly accepting the divine will traced out therein.

3. In the task of advancing the reading and study of the Bible, there is wide scope for ecumenical cooperation. Belief that the Lord continues to speak to his disciples through the inspired text has a special power to strengthen the fraternal bonds between Catholics and members of other Churches and ecclesial communities; and in our dialogue, as the Council says, "the sacred utterances are precious instruments in the mighty hand of God for attaining that unity which the Saviour holds out to all men" (*Unitatis Redintegratio*, 21).

It is in the force and might of God's word, and not in any earthly power, that the Church finds support and energy, the strength of her faith and the food of her soul (Cf. *Dei Verbum*, 21). Through the intercession of Our Lady Queen of Apostles and Prophets may you find renewed strength to do your part in assisting the faithful to hear the word of God and to keep it (Cf. Lk. 11: 28).

I cordially impart to you my Apostolic Blessing.

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