

# BUSOG

**NOURISHED BY THE WORD**



**A BIBLE METHODOLOGY**  
**in the Light of *VERBUM DOMINI* for the**  
**NEW EVANGELIZATION**

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## About the Author



**Fr. Arlo Bernardo S. Yap, SVD** was ordained in 1983 at Divine Word Seminary in Tagaytay City. He obtained a Masteral degree in Development Communication, major in Broadcasting, in 1994 from the University of the Philippines in Los Baños, Laguna. He hosted weekly radio programs “Itanong Mo Kay Father” and “Hello Father” at Radio Veritas from 1987-1999. As of this writing, he is regularly celebrating Holy Mass on air at the same radio station every 1st and 2nd Thursday of the month.

As he was assigned as SVD Biblical Coordinator in 1999, he was sent to Nemi, Rome to take a four-month Dei Verbum course, and then became the Director of Divine Word Biblical Center, located at Christ the King Mission Seminary, Quezon City in 2000.

He is presently assigned as SVD Coordinator of Philippine Central Province for Biblical Apostolate (for the second time) and Social Communications.



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the members of the Oasis of Love Catholic Charismatic Community and now with the Family Disciples of the Word; to Bro. Santi Edralin, Bro. Ramon Arguelles and Bro. Jeffrey Meneses who shared the LBS to Couples for Christ Foundation for Family and Life (CFCFFL) and Singles for Family and Life (SFL); to Fr. Francis Gustilo, SDB and Fr. Vicente Cervania, SDB of Don Bosco Center of Studies for making LBS a special course, *Family Catechesis through Liturgical Bible Study* in their curriculum; and to a lot more individuals who journeyed with Liturgical Bible Study and were nourished with the word of God through these years.

And lastly, this Bible methodology is devised in the name of the Divine Word, *the Word became flesh and made his dwelling among us* (John 1,14).

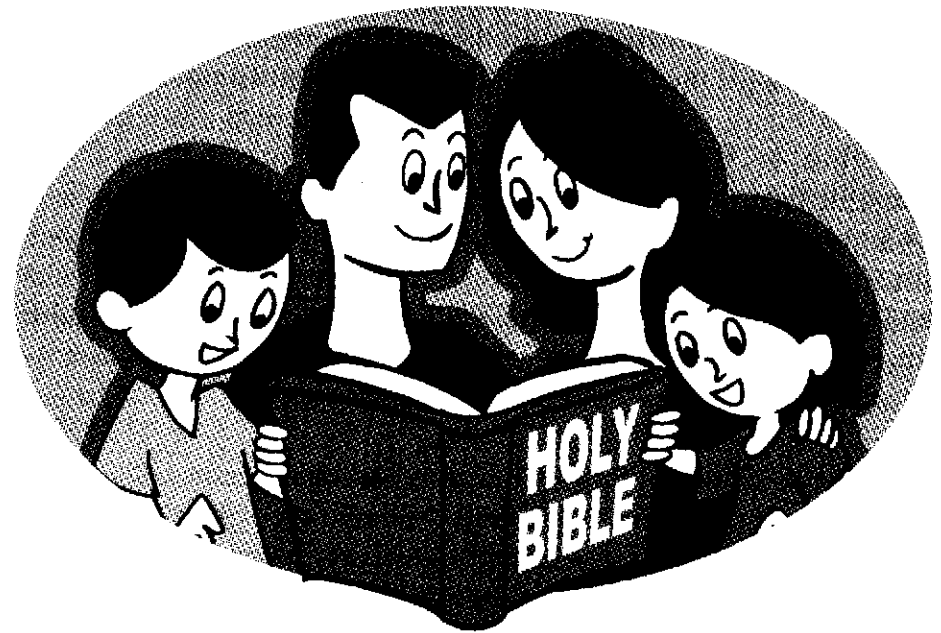
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## PART ONE: The Liturgical Bible Study



*One does not live by bread alone, but by every word that comes forth from the mouth of God.*

Matthew 4,44

## I. Its Beginnings and Working Principles

Right after my four-month Biblical-pastoral course in Rome in 1999, the first question I asked my secretary at Divine Word Biblical Center was: “*Kumusta na ang mga Bible sharing groups natin?*” (How are our Bible sharing groups doing?) Ms. Carmela Carvajal-Estacio, who has been in the Biblical Apostolate for the past two decades replied without any pause: “Father, after doing Bible sharing for more than 10 years, people are now looking for Bible study.”

As I assumed my office as SVD Biblical Coordinator in January 2000, my personal quest for a Bible study method began. I noticed that almost all Bible sharings and even Bible study methodologies I encountered through the years are taking only the Gospel for reflections. And I asked myself why take only the Gospel... why not include the two other readings of the Sunday? How about the Responsorial Psalm?

Thus, in 2000, the Liturgical Bible Study was born at the Divine Word Biblical Center, located inside the compound of Christ the King Mission Seminary, Quezon City. It was envisioned primarily to prepare the Catholic faithful especially the families, communities, parishioners and many other faith-seeking individuals for the Sunday Mass and to upgrade existing Bible sharing methods being utilized for the past four decades.

The Liturgical Bible Study is a study and understanding of the three Sunday readings, leading to the insightful discovery of their connections to each other. The LBS, is an interactive, question and answer process, where a leader is more of a facilitator than a teacher. He goes through the Sunday readings, Gospel, then First Reading, and then Second Reading, one after another, verse by verse by asking questions and the members giving answers basing them on the text. After determining the connections between the three Sunday readings, the members take the Responsorial Psalm to affirm their insights. Based from the unified message of the three readings, which I call *hibla* (fiber or thread), the

facilitator poses an application-question to initiate a sharing of life experiences from the members after dividing them into smaller groups. The whole LBS process lasts around one-and-a-half hours for an average of 10-20 members.

The first group I formed for the LBS was the KABALITA (*Kabataang Lingkod ng Banal na Salita* or Young Disciples of the Word). Its members were just kids, teenagers, some were young professionals. The experience was truly more transformative than informative. I saw the group being nourished by the Word of God, growing in wisdom even with their young minds and hearts. The members were expressing that they come to attend the Mass more prepared especially for the homily and the Eucharist liturgically. They had a deep recall of the LBS as the lectors and the priest proclaim the Sunday readings. Soon the Divine Word Biblical Center and the KABALITA began sharing the LBS experience to others. And many others were saying that the LBS experience was indeed nourishing.

In the process of sharing the LBS, together with my DWBC staff, we conceptualized an LBS training module, which could serve as a follow-up to the Basic Bible Seminar (BBS), developed by John Paul I Biblical Center in Vigan, Philippines. Likewise, the LBS will be useful for those individuals and communities who have been familiar with *Lumko Method*, *Bibliarasal*, and other Biblical methods.

Slowly, we formulated talks, activities, and workshops for the LBS and came up with Liturgical Bible Study Seminar (LBSS) training module. As of this printing, the LBSS has been conducted to the Oasis of Love Catholic Community, Franciscan Missionaries of Mary (FMM), Couples for Christ Foundation for Family and Life (CFC-FFL), Diocese of San Pablo, Laguna through its Diocesan Biblical Apostolate, Holy Family Charismatic communities, and many others.

Looking back, I realized that there have been several movements of faith in the Catholic Church in the Philippines as led by the Holy

Spirit since Second Vatican Council. There was the *Cursillo* movement that began in the 70's; the Charismatic renewal movement; and the Family life and Marriage Encounter movements that started in the 80's. Now, for the second millennium, it would be the WORD OF GOD MOVEMENT. As we entered this period, Pope Emeritus Benedict XVI declared the urgency of the New Evangelization. And in 2008, the Synod of Bishops on the Word of God was convened: the Word of God in the Life and Mission of the Church, *Verbum Domini*. The Liturgical Bible Study is one of our responses to this call for New Evangelization in the light of *Verbum Domini* (VD).

## II. Operational Framework

### A. Theological Setting: The Word of God as Food

We all know that the Holy Mass has two parts: The Liturgy of the Word and the Liturgy of the Eucharist. This picture is most vivid in Luke 24,13-35, The walk to Emmaus, where Jesus explained the scriptures to His two disgruntled disciples along the road and upon reaching Emmaus, He took bread, blessed it, broke and gave it to His disciples. Pope Benedict XVI wrote: "*The presence of Jesus, first with his words and then with the act of breaking bread, made it possible for the disciples to recognize him. Now they were able to appreciate in a new way all that they had previously experienced with him: 'Did not our hearts burn within us while he talked to us on the road, while he opened to us the Scriptures?'*" (VD, p. 102)

Furthermore, just like the Liturgy of the Eucharist understood and believed as food, so is the Liturgy of the Word. While Jesus was praying and fasting for 40 days after his baptism, the devil came to him and said: "*If you are the Son of God, turn these stones into bread. But Jesus answered: Man does not live on bread alone, but on every word that comes from the mouth of God*" (Matthew 4,3-4). The material bread here is perceived as food for the stomach, but the word of God is food for

thought, food for the spirit. Hence, we feed our minds with the word of God in the Holy Mass as expounded to us by bishops, priests and deacons (VD, p. 108), leading us into more meaningful celebration of the Holy Eucharist.

Thus, if the word of God is food, in the LBS, the facilitator cooks the word of God in the liturgical readings with the members of the group. And so, cooking and eating together the wisdom of the word of God becomes even more nourishing and transformative and enjoyable. Consequently, to enjoy the food prepared from the word of God, every member is encouraged to bring his/her own Bible for the Liturgical Bible Study. *No Bible, no plate!*

### B. Liturgical Readings:

At the very heart of Liturgical Bible Study are the Liturgical readings for the Holy Mass. We wonder how these readings were intentionally selected and meticulously combined to mean a particular theme for the Holy Mass of the day or of the Sunday. Or, were the liturgical readings just randomly combined?

#### 1. History of Liturgical Readings for the Mass

According to Eric Palazzo, in "*A History of Liturgical Books from the Beginning to the Thirteenth Century*," the reading of the Scripture started at the very beginning of official Christian gatherings for worship and so making the Liturgy of the Word the centerpiece of the whole liturgical action (Palazzo, p. 83). "*From the earliest time of Christianity, the Bible was read during the different assemblies of the faithful. The principle then was to read the sacred text in its entirety (lectio continua) so that the whole of Scripture could be food for meditation*" (Palazzo, p. 83).

Palazzo added that according to general view, biblical passages were chosen, probably, as early as 2nd century, "*to be read during the eucharistic celebration of a specific feast because they were particularly*



*fitting. The yearly recurrence of the important events of Christian history rapidly led to a choice of readings whose themes corresponded to the meaning of the feasts or the liturgical time (principally Easter, Ascension, Pentecost, Christmas)" (Palazzo, p. 83).*

During the first centuries of the Church, the liturgical year for the readings slowly developed. And by the 7th century, the liturgical year was already established (Palazzo, p. 86). This led to the development of Christian lectionaries. Furthermore, after the Second Vatican Council in 1965, the Holy See promulgated the *Order of the Readings for Mass (Ordo Lectionum Missae)* which introduced a three yearly cycle of readings that include four passages on Sundays – *First Reading, Responsorial Psalm, Second Reading and Gospel*; and for weekdays, a two yearly cycle of three passages – *First Reading, Responsorial Psalm and Gospel*.

## **2. The Word of God in the Church according to *Verbum Domini***

*Verbum Domini* is very clear in expressing that “*liturgy is the privileged setting in which God speaks to us in the midst of our lives; he speaks today to his people, who hear and respond*” (VD, p. 96). Therefore, every liturgical activity, for that matter, is founded on the sacred Scripture. Quoting the Constitution *Sacrosanctum Concilium*, Pope Benedict XVI emphasizes that “*sacred Scripture is of the greatest importance in the celebration of the liturgy. From it are taken the readings, which are explained in the homily and the psalms that are sung*” (VD, p. 96).

Furthermore, the Synod illustrates the word of God in the celebration of the liturgy in the Sacraments, particularly in the Holy Mass. It commends the importance of the Lectionary in the service of the word during the Mass. This Lectionary which was one of the reforms in the Second Vatican Council has resulted into greater “*access to sacred Scripture, which is now offered in abundance, especially at Sunday Mass. The present structure of the Lectionary not only presents*

*the more important texts of Scripture with some frequency, but also helps us to understand the unity of God's plan, thanks to the interplay of the Old and New Testament readings, an interplay 'in which Christ is the central figure, commemorated in his paschal mystery'” (VD, p.106).*

This *Verbum Domini* document is the working principle of the Liturgical Bible Study. It is *liturgical* because it takes the three liturgical readings of the following Sunday, with the Responsorial Psalm, or the two liturgical readings during weekdays for study and reflections. The *Liturgical Bible Study* (LBS) seeks to understand the *interplay* of the liturgical readings as they are related, connected or even perceived as having some similarities and parallelisms among themselves. The LBS seeks to answer why these readings are matched together. Why is the First Reading chosen by the Church, to match the Gospel? And so with the Second Reading and the Psalm?

The concrete result of understanding the *interplay* of the liturgical readings is wisdom in discovering what God is telling us, his people, in the celebration of the Holy Mass, and what God is saying to every individual, personally.

This wisdom of understanding the connections of the readings is transformative because it is the word of God speaking to his Church and to every individual.

The LBS perhaps is one among the few bible methodologies or activities, in the Church, that considers the three liturgical readings for study and for reflections. This three-reading and psalm methodology has been affirmed strongly in *Verbum Domini*: “*When we approach the (Eucharistic) Mystery, if a crumb falls to the ground we are troubled. Yet when we are listening to the word of God, and God's Word and Christ's flesh and blood are being poured into our ears yet we pay no heed, what great peril should we not feel*” (VD, p105)? This means that every liturgical reading is considered as very important in the Liturgy of the Word during the Holy Mass. Hence, all these liturgical readings are taken for study and insights in the LBS process.

## C. Pastoral Beneficiaries

### 1. Family

The Church, from the beginning, has described a Catholic family as the most fundamental ecclesial community. In fact, *Lumen Gentium* illustrates that the family is the *domestic Church*, where the parents become the first teachers of the Catholic faith, by word and example, to their children (LG #11). *Verbum Domini* affirms this significant insight: “Part of authentic parenthood is to pass on and bear witness to the meaning of life in Christ: through their fidelity and the unity of family life, spouses are the first to proclaim God’s word to their children. The ecclesial community must support and assist them in fostering family prayer, attentive hearing of the word of God, and knowledge of the Bible” (VD, p.138).

Ramon and Merlyn Arguelles and their five children, as of the time of this writing, has been doing the Liturgical Bible Study as a family regularly for more than three years already. Their video was uploaded at YouTube (<http://www.youtube.com>) on Liturgical Bible Study page. The effect for the family is very significant and uplifting. There has been more meaningful bonding among parents and children, more spiritual nourishment through the word of God, and they go to Sunday mass more prepared, better equipped to more fully comprehend the priest’s homilies. Now, the children themselves are facilitating the LBS with their peer groups and playmates.

Another video uploaded at YouTube as EJ Porta, is the preaching of 7-year old Edward Joseph (EJ) Porta before a community of church leaders and parishioners in Don Bosco Parish, Makati. EJ was literally conceived with the word of God through Liturgical Bible Study. His parents, at the time, just got married and they had been attending our LBS every Monday. When EJ was 7 years old (2014), he volunteered to preach, to the surprise of his parents, Edward and Josephine. A year after, his younger brother, Ezequiel also began preaching for their community, *Family Disciples of the Word*, which was born out of Liturgical Bible Study.

## 2. The Clergy and the Religious

Pope Benedict XVI recalled what Pope John Paul II said in *Pastores Dabo Vobis*: “the priest is first of all a minister of the word of God, consecrated and sent to announce the Good News of the Kingdom to all...” (VD, p.130). Thus in *Verbum Domini*, one of the most compelling issues it presented is the importance of the homily. “Accordingly, the faithful listen to God’s word and meditate on it, but those who have the office of teaching by virtue of sacred ordination or have been entrusted with exercising that ministry, namely bishops, priests and deacons, expound the word of God” (VD, p. 108).

Furthermore, Pope Benedict XVI in his *Sacramentum Caritatis*, emphasizes that there is a need to improve the quality of homilies. “The homily is a means of bringing the scriptural message to life in a way that helps the faithful to realize that God’s word is present and at work in their everyday lives” (VD, p. 108).

The Liturgical Bible Study would be an effective tool to prepare the clergy and the religious for the celebration of the Holy Mass whether for Sundays or weekdays. The priests can provide deeper insights if the three liturgical readings and their interplay are considered for reflection.

The usual preaching on the Gospel text alone may limit insights. In all probability, the preacher or the homilist could end up recycling his thoughts and insights over the years. But with the interplay of the liturgical readings, the Gospel is streamlined by the other readings, presenting different angles of insights and reflections and even be animated by the Responsorial Psalm. A padlock of three digits, for example, has obviously more combinations of insights compared to a single plunger one.

## 3. Lectors and the Ministry of Reader

The Synod affirms that the Ministry of Reader is a lay ministry. Those entrusted with this office are required to be “truly suitable and carefully trained. This training should be biblical and liturgical, as well

as *technical*” (VD, p. 107). Notice that the last concern in the training and preparation of lectors, that is equally essential, is *technical*, that includes pronunciation, voice modulation, and even the use of sound equipment.

The Synod continues to emphasize that: *“The purpose of their biblical formation is to give readers the ability to understand the readings in context and to perceive by the light of faith central point of the revealed message. The liturgical formation ought to equip readers to have some grasp of meaning and structure of the liturgy of the word and the significance of its connection with the liturgy of the Eucharist”* (VD, p. 107).

The Liturgical Bible Study aims to achieve these biblical and liturgical preparations for the lectors. Through the process of LBS, where the internalization of the details of the readings and the understanding of their interplay or connections are experienced, the lectors are, first of all, evangelized and transformed by the word of God. And with the technical preparations, the lectors are able to proclaim the word of God more confidently and more effectively before the faithful.

#### **4. The Religious and Lay Communities**

Some of the biblical methodologies that religious and lay communities have been using for the past decades are, in all practicality, more word of man than word of God. A member of the community, after reading aloud or listening intently to the reading of the Gospel text, chooses a word or phrase that strikes him/her. And after prayerful silence, he/she shares his/her experiences related to the word or phrase chosen. These methodologies, with some ending with a course of action in the light of the Gospel text, have definitely led the faithful toward holiness and transformation.

On the other hand, the Liturgical Bible Study is designed to achieve much more understanding of the Gospel and the two readings and their interplay with each other. Hence, through the simple process

of LBS, the community, members of which ‘cook’ and ‘eat’ the word of God together, may be more nourished and transformed. And these members, who go through LBS, will come more prepared for the Holy Mass and be more appreciative of the Liturgy of the Word together with the Liturgy of the Eucharist.

#### **5. Parishes and Schools**

Basic ecclesial communities and schools can benefit tremendously from Liturgical Bible Study. In the parish context, more BEC leaders will be able to lead their own families with more insightful wisdom of the word of God through LBS. Basic Ecclesial Communities can participate more meaningfully in the Holy Mass because they come prepared for it through the Liturgical Bible Study.

And in the school context, the campus ministry can gain more impetus in the proclamation of the word of God. Catechism will be more attractive and participative among catechists and students. For Pope Benedict XVI, *“catechesis must be permeated by the mindset, the spirit and the outlook of the Bible and the Gospels through assiduous contact with the texts themselves; yet it also means remembering that catechesis will be all the richer and the more effective for reading the texts with the mind and the heart of the Church”* (VD, p.126).

#### **6. Any Faith-seeking Individual**

Many individuals, Catholic and non-Catholic are at a loss looking for directions in life. And many Catholics are leaving the Church. According to Social Weather Stations (SWS), there has been a decline in weekly Church attendance from 64% in July 1991 to 37% in February 2013 (Social Weather Stations, April 7, 2013).

Since early part of 2014, a group of young professionals in Makati City, Metro Manila, led by Teny Mardo Peralta and E.Y Tolentino, both from Singles for Family and Life, had been gathering regularly every Monday at a coffee shop, sometimes at a restaurant, in Makati



for the Liturgical Bible Study. Faith-seeking individuals of the group admitted being better enlightened and nourished with the word of God in the sessions. One new member of the group regularly attending the LBS who was even not a Catholic is now considering conversion to the Catholic faith.

The Liturgical Bible Study has proven to be a good tool for attracting Catholics and non-Catholics to the Church. People come to appreciate the Holy Mass as a source of nourishment through the Liturgy of the Word and the Liturgy of the Eucharist.

### III. Structure of Liturgical Bible Study

#### A. The Liturgical Bible Study Outline

1. *Opening Prayer or Song*
2. *Liturgical Bible Study Proper*
  - a. *Gospel*
    - 1) *Reading of the text.*
    - 2) *Understanding the text verse by verse.*
    - 3) *Summary of the Gospel*
  - b. *First Reading*
    - 1) *Reading of the text.*
    - 2) *Understanding the text verse by verse.*
    - 3) *Connecting the Gospel with the First Reading.*
  - c. *Second Reading*
    - 1) *Reading of the text.*
    - 2) *Understanding the text.*
    - 3) *Connecting the Gospel, First Reading and Second Reading*
  - d. *One-Thread Message (Hibla)*

#### 3. *Actualization: Application Question for Faith Sharing*

#### 4. *Closing Prayer*

### B. LBS Parts Explained

#### 1. *Opening Prayer or Song*

The facilitator opens the Liturgical Bible Study with a prayer or with an appropriate song. A short praise and worship service for the group can certainly animate the group toward the promptings of the Holy Spirit for the Liturgical Bible Study.

Invoking the Holy Spirit and asking God's holy presence is the most essential part in the process of Liturgical Bible Study. The Holy Spirit works in them to reveal to the participants the meaning of the word of God, leading to the basic understanding of the liturgical Sunday readings. This is considered a kind of revelation leading to the understanding of the word of God that becomes the wisdom of the participants – a gift from the Holy Spirit.

Furthermore, the opening prayer or song sets the spiritual tone for the group as it predisposes them for this important activity: the participants quiet down, settle together in a prayerful mood and prepare themselves for the Liturgical Bible Study (LBS).

In calling the attention of the participants who may still be engaged in exchanging pleasantries with each other, as a matter of sensible practice, the facilitator may say: "*Let us continue putting ourselves in the presence of the Lord.*" And after the prayer, the facilitator or prayer leader may end by saying: "*This we ask You in Jesus' name*" or "*We ask You this through Christ, our Lord*" or simply, "*In Jesus' name*".

Another way of opening the LBS is just singing the song "*Come Holy Spirit*" which is very popular.

## Come Holy Spirit

*Come Holy Spirit*

*Come, Holy Spirit, we need You.*

*Come, Holy Spirit, we pray.*

*Come with Your strength and Your power.*

*Come in Your own special way.*

*Come like a spring in the desert*

*Come to the weary of soul.*

*O let Your sweet healing power*

*Touch us and make us whole.*

For groups belonging to Catholic charismatic communities or Marriage and Family life communities, a 5-10 minute praise and worship service is encouraged because it will animate the group into deeper participation of the members in prayer.

### 2. Liturgical Bible Study Proper

After the prayer, the facilitator or leader reminds the members that the texts will be taken from the readings for the coming Sunday. He /she will announce, or better still, write on the board the Sunday readings, starting with the Gospel. The members of the group will locate from their Bibles the Sunday Gospel.

#### a. Gospel

##### 1) Reading of the text.

A member of the group reads the text. Everybody stands to honor the Gospel. As the reader proclaims the Gospel, the rest of the group reads with him/her silently.

The reader begins:

*"A reading from the Holy Gospel according to \_\_\_\_\_,  
chapter \_\_\_\_\_, verses \_\_\_\_\_"*

Everybody answers, making the sign of the cross on the forehead, on the lips and on the heart: *"Glory to you O, Lord."*

The reader ends: *"The Gospel of the Lord..."*

Everybody answers: *"Praise to You, O Lord Jesus Christ."*

For example: Mark 1,14-20

(3rd Sunday in Ordinary Time)

Reader: *"A reading from the Holy Gospel according to St. Mark chapter 1, verses 14-20"*

Participants: *"Glory to you O, Lord."*

*"<sup>14</sup>After John had been arrested, Jesus came to Galilee proclaiming the gospel of God: <sup>15</sup>"This is the time of fulfillment. The kingdom of God is at hand. Repent, and believe in the gospel." <sup>16</sup>As he passed by the Sea of Galilee, he saw Simon and his brother Andrew casting their nets into the sea; they were fishermen.<sup>17</sup> Jesus said to them, "Come after me, and I will make you fishers of men." <sup>18</sup>Then they abandoned their nets and followed him. <sup>19</sup>He walked along a little farther and saw James, the son of Zebedee, and his brother John. They too were in a boat mending their nets. <sup>20</sup>Then he called them. So they left their father Zebedee in the boat along with the hired men and followed him."*

The reader ends: *"The Gospel of the Lord..."*

Everybody answers: *"Praise to You, O Lord Jesus Christ."*

Then everybody sits and the facilitator takes over.

The reason why the group reads the Sunday Gospel first is the fact that it is the main liturgical reading. The first and the second liturgical readings support and compliment the Gospel.

And secondly, for practical reasons, if the group has limited time for the LBS, at least the Gospel and the First Reading can be studied and reflected upon for the connections, leading to the wisdom of the word of God in the Holy Mass.

## 2) Understanding the text

The facilitator encourages the group to explore the Gospel text. The facilitator, thus, leads the group to go into the details of the text, examining them, verse by verse, by asking questions based on the text, and encouraging the group to visualize the text. The members of the group then look for answers from the text or verses that will shed light and understanding on the reading.

### Going into the details

The simplest way to understand the Gospel text is to go into the details of the text. In Filipino, the LBS calls this "*himayin* method". The objective is to understand and get the sense of the Gospel text. Understanding the biblical text does not necessarily mean that in the LBS, the facilitator should have a biblical and theological background. Certainly, it is a great advantage for the group if the facilitator has. But in the LBS, the facilitator is not the teacher and the members are not his/her students. He/she facilitates to encourage the members to express their knowledge and understanding through evocative approach by asking them questions based on the text, verse by verse, and the members answering based on the text, verse for verse.

F = Facilitator

P = Participants(s)

v = Verse

F: *In v.14, after what event did Jesus come to Galilee?*

P: *After John was arrested.*

F: *What did Jesus do in Galilee?*

P: *He was proclaiming the gospel of God.*

F: *In v.15, what was His message?*

P: *"This is the time of fulfillment. The kingdom of God is at hand. Repent, and believe in the gospel."*

F: *In v.16, as Jesus passed by the Sea of Galilee, whom did Jesus see?*

P: *Jesus saw Simon and his brother Andrew.*

F: *And what were they doing?*

P: *They were casting their nets into the sea for they were fishermen.*

F: *In v.17, what did Jesus tell them?*

P: *"Come after me, and I will make you fishers of men."*

F: *In v.18, what was the reaction of Simon and Andrew?*

P: *They abandoned their nets and followed Jesus.*

F: *In v.19, who else did Jesus see?*

P: *Jesus saw James and his brother John, sons of Zebedee.*

F: *What were they doing when Jesus saw them?*

P: *They were in a boat, mending their nets.*

F: *In v.20, what happened when Jesus called them?*

P: *They left their father Zebedee, together with their hired men and followed Jesus.*

The above Q & A may seem at first glance as too elementary. But this simplified approach is intended not only to encourage participation whether among children or adults, but also to stimulate their minds toward later analytical approaches and insights.

### 3) Summary of the Gospel

After going into the details of the Gospel, the facilitator asks a member of the group to summarize the said reading to deepen the group's learning process.

#### b. First Reading

The members of the group will now locate from their Bibles the First Reading of the coming Sunday. Doing this regularly during the weekly Liturgical Bible Study sessions will make the members of the group familiar with the books and parts of their Bibles.

#### 1) Reading of the Text

Another member from the group reads the text of the First Reading aloud while other members read silently with him/her on their own Bibles.

Illustration: Jonah 3,1-5.10  
(3rd Sunday in Ordinary Time)

Reader: "A reading from the Book of Jonah  
Chapter 3, verses 1-5.10."

<sup>1</sup>"The word of the LORD came to Jonah a second time, saying:  
<sup>2</sup>"Set out for the great city of Nineveh, and announce to it the message that I will tell you."  
<sup>3</sup>So Jonah set out for Nineveh, in accord with the word of the LORD. Now Nineveh was an awesomely great city; it took three days to walk through it.  
<sup>4</sup>Jonah began his journey through the city, and when he had gone only a single day's walk announcing, "Forty

days more and Nineveh shall be overthrown,"  
<sup>5</sup>the people of Nineveh believed God; they proclaimed a fast and all of them, great and small, put on sackcloth.

<sup>10</sup>"When God saw by their actions how they turned from their evil way, he repented of the evil he had threatened to do to them; he did not carry it out."

Reader: "The Word of the Lord."

People: "Thanks be to God."

#### 2) Understanding the Text

Just like the way to understand the Gospel text, the facilitator asks questions based on the text of the First Reading, verse by verse, and the members of the group answer based on the text.

F: In v.1, what came to Jonah?

P: The word of the Lord.

F: In v.2, what did the Lord tell him?

P: "Set out for the great city of Nineveh, and announce to it the message that I will tell you."

F: In v.3, did Jonah obey the Lord?

P: Yes.

F: Please describe Nineveh in v.3.

P: Nineveh is an awesomely great city. It took three days to walk through it.

F: In v.4, when Jonah was in the city, what did he announce to its people?



- P: *"Forty days more and Nineveh shall be overthrown."*
- F: *In v.5, what was the reaction of the people of Nineveh?*
- P: *They believed God; they proclaimed a fast and all of them, great and small, put on sackcloth.*
- F: *And in v.10, when God saw how they repented from their evil way, he repented of the evil he had threatened to do to them; he did not carry it out.*

At this stage in the session, the facilitator can already notice a faster and more prompt response time from the participants.

### *3) Connecting the Gospel with the First Reading.*

The facilitator will ask his members if there are connections, similarities or significant relationships between the Gospel and the First Reading. The members will now express their insights regarding what they see as relationships between the two readings. The facilitator then asks the group: "Why did the Church choose this First Reading to match the Gospel?"

The wisdom of the readings begins to unfold. The members share to the group what they perceive as connections and similarities between the said liturgical readings.

Example responses:

- Both readings have a message to proclaim:*  
*In the Gospel, Jesus proclaimed the Kingdom*  
*In the 1st Reading, Jonah proclaimed Nineveh's destruction.*
- Both have the message of repentance:*  
*In the Gospel, Jesus said: Repent and believe in the gospel.*  
*In the 1st Reading, the people of Nineveh repented.*

- Both have someone called:*  
*In the Gospel, Simon, Andrew, James and John were called.*  
*In the 1st Reading: Jonah was called.*

There could be more similarities and connections that can be traced from the two readings. The facilitator may express his/her appreciation and affirmation for the members who share their insights to the group.

### *c. Second Reading*

The members of the group will now locate the Second Reading from their Bibles.

#### *1) Reading of the text*

Another member reads the text as he/she stands and the rest remain seated.

#### *1 Corinthians 7,29-31 (3rd Sunday in Ordinary Time)*

Reader: *"A reading from the 1st Letter of St. Paul to the Corinthians, chapter 7, verses 29-31."*

*"<sup>29</sup>I tell you, brothers, the time is running out. From now on, let those having wives act as not having them, <sup>30</sup>those weeping as not weeping, those rejoicing as not rejoicing, those buying as not owning, those using the world as not using it fully. For the world in its present form is passing away."*

Reader: *"The word of the Lord."*

People: *"Thanks be to God."*

#### *2) Understanding the text*

F: *In v.29, what was the warning of St. Paul to the Corinthians?*

P: *Time is running out.*

- F: *So, what was his advice to them?*
- P: *Those who have wives act as not having them.*
- F: *In v.30, what else?*
- P: *Those weeping as not weeping, those rejoicing as not rejoicing, those buying as not owning.*
- F: *In v.31, what else did he tell them?*
- P: *Those using the world as not using it fully.*
- F: *What was the reason of St. Paul?*
- P: *For the world in its present form is passing away.*

As the session progresses, the participants become more adept at the *himayin* process. Little by little, they are apt to become incisive in their reflections.

### *3) Connecting the Gospel, First Reading and the Second Reading.*

The facilitator will now ask the members the connections from the three readings. The connections expressed by the group may not be exhaustive.

Example responses:

*-All three readings have warnings:*

*from Jesus, from Jonah and from St. Paul.*

*-Likewise, all three readings have proclaimers:*

*Jesus, Jonah and St. Paul.*

*-Further in the readings, the subjects have either possessions or families to leave behind:*

*Simon and Andrew left their nets (signifying their livelihood).*

*James and John left their father.*

*The people of Nineveh left their sinfulness.*

*And the Corinthians spiritually left their wives and other material things.*

*-There is also a sense of urgency in all three:*

*Simon and Andrew, James and John, immediately left their families and their work.*

*The people of Nineveh immediately repented.*

*And St. Paul said: "Time is running out."*

There could be other connections that can be elicited from the members.

### *d. One-Thread Message*

The objective of this part of the LBS is to gather the insights of the group and synthesize them into one or two sentences. The group formulates a 'one-thread' message using the connections of the readings. We call this message *hibla* (fiber). The 'one-thread' message or *hibla* expresses the unity of the three readings. The group draws their insights and reflections from the readings with the facilitator guiding and animating the members. This 'one-thread' message may be affirmed by reading the Responsorial Psalm (just the response) before the group.

For example:

- *God's call is for everyone.*
- *There is sense of urgency when we respond to His call.*
- *Whenever God calls, He gives instructions what to do.*
- *God calls us to proclaim the word of God.*

If these are the one-thread message (*hibla*), we now take the Responsorial Psalm: "*Teach me Your ways, O Lord.*" Thus the final output may come out like this:

*"The ways may be revealed to us by the word of God. And eventually, when we know His ways, then we are called and sent to others to proclaim in turn the word of God."*

### **3. Actualization: Application Question for Faith Sharing**

The biblical texts have now become the 'Word of God', a source of spiritual life and an inspiration to live by. The group has just released the power of the Word as it speaks to the members. This part of the LBS puts the Word of God into concrete lives and experiences. The facilitator will ask a question to the members based on the group's insights.

For example, *"Based on the readings this coming Sunday, when did you experience God calling you? What was His message for you?"*

The facilitator may divide the big group into smaller groupings of 3-4 members per group to maximize the sharing within a shorter time. Sharing may encourage confidentiality and bonding among the smaller groups

### **4. Closing Prayer or Song**

The facilitator concludes with a thanksgiving prayer for the wisdom and enlightenment they received, for the participation of the members, but most of all for the guidance of the Holy Spirit. The group may exhort and glorify God for all the blessings.

Then the members, initiated by the facilitator, as part of the LBS culture, shall bless each other with the sign of the cross on the forehead. The very reason for this is the fact that every Catholic Christian received the sign of the cross on the forehead during his/her Sacrament of Baptism from the priest, parents and godparents. Adapting this culture will foster warmth, unity and love among themselves.

## **C. The Psychological Process, Levels of Asking Questions, and Scope of Liturgical Bible Study**

### **1. The Psychological Process: Power of Verbalization**

**I**t may seem that the process of understanding the Gospel and the other readings, using the question-and-answer format, is very elementary and simple. The facilitator asks questions, verse by verse, from the liturgical readings, and the participants answer based on the text. Even children who know how to read the Bible, though slowly, can participate and answer in the LBS with this process. In other words, they are able to verbalize every verse. And verbalizing the text by the members will lead them to greater comprehension of the word of God.

The effects of verbalization is basically psychological. Robert Gagné and Ernest Smith, Jr. write in *Journal of Experimental Psychology*, according to the abstract on *A Study of the Effects of Verbalization on Problem Solving*, "requiring Ss (students) to verbalize during practice has the effect of making them think of new reasons for their moves, and thus facilitates both the discovery of general principles and their employment in solving successive problems" (Robert Gagné and Ernest Smith Jr., Vol. 63 (1), Jan 1962).

This observation was affirmed by Stephen Carmean and Morton Weir from University of Illinois when they compared a verbal control group with the non-verbal. They observed that "verbalizing the correct stimulus after each response facilitated learning" among the students and that the recall of the stimuli which they had overtly verbalized was greater" (*Effects of Verbalizations on Discrimination Learning and Retention*, Journal of Verbal Learning and Verbal Behavior, Vol. 6, Issue 4, 1967).

It is our common experiences that when we do review in preparation for school exams, we memorize our notes. And very often we have to verbalize our review notes together with other classmates for better memory retention.

In another instances, when we encode or typewrite our reports and other paperwork, we virtually verbalize every word while typing or encoding them on a laptop or computer or typewriter. As we verbalize, we enhance our mental focus.

These psychological strengths of the Liturgical Bible Study process lead to a deeper understanding of the word of God, which would eventually guide us to its wisdom and spiritual nourishment.

## 2. Levels of Asking Questions

The LBS acknowledges that there are participants coming from all walks of life, from lay people, religious and clergy, young and old, and from those with different academic backgrounds and with various levels of spirituality and knowledge of the Bible. In drawing participation from these types of groups, the facilitator may adopt three levels of asking questions, depending on the group's situation, background and needs.

### Level 1

Situations:

- *If the group is just new to LBS;*
- *If the group has children and adults together;*
- *If there are participants who only finished elementary or high school level.*

Treatment:

- *The facilitator asks questions, verse by verse based from the biblical text.*
- *The participants answer from the text, verse by verse.*

Examples:

Bible text: Luke 17,11-19

### *The Cleansing of Ten Lepers.*

*"<sup>11</sup>As he continued his journey to Jerusalem, he traveled through Samaria and Galilee. <sup>12</sup>As he was entering a village, ten lepers met him. They stood at a distance from him <sup>13</sup>and raised their voice, saying, 'Jesus, Master! Have pity on us!' <sup>14</sup>And when he saw them, he said, 'Go show yourselves to the priests.' As they were going they were cleansed. <sup>15</sup>And one of them, realizing he had been healed, returned, glorifying God in a loud voice; <sup>16</sup>and he fell at the feet of Jesus and thanked him. He was a Samaritan. <sup>17</sup>Jesus said in reply, 'Ten were cleansed, were they not? Where are the other nine? <sup>18</sup>Has none but this foreigner returned to give thanks to God?' <sup>19</sup>Then he said to him, 'Stand up and go; your faith has saved you.'"*

F: *In verse 11, as Jesus was going to Jerusalem, where was he passing through?*

P: *Samaria and Galilee.*

F: *In v. 12, whom did Jesus meet?*

P: *Ten lepers, standing at a distance from him.*

F: *In v. 13, what did they say to Jesus?*

P: *"Jesus, Master, have pity on us!"*

And so on...

### Level 2

Situations:

- *If the group has been used to LBS process and wants deeper understanding of the biblical text*

Treatment:

- *The facilitator asks questions verse by verse and some practical questions. Practical questions lead to logical situations or implications though not mentioned directly in the text.*



Examples of some practical questions from the same Biblical text:

F: *In v. 12, whom did Jesus meet?*

P: *Ten lepers, standing at a distance from him.*

F: *In v. 12, practical question, why did the lepers stand at a distance from Jesus?*

P: *Because leprosy at that time was considered a dreaded disease, highly contagious and untreatable at that time.*

F: *Another practical question, how do you describe a leper?*

P: *Some lepers have skin rotting and falling off, some lost their fingers and toes and they smell terrible.*

Another example:

F: *In v. 14, when Jesus saw the ten lepers, what did he tell them?*

P: *Jesus said: "Go and show yourselves to the priests."*

F: *Practical question, why did Jesus command them to go to the priests?*

P: *Maybe the priests would be the ones to declare that they are already healed and therefore can join their families.*

P: *Maybe, leprosy was considered at the time a curse from God. So when the lepers are healed, it means that they were cleansed from the curse and so the priests would allow them to join their families.*

F: *As they were going, what happened to them?*

P: *They were all cleansed.*

### Level 3

Situations:

- *If the members of the group, like seminarians, religious and lay leaders, even clergy, and those who are already used to LBS process, need more knowledge of the Bible and deeper insight from the liturgical readings.*

Treatment:

- *The facilitator asks questions, verse by verse, with some practical questions and a little research from commentaries usually can be taken from the footnotes of New American Bible, Jerusalem Bible, New Community Bible published by St. Paul's Publications and other Bible commentaries.*

Example of a little research from commentaries:

F: *Do you have any commentary on your footnotes regarding the story of the ten lepers?*

P: *From the New American Bible, (Luke 17, 11–19)*

*This incident recounting the thankfulness of the cleansed Samaritan leper is narrated only in Luke's gospel and provides an instance of Jesus holding up a non-Jew (Lk 17, 18) as an example to his Jewish contemporaries (cf. Lk 10, 33 where a similar purpose is achieved in the story of the good Samaritan). Moreover, it is the faith in Jesus manifested by the foreigner that has brought him salvation (Lk 17, 19; cf. the similar relationship between faith and salvation in Lk 7, 50; 8, 48. 50).*

### 3. Scope of Liturgical Bible Study

The perimeter of the Liturgical Bible Study is pegged at the Sunday liturgical readings of the Holy Mass. If the LBS is used for weekdays, then the scope is limited to the weekday's liturgical readings. These are two practical reasons for establishing the scope of LBS.

### *a. Limiting the Topic*

The participants' answers, connections between the readings and the insights should be drawn out of the Sunday liturgical readings.

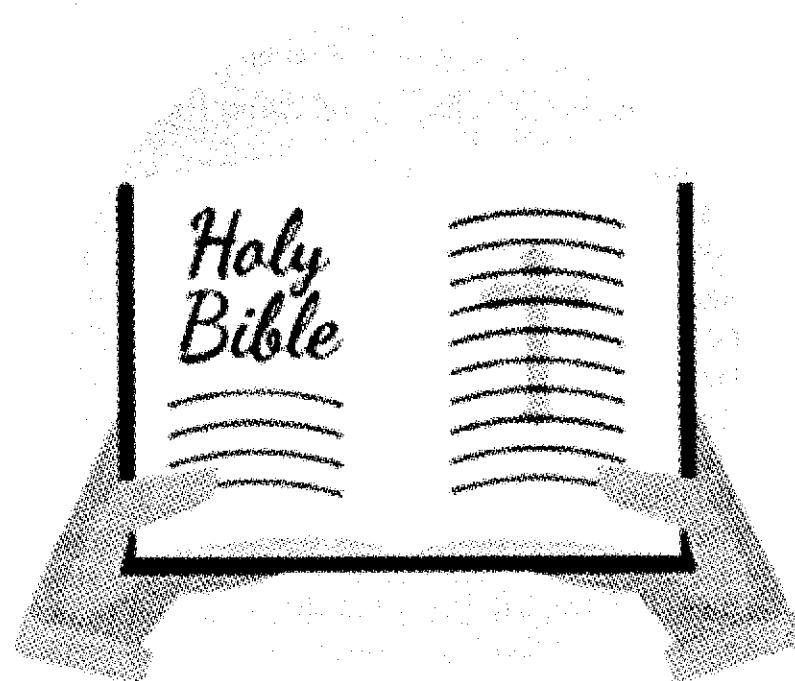
For example, if the Sunday Gospel is taken from Luke 9,10-17, the story of the multiplication of the loaves, the LBS scope is confined only to the account of St. Luke. Hence, the account of St. John on the multiplication of the loaves, particularly about the boy who had five barley loaves and two fish (John 6,9) should not be part of the discussion or insight.

Another example, if a participant asks the LBS facilitator questions about Catholic doctrines like, the Blessed Virgin Mary or veneration of saints, but not part of liturgical readings, the latter is not obliged to answer. The facilitator may politely reply: "*Brother/Sister, sorry, we will not discuss your question here today. Maybe some other time.*" This is to avoid any possible debate or discussion not part of the liturgical readings.

### *b. Limiting the Time Frame*

With the focus of the interaction on the liturgical readings, the time for the entire LBS process is more manageable and meaningful.

## PART TWO: The Liturgical Bible Study Seminar (LBSS)



*Indeed, the word of God is living and effective, sharper than any two-edged sword, penetrating even between soul and spirit, joints and marrow, and able to discern reflections and thoughts of the heart.*

Hebrews 4,12

## Outline of the Liturgical Bible Study Seminar

- I. NATURE and OBJECTIVES of LITURGICAL BIBLE STUDY SEMINAR
  - A. Nature
  - B. Objectives
- II. PROPOSED SCHEDULING for LITURGICAL BIBLE STUDY SEMINAR
  - A. Live-out Seminar
  - B. Live-in Seminar
- III. BIBLE ENTHRONEMENT WITH PILGRIM DANCE
- IV. CONFERENCES
  - A. CONFERENCE 1: The Bible and Its Contents
  - B. CONFERENCE 2: The Bible: Its Composition, Revelation and Inspiration
  - C. CONFERENCE 3: Methods of Interpretation of the Bible in the Church
  - D. CONFERENCE 4: Workshops
    1. Liturgical Bible Study: Hands-on
    2. Facilitating Liturgical Bible Study
  - E. CONFERENCE 5: The Call to be Disciples of the Word
- V. CELEBRATION OF THE HOLY MASS
  - A. Offertory of the Word
  - B. Offertory of the Eucharist
  - C. Graduation and Distribution of Certificates
- VI. FOLLOW-UP ACTIVITIES AND RESOURCES
  - A. Proper and Regular Exposure
  - B. National Bible Week
  - C. Acquisition of Bibles
  - D. LBS Resource Office, a Course on Family Catechesis through Liturgical Bible Study
  - E. Social Media Sites

## I. NATURE and OBJECTIVES of LITURGICAL BIBLE STUDY SEMINAR

### A. Nature

The LITURGICAL BIBLE STUDY SEMINAR is a process of formation designed for the spiritual nourishment of individuals and communities through the Word of God. Initially, the LBSS endeavors to develop among the participants a hunger for the Word by providing a basic knowledge of the Bible including its background and its purpose in human daily living. With the Sunday readings to be taken up in the workshops, the participants are led to appreciate and be nourished with the spiritual insights drawn from the word of God.

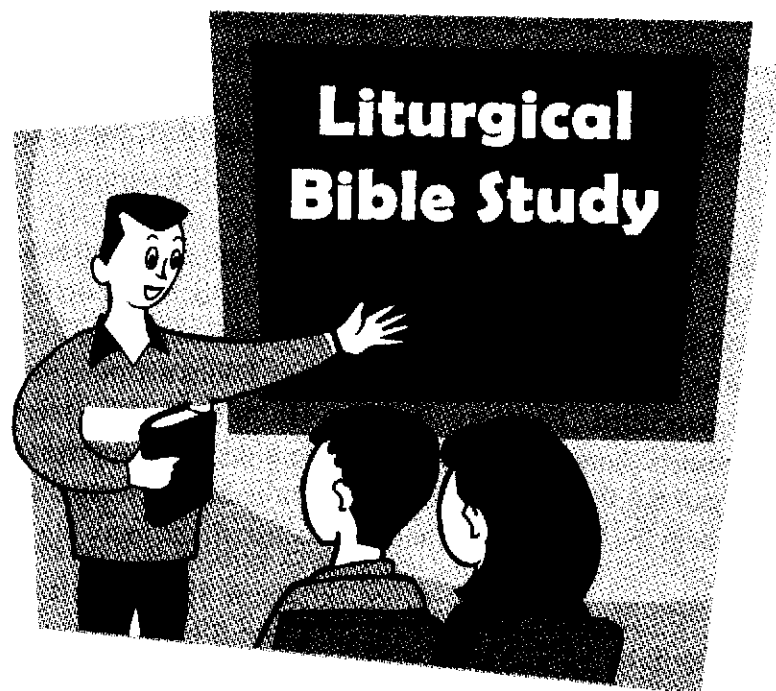
Moreover, the LITURGICAL BIBLE STUDY SEMINAR (LBSS) is designed as a follow-up to the *Bibliarasa*, *Basic Bible Seminar* (BBS), and the *Bible Facilitators' Seminar*, *Lumko* method and other Bible methodologies. The LBSS can be used as a next-level Biblical program. Through the conferences and workshops, the LBSS endeavors to teach and train the participants how to facilitate the Liturgical Bible Study.

Subsequently, the participants are expected to form Liturgical Bible Study groups in their respective areas using the methodology they have learned from the seminar. Thus it is hoped that individuals and communities will come to celebrate the Holy Eucharist more prepared and more nourished. This way, they can affirm their own insights *vis a vis* the priests' homilies resulting in a more enriched appreciation of the Liturgy of the Word. The more the individuals and communities are nourished with the Word of God and the Eucharist, the more the Church comes alive!

### B. Objectives

The Liturgical Bible Study Seminar is conducted:

1. To provide the participants with some basic knowledge and understanding of the Bible, its contents, composition, revelation and inspiration;
2. To impart among the participants the different methods of interpreting the Bible in the Church;
3. To lead the participants into experiencing the Liturgical Bible Study process through workshops and at the same time, being spiritually nourished from the experience of LBS.
4. To enable the participants to facilitate the Liturgical Bible Study and eventually conduct the LBS with confidence.
5. To encourage the participants to form Liturgical Bible Study Groups in their respective areas or communities.



## II. PROPOSED SCHEDULING FOR LITURGICAL BIBLE STUDY SEMINAR

### A. Live-out Seminar

#### Day 1

07:30	Registration
08:00	Short Praise and Worship
08:30	Orientation
09:00	Bible Enthronement with Pilgrim Dance
10:00	Snacks
10:30	Conference 1
12:00	Lunch
01:00	Praise and Worship
01:30	Conference 2
03:00	Break with One Worship Song
03:30	Conference 3
04:30	Snacks
05:00	Conference 4 ( <i>Workshops 1-3</i> )
06:30	Plenary, Conclusion and Announcements
07:00	End of Day 1 ( <i>Departure</i> )

#### Day 2

07:30	Registration
08:00	Short Praise and Worship
08:30	Recap
09:00	Conference 4 ( <i>Workshops 4-6</i> )
10:00	Snacks
10:30	Continuation of <i>Workshops 4-6</i>
12:00	Lunch
01:30	Conference 5
03:00	Break with Preparation for Holy Mass
03:30	Holy Mass with Graduation and Giving of LBSS certificates
	Acknowledgements and Expressions of Gratitude
05:00	Snacks
	End of LBSS ( <i>Home Sweet Home</i> )



## Introduction

With the chairs arranged and the participants standing, the priest or lay prayer leader begins by addressing the participants:

Priest/leader: *The whole of Christian life is like a great pilgrimage towards the Father's house, and everyday we discover His unconditional love for all of us.*

*Let us open this celebration with a dance symbolizing our journey to the Father.*

## Pilgrim Dance with Bible offering

### Instructions:

Have the participants stand in line, each placing his right hand on the left shoulder of the person in front, and his left hand holding his Bible in front of his chest. At a signal, with an instrumental music playing, everybody walks toward the chapel or room.

Beginning with the right foot, the participant moves with three steps forward and then stops on the fourth step with the left foot lifted behind him. The participant then shifts his weight back to the left foot while raising the right foot simulating a step backward, and he begins again with the right foot three steps forward and one step back, and so on, until the group reaches the center of the chapel or room.

As each member approaches the center of the chapel or room, he/she places his/her Bible on the table prepared earlier. The dance continues until everybody has placed his/her Bible on the table. Then, as the participants remain standing before their chairs, the para-liturgical celebration continues with the priest or lay prayer leader presiding as he/she stands before the participants.

## Invitation to Prayer (if a priest presiding)

Priest: *In the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit,*

All: *Amen.*

Priest: *Peace be with you.*

All: *And with your spirit.*

## Invitation to Prayer (if a lay prayer leader presiding)

Leader: *In the name of the Creator who gathers us,*

All: *Let the name of God be praised.*

Leader: *In the name of Jesus who frees us,*

All: *Let the name of God be praised.*

Leader: *In the name of the Spirit who sustains us,*

All: *Let the name of God be praised.*

Leader: *Be with us in this assembly, O Lord. And make us one, as we experience and proclaim your wondrous deeds and magnificent love in Jesus' name.*

All: *Amen.*

## Opening Prayer

Priest/Leader: *Let us pray,*

*Heavenly Father, we thank You for gathering us today to know You more through Your Word. We thank You for this assembly of your chosen people to undergo Liturgical Bible Study Seminar. May we ask You to send us the Holy Spirit that He may inspire us to be able to understand Your wisdom and put it into practice in our daily lives. We ask this through Christ, Your Son and our Lord, who lives and reigns with You and the Holy Spirit, One God forever and ever.*

All: *Amen.*

## Liturgy of the Word

Commentator: *Please be seated.*

*Let us now listen to our selected Scriptural readings. After each reading, a short reflection follows.*

Reader: *A reading from the Letter to the Hebrews, Chap. 4, v.12 to 13.*

*"Indeed, the word of God is living and effective, sharper than any two-edged sword, penetrating even between soul and spirit, joints and marrow, and able to discern reflections and thoughts of the heart. No creature is concealed from him, but everything is naked and exposed to the eyes of him to whom we must render an account."*

*The Word of the Lord.*

All: *Thanks be to God.*

Silence for Reflection

*(Soft music may be played here.)*

Commentator: *Please stand to honor the Gospel.*

*(A simple song of Alleluia may follow.)*

Priest/Leader: *A reading from the Gospel according to St. Luke, chapter 11, v. 27-28.*

*"While he was speaking, a woman from the crowd called out and said to him, "Blessed is the womb that carried you and the breasts at which you nursed." He replied, "Rather, blessed are those who hear the word of God and observe it."*

*The Gospel of the Lord*

All: *Praise to You O Lord Jesus Christ.*

Commentator: *Please be seated.*

## Homily

The priest-presider or any assigned leader may give his/her insights regarding the symbolisms of the Pilgrim Dance, like the meaning of placing the right hand on the left shoulder of the person in front and the Bible on the chest, why three steps forward and one step backward are made, etc.. He/she then shares his/her reflections on the Scriptural readings.

### Veneration of the Bible and Offering of Personal Intentions

Commentator: *Please stand for the veneration of the Bible.*

*After our celebrant places the Bible on the lectern, please form four lines. Every four participants will lay their hands on the Bible as they make their intentions before the word of God.*

The priest/leader solemnly places the Bible on the lectern with flowers as adornment. The participants are asked to form four lines and in groups of four, they approach the Bible upon which they lay their hands while uttering in silence their personal prayers and petitions. Afterwards, the participants go back to their seats while waiting for the others to finish giving prayerful respect to the Bible. *(Soft music plays.)*

### Our Father

Commentator: *Please stand*

Priest/Leader: *Gathering our prayers and praises into one, let us offer the prayer Jesus Christ taught us.*

***Our Father*** maybe sung . . .

Priest/Leader: *Let us pray:*

*God, our Father, You sent Your Son, Jesus Christ, as the Word made flesh and dwelt among us. We thank You for making us Your children through Baptism which Your Son Jesus has instituted in us. And now*

as Your children, we ask You to bless our Liturgical Bible Study Seminar. May this seminar bring us closer to You as we know You more with Your wisdom. Bless all our participants that they may involve themselves wholeheartedly in this seminar.

Lord, bless also, all our speakers, sharers and facilitators that we may do our assigned tasks to glorify You more than ourselves. And, finally, bless our families, we left behind, for us to participate in the Liturgical Bible Study Seminar. We ask You this through Our Lord, Jesus Christ, Your Son, who lives and reigns with You and the Holy Spirit, one God, forever and ever.

All: Amen.

### Blessing

Priest: (Takes the enthroned Bible from the lectern and blesses the people with it.)  
*May the Almighty God bless you, (+) in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit,*

If a lay leader presiding, he/she leads the participants with the sign of the cross.

Leader: *May Almighty God bless us, in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit,*

All: Amen.

Recessional Song

## IV. CONFERENCES

### A. CONFERENCE 1: THE BIBLE AND ITS CONTENTS

#### OBJECTIVES OF THE CONFERENCE:

1. To provide individuals with basic information about the Bible.
2. To help individuals familiarize themselves with the different books of the Bible, and provide them with the skills for quickly locating texts.
3. To help the participants distinguish the difference between Catholic, protestant and 'ecumenical' Bibles.

#### THINGS NEEDED

1. Individual Bibles (of various versions)
2. paper/pen
3. marking pen
4. tally (white or black) board
5. Handout #1: *Different Versions of the Bible*
6. Handout #2: *Features/Differences in Catholic and Protestant Editions*
7. Handout #3: *The Deuterocanonicals*
8. Handout #4: *Books in the Catholic Bible*

#### OUTLINE OF THE CONFERENCE

- I. Introduction
- II. Bible Familiarization
  - A. Objectives of the Activity
  - B. Instructions
  - C. Questions
  - D. Answers
  - E. Discussions
- III. The Books of the Bible
  - A. Two Main Divisions
  - B. Chronological Arrangement of the Books of the Bible
  - C. Conclusion

## CONFERENCE PROPER

### I. Introduction

The Bible may be described as a collection of writings, which the Church recognizes as inspired.

This book is often referred to by different names: Bible, Sacred Scriptures, Sacred Books, the word of God, the Holy Book, the Old and New Testaments.

The word "Bible" originates from the Latin word "*biblia*" which means 'book' and from the Greek word '*biblia*' which also means 'books'.

The Bible may be considered as one significant work – the work of the Divine Author. However, from the human standpoint, it is not just a book, it is not even *the* Book. It is actually a library or a collection of books, better still, a literature of a people, the Chosen people, God's chosen people.

### II. Bible Familiarization

#### A. Objectives of the Activity

Bible Familiarization aims to acquaint the participants to the different books of the Bible in the Old and New Testaments. This activity is also intended for the participants to discover and discuss the differences between Catholic, protestant and 'ecumenical' Bibles, particularly with regards to Deuterocanonical books, the application of the "Imprimatur" and the "Nihil Obstat".

#### B. Instructions

For this activity, copies of complete Bibles, Old and New Testaments, in different versions/translations are needed.

Make smaller groups of about 3-5 participants, and give each member a copy of a complete Bible with the following instructions:

1. Flip through the pages of the Bible. List down the titles of the books and after each title, write down the number of chapter/s of each book. Do this for both the Old Testament and New Testament.
2. Total the number of books you have in the Old Testament and in the New Testament. Then compute the sum total number of books for both Testaments.
3. Identify which book/s has/have the highest number of chapters and which book/s has/have the least number of chapters considering their verses. Do this both for the Old and New Testaments.
4. After you have finished, please write your group's answers on the tally sheet posted on the board.
5. Discussion follows.

#### C. Questions

1. How many books are there in the
  - a) Old Testament
  - b) New Testament
2. How many books are there in the entire Bible?
3. How many chapters do you have in the books of:
  - a) Baruch
  - b) Daniel
  - c) Esther
4. In the Book of Daniel, how many verses do you have?
5. What is the version of the Bible used by the group?

**D. Answers**

1. Number of books:

- a) Old Testament = 46 or 39 or 51 books  
 b) New Testament = 27 books

2. Total number of books in the Bible = 73 or 66 or 78 books

- 73 Books - Catholic Bible  
 66 Books - Protestant Bible  
 78 Books - Ecumenical Bible

3. Books	Catholic	Protestant
Baruch	6 chapters	5 (chs)
Daniel	14 chapters	12 (chs)
Esther (Greek)	included	deleted

4. Daniel 3      100 verses      30 verses

5. Please take note what version of the Bible was used by the group in the activity.

**E. Discussions**

Since there are common and correct answers in the last two questions, the first and second questions, which have varied answers will be thoroughly examined, particularly the number of books in the Old Testament.

In the New Testament, there are exactly 27 books in all versions.

However, some of the answers indicate that the Old Testament has 46 books; some, 39 books; and still others 51 books. Why? Let the participants examine which Bible editions have 46 books, 39 books, and 51 books. (*Please refer to Handouts #1: Different Versions of the Bible, p. 109 and #2: Features/Differences in Catholic and Protestant Editions, p. 111*)

**1. Differences in the formation of the Old Testament Canon**

a) The different editions/versions of the Bible can be classified into three categories depending on the number of books in the Old Testament.

Catholic Bible	- 46 books
Protestant Bible	- 39 books
Ecumenical Bible	- 51 books

b) In the Catholic translations there are seven books that are not included in the Protestant translations, namely:

1. Tobit
2. Judith
3. Sirach
4. Wisdom of Solomon
5. Baruch
6. 1 Maccabees
7. 2 Maccabees

c) While in the Ecumenical translations, there are 12 writings not included in the Protestant translations. Seven (7) among the 12 are listed above as books, while an additional five writings are added to the list, namely:

1. Esther (Greek)
2. Letter of Jeremiah
3. Songs of the Three Young men
4. Susanna
5. Bel and the Dragon

d) The above group of twelve books is referred to by Catholics as Deuterocanonical ("second listed") meaning that they were conclusively accepted by Catholic Bible scholars as inspired. Protestants refer to this collection of books as the Apocrypha,

which literally means “hidden” or “secret.” This term is actually intended to mean “not inspired”, although Protestant scholars, like Catholics, recognized the value of these books for understanding the late Old Testament period. Some Protestant Bibles included them in certain editions, particularly those used by Episcopalians and Lutherans.

- e) The five writings mentioned and listed in the Ecumenical translation are found interspersed or merged in some of the books in the Catholic translations:
- i. Letter of Jeremiah = Book of Baruch, chap 6 of Catholic Bible
  - ii. Song of the Three Young Men and Prayer of Azariah = Daniel 3. 24-90 of Catholic Bible
  - iii. Susanna = Daniel, chap 13 of Catholic Bible
  - iv. Bel and the Dragon = Daniel, chap 14 of Catholic Bible
  - v. Esther (Greek) = sections added to Esther, sometimes italicized or the chapters are indicated by letters and not numbers in the Catholic Bible
- f) So, by merging the five writings in the books as indicated above, the total number of books in the Old Testament is down to 46 books.
- g) Another way of looking at it is to compare the number of chapters in the Book of Baruch, in the Book of Daniel, and in the Book of Esther in Catholic and Protestant Bibles. It will be noticed that those chapters found in the Catholic Bible but not in the Protestant Bible are classified as Deuterocanonical in the Ecumenical Bible.
- h) The Catholic editions of the Bible that list 46 books are the following: New American Bible (NAB), Jerusalem Bible (JB), Christian Community Bible (CCB), Revised Standard Version (RSV), New Revised Standard Version – Catholic edition (NRSV).

Meanwhile, the Good News Bible/Today’s English Version (GNB/TEV), and its Filipino version have 51 books.

The King James Version (KJV), New International Version (NIV), and Gideon Bibles having 39 books and are all Protestant editions.

2. The Catholic edition has an “Imprimatur” (which means it ‘can be printed’) and a “Nihil Obstat” (meaning ‘nothing opposes), signed by a monsignor or a bishop or any competent clergy, appearing on the copyright page; Protestant editions do not have these.

3. Technical and Doctrinal Reasons for the Non-Inclusion of the Deuterocanonical books in Protestant Bibles. (*Please refer to Handout #3: The Deuterocanonicals, p. 113*)

### III. The Books of the Bible

#### A. Two Main Divisions

The Scripture is divided into two: the Old Testament and the New Testament. The word “testament” is an approximate translation of the Greek *diatheke*; it indicates a fundamental feature of revelation, which is the Covenant or treaty that God made with the people whom He had chosen: the people of Israel.

The Old Testament is the story of this people in the light of the Covenant, a story largely of infidelity on their part and of unfailing fidelity on the part of God. God’s purpose, the redemption of humankind, was to be achieved by sending his Son into the world.

This covenant theme of man’s infidelity and God’s fidelity to his promise of salvation is oft repeated throughout the Bible – from the fall of Adam and Eve from Eden and God’s promise of a Messiah (Gen. 3:15); to Noah and his family’s protection from the deluge and God’s promise to never again destroy the earth by flood (Gen. 8,21); to God’s promise to Abraham: “I will be your God and you will be my people” (Lev. 26,12); up to God’s final covenant with man through His Son sent into the world (1Cor. 11,25).

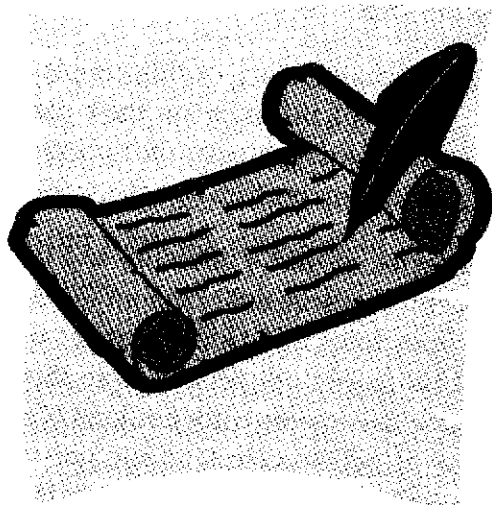
The coming of the Son of God (in the New Testament) naturally marks the beginning of a new era. God makes a new and final treaty, sealed in the blood of Christ, with a new people – yet directly descended from the old – the Church. The New Testament reveals the fulfillment of God's plan, a plan that was there from the beginning, for the two Testaments, although distinct, are intrinsically linked.

The Old Testament is God's preparation for the New. Indeed, the Old Testament can be fully understood as being fulfilled in the New Testament.

**B. Chronological Arrangement of the Books of the Bible** in English and in Filipino translations. (*Refer to Handout #4: Books in the Catholic Bible, p. 116*)

### C. Conclusion

*The facilitator may lead the participants with a closing prayer, thanking God for handing to man the Book of Life, the Bible, and asking God to continue inspiring men to discover more deeply the beauty of the Word of God in their lives.*



## B. CONFERENCE 2: THE BIBLE: ITS COMPOSITION, REVELATION AND INSPIRATION

### OBJECTIVES OF THE CONFERENCE

1. To make participants understand how the Bible came to be written: the different stages of its composition and development;
2. To make the participants understand the meaning of Revelation of God in the Bible, providing them with insights on the processes used by ancient writers in setting forth God's messages;
3. To provide the participants with insights on the Bible as the Book of Life inspired by the Holy Spirit and intended to serve as a guide for man in his journey toward salvation.

### THINGS NEEDED

1. Individual Bibles
2. black/white board
3. chalk and eraser/marking pen
4. Handout #5: *The Bible's Development Process*
5. Handout #6: *Kinds of Inspiration*

### OUTLINE OF THE CONFERENCE

- I. The Process of Bible Composition
  - A. Events
  - B. Oral Tradition
  - C. Written Tradition
  - D. Edited Tradition
  - E. Canonical Tradition
- II. Biblical Word and Revelation
  - A. Biblical Word
    1. Modern usage
    2. Hebrew usage



## B. Biblical Revelation

1. Modern usage
2. Biblical usage

## III. Biblical Inspiration

- A. Modern usage
- B. Biblical usage

## IV. Conclusion: A Testimony on the WORD

### CONFERENCE PROPER

#### I. The Process of Bible Composition

*(Refer to Handout #5: The Bible's Development Process, p. 118)*

Books are privileged memorials of peoples. In books are preserved the account of events, persons and circumstances that formed a people and gave them identity. By reading these books, the people become aware of who they are and what they are not.

People do not simply start their history writing books. They first experience the events, then, recall and retell them before they finally put their remembrances in writings as lessons and reasons for life for their future generations. The same is true with the Bible. In general, there are five stages of events in writing down the books of the Bible.

#### A. Events

Naturally, a story happens before it is written. The Bible speaks of a love story – between God and Israel (representing man), that is embodied in a simple underlying covenant or agreement entered into by them.

A story contains characters, events, and experiences. God's love and man's response is vividly experienced and expressed by individual Israelites and by the nation as a whole.

1. The calling and life of Abraham, Isaac, Jacob and Joseph (Gen 12 to 50)
2. The Exodus event: Moses (Ex 1-16, Num 10-25)
3. The Conquest of Canaan: Joshua, Samson, Samuel (Jos 1-16, Judg 1-9, 1 Sam 1-7)
4. The Establishment of the Kingdom of Israel: David, Solomon, Saul (1 Sam 8-31, 2 Sam 1-20, 1 Kgs 1-11)
5. The Division of the Kingdom (1 Kgs 12-22, 2 Kgs 1-24)
6. The Exile in Babylon (2 Kgs 25)
7. The Return from the Exile (Ezra 1-10, Neh 1-13, 1 Mc 1-16)
8. The Birth, Life, Death and Resurrection of Jesus Christ (Matthew, Mark, Luke and John)
9. The Spread of Christianity (Acts, Letters of Paul, Catholic Letters)

Throughout these stories the covenant theme is repeated and renewed in one continuous unbroken revelation of God's love for His people despite the latter's constant infidelity. Throughout the Bible, too, the reader is made aware of God's methodical self-revelation: from His exalted position in the "heavens," to the mountain of Horeb (Ex. 3:1), to His dwelling among men through His Son, Jesus.

#### B. Oral Tradition

Margaret Nutting Ralph writes: "*God revealed himself to his people through these events and people talked about their experiences. As accounts of these experiences were handed on from generation to generation by word of mouth, a body of oral traditions about the events grew.*" (M. N. Ralph, (1992), p. 12). These oral traditions took different forms like blessings, curses, songs of battle, laws and accounts of events which are now considered legends (Ralph, p. 12). These oral traditions became part of the history of the community and its underlying motivation to inspire and to remind the community of God's justice to his people.

### C. Written Tradition

As a people grew in knowledge from these retold events and stories, writing developed largely among the learned. The community leaders necessarily saw the need to commit the oral traditions into writing for better preservation, even as new events and learning continued to unfold and eventually were also recorded. But even as word-of-mouth traditions were being written, they were also revised according to the perceived needs of the community at the time. Ralph writes: "*Traditional stories were appropriated, sometimes from surrounding cultures and were made contemporary by succeeding generations*" (Ralph, p. 19). For example, a writer might appropriate a story that already existed in his culture in oral and written form, and then use it to illustrate a different theme with a different situation. An existing story about a natural disaster like flood or earthquake might be retold to illustrate how God acts through events, how man is responsible for his actions, and how only God can save him (Ralph, p. 19). These stories as written in the Bible, are called *layered*. A story can be layered in those certain elements may be added to the story reflecting its passage through time as different authors rewrite the story to include new emphases or insights or even new meanings. This "layering" is the necessary consequence of the texts' being the work not of a single generation but of several generations.

*"Stories about people or events, songs, poems, riddles, curses, blessings – all the elements of oral tradition were eventually written down. The fact that they were written down does not mean that the oral tradition stopped. The two traditions could exist side by side"* (Ralph, p.20).

### D. Edited Tradition

At various times in their history, the chosen people edited the inherited oral and written traditions from the past generations. There were different indicators of various layers in the editing process.

*"The first ramification that the texts have been edited several times is the fact that the books in the Bible do not appear in the order in which*

*they were written"*, Ralph writes (p. 21). The arrangement of books in the Old Testament is predominantly thematic. First comprise the Law, also called Torah or Pentateuch. Next are the prophets and then the writings. "*In each section, the order in which the books appear is not in the same order in which they were written*" (Ralph, p. 21).

The second ramification of the edited text indicates that there were diverse perspectives of certain concerns of the chosen people. For example, some texts seemed to agree with the idea of human kingship while other texts were against it, since they regarded only God as king. The reason for the lack of consistency depended on the history of the text. The supposed editor or editors may have had several traditions on hand to work with, and for some reason did not select between one of them but included both (Ralph, p. 21). One rationale could be that he or they preferred to include the traditions to remain as close to the written "original" as possible.

And third ramification signifies that not one account is presented as an account contemporary with the event because all the accounts invariably included hindsight. "*As the accounts were taken and edited for new generations, they were made contemporary for that generation*" (Ralph, p. 23). Certain themes were given emphasis fitted for the particular audience whom the editor/s of that time was addressing.

### E. Canonical Tradition

The final step in the growth process, which resulted in the present Bible, is that some books came to be considered as "canonical" or part of the church's "canon," Latin word for "yardstick". Thus, it can be said that a book becomes canonical when it passes a certain "yardstick" or standard and comes to be accepted by an authority as part of scriptures. In other words, the community's church leaders recognized and acknowledged that a particular book or set of books accurately reflected the church's religious experience and religious beliefs (Ralph, p. 24).

In the early Church, the writings, which emerged during the life of the Church were read at worship services. By the second century, some

were accepted and embraced by all the churches while others fell into disuse. Eventually, an organization of bishops from Rome called The Council of Trent "closed" the New Testament canon in the sense that it promulgated what had already been decided through traditional usage. The books of the Bible were born through the experience and beliefs of the church and likewise, they reached canonicity through the experience and beliefs of the church. In every way, the Bible exists because of God's intervention and His people's participation (Ralph, pp. 24-25).

It would be interesting to note here that when the Protestant Reformists produced their own version of the Old Testament, they included only those that were "originally" in Hebrew. In rejecting the books included in the "Apocrypha," they were in fact rejecting more than one thousand years of preservation by the community of Christians from where they themselves sprang. (Refer to Handout #3: *The Deuterocanonicals*, p. 113)

## II. Biblical Word and Revelation

### A. Biblical Word

One timeless phrase we give to the Bible is: it is the Word of God. "And God said", a Word was spoken. "And the Word was made flesh", a Word is happening in history. Let us see the meaning of the Word in the Bible.

1. Modern usage: A word is an expression of an idea/message that is either spoken or written.
2. Hebrew usage: *dabar*
  - a. It is primarily spoken
    - 1) Gen 23.1ff (seal contract)
    - 2) Ex 6.7; Lev 26.12 (covenant)
    - 3) Gen 27.1ff (blessing: Jacob)
  - b. It is more than an expression of idea, it is actually happening at that same instance:
    - 1) Gen1 and the ff: "And God said ...and there was ..."

- 2) Num 28.1 and the ff: "*The Lord said to Moses ...*"
- 3) Num 30.1 and the ff: "*Moses then gave the Israelites the instructions*"
- 4) Mt 4.19 and the ff: "*He said to them, 'Come after me...' they immediately followed...*"
- 5) Mt 8.3: "*Jesus stretched out his hand and touched and said, 'I do will it. Be cured'. Immediately the man's leprosy disappeared*"
- 6) Mk 10.52: "*Jesus said in reply, 'Be on your way. Your faith has healed you'. Immediately he received his sight...*"
- 7) Mk 5.41: "*Taking by hand, he said to her, Talithakoum ...*"
- 8) Lk 5.27: "*He said to him, 'Follow me'. Leaving everything behind, Levi stood up and became his follower*"

- c. It contains the personality, energy and authority of the speaker, as if the person himself is in it:

If a person broke his word, he also broke himself.

A person is characterized by the manner he speaks and writes, his emphasis in his expressions and his passion.

His personality, energy and authority are also revealed in his choice of words in his speech and writings.

Therefore, we say that the Bible is the Word of God based on the ancient understanding of the word as *dabar*, it means that God not only handed over his ideas and messages to Israel but also revealed Himself in writing.

### B. Biblical Revelation

Since in the Bible God transmits His thoughts and messages to His people, Israel, in the process He reveals Himself to them. The more God speaks, the deeper His people get to know Him.

1. Modern usage: It is the uncovering or disclosure of something that is hidden.
 

Ex. A suitor reveals his feelings and love to the woman he is courting in his speech and actions.

## 2. Biblical usage: "Divine Revelation"

- a. It is God showing Himself in words and deeds to his people.
- b. His self-revelation took place in history:
  - 1) in the lives of the patriarch;
  - 2) in the saving event of exodus;
  - 3) in the history of Israel – the people of God;
  - 4) in the life, death & resurrection of Jesus Christ.
- c. Jesus Christ is the fullness of God's revelation – God the Father in human form – everything that God wants man to know about Himself.
- d. The Bible is the privileged source of revelation for Christian communities, just like the Law and the Prophets of the Old Testament were for the Jews in the time of Jesus.

Life in Christian communities and our prayer life are also moments of encounter with God. God also reveals Himself in nature, in people and in history.

## III. Biblical Inspiration

The Bible as the *Word of God* has inspired individual persons for many centuries. People have allowed the Word of God to guide and enlighten them in their lives. In modern times, many lives have been transformed and even radically reformed because of the Holy Scriptures.

How does the Bible inspire people? What exactly is Biblical inspiration?

A. Modern usage: It is a power or force at work within a person.

Ex. Mothers with children, living in other countries, are inspired to write them letters and vice versa.

B. Biblical usage: The revelation of God (that is God's words and action) to the people in history is inspired by the Holy Spirit.

The word "*Inspiration*" comes from:

Latin: *inspirare* – "to breathe into"

Hebrew *ruah* – "life-giving breath"

The word "*Spirit*" is from "*inspirare*". Moreover, the word "*Spirit*" from "*inspirare*" is the same as the spirit in the word "*ruah*" used in the creation story.

Latin = *inspirare*

Hebrew = *ruah*

Greek = *pneuma*

English = *spirit*

Filipino = *hininga*

'*Kapaghiningahan, ibig sabihin, "binigyang-buhay."* ('Breathing into' means giving life.)

When God created man, He breathed into man and gave him life.

Inspiration is the work of the Holy Spirit because the Spirit is always the Breath of life.

The Bible as written was inspired by God which is why it continues to give life after thousands of years – 3,000 years – that is: from generations to generation.

Before being set into writing, the message had been lived and spoken. The Spirit of God guided not only the writing down but also the living and the proclamation of this message.

Scriptural inspiration is the last movement of a long series of actions by the Spirit of God, who after having prepared the way and proclaimed the Word through various persons or groups, had it consigned into sacred books to be destined for all times and places.

(Refer to Handout #6: *Kinds of Inspiration*, p. 119)

## IV. Conclusion: A Testimony on the Word

Have someone to give a testimony about the effect or blessings of the Word of God in his/her life. How he/she has been guided by God through the Word. How he/she has been transformed and molded by the Word.

## C. CONFERENCE 3: METHODS OF INTERPRETATION OF THE BIBLE IN THE CHURCH

### OBJECTIVES OF THE CONFERENCE

1. To make the participants understand and distinguish the difference between the two general methods of interpretation of the Bible.
2. To enable the participants to apply the methods of interpretation suggested and developed in the seminar via the bible study process with the participants using the pastoral method.

### THINGS NEEDED

1. Individual Bibles
2. Black/white Board
3. Chalk and eraser/ marking pen
4. Handout #7: *Difference between Diachronic and Synchronic Methods*
5. Handout #8: *Structure of Liturgical Bible Study*

### OUTLINE OF THE CONFERENCE

- I. Introduction: Review of the Seminar's Main Objectives
- II. What is the Purpose of Biblical Interpretation?
- III. General Methods of Biblical Interpretation
  - A. Diachronic methods
  - B. Synchronic methods
  - C. The Syncretic, or Combination of the Two Methods

### CONFERENCE PROPER

#### I. Introduction

This conference is the very heart of the LITURGICAL BIBLE STUDY. It is intended for the participants to develop the skills in opening

and reading their Bibles, and discovering the meaning of the Biblical texts in context. Through this process the participants are not only being helped or assisted in their Bible study, but in effect are themselves essentially being nourished by the word of God. This conference is meant to help individuals overcome apprehensions or fear of reading the Bible, and the fear of misinterpreting it.

#### II. What is the Purpose of Biblical Interpretation?

According to *The Interpretation of the Bible in the Church*: "It is the question of overcoming the distance between the time of the authors and the first addressees of the biblical texts and our own contemporary age, and of doing so in a way that permits a correct actualization of the scriptural message so that the Christian life of faith may find nourishment" (The Pontifical Bible Commission, (1993), p. 78)

The interpretation of the Bible has three elements, namely, the mind of the author during the writing, his target listeners or readers during his time, and the message of the author as his words speak to us today. As we relate closely our contemporary situations to the mind of the author and his intended listeners or readers, we get the correct actualization or perspective of the Biblical message and thereby get nourishment from it for our Christian faith.

However, the interpretation of the Bible does not end in understanding but in living the Word of God. To do this, the text has to be made relevant to the people of our time. "In Church tradition, the Fathers, as first interpreters of Scripture, considered that their exegesis of texts was complete only when it had found a meaning relevant to the situations of Christian life in their own day" (PBC, 79).

#### III. General Methods of Biblical Interpretation

It is said that there is no single way of understanding the Bible. Our understanding is conditioned by the methods of interpretation that

we use. Different methods exist because there are diverse philosophies of interpretation and of looking at reality and various levels of understanding.

No method can guarantee a complete and perfect understanding of the Biblical text. No method is *the* method, the catch-all method. It is important to recognize what each method can or cannot do, and its real value for the understanding of Scripture in relation to what people need. No doubt, each method sheds some light on our understanding of the text, in one way or another. So the more we are familiar with the methods and use them, the more we are enriched in our understanding of the Word of God.

### Diachronic and Synchronic Methods

In general, different methods of interpretation can be classified into two: diachronic and synchronic. The diachronic methods trace how the text developed. They do not look at the text itself but at its pre-history, what it had been before, its sources, etc. Synchronic studies seek to interpret the text as it now stands and speaks to us, not what it had been. (Please refer to Handout #7: *The Difference Between Diachronic and Synchronic Methods*, p. 120)

#### A. Diachronic Methods

**D**iachronic methods consist of studying literary works, which deal with how they originated, how they were composed and how they came or developed into their present state (the composition and formation aspect). The historical-critical methods are diachronic. They are concerned more with what the text had been rather than with what it is now. *“These methods mostly belong to historical-literary studies... At present, some quarters question the validity of following the historical-critical methods. They claim that too much preoccupation with the past helps little in making the texts meaningful and relevant to us today”* (Pabillo, p. 138).

In simple terms, these methods deal with more in-depth analyses into: who wrote the text, when it was written, the objective of the writings, to whom it is intended, etc.. In Filipino, we call the process of doing diachronic as *“sinasaliksik”* (making research) the historical background of the biblical text. Among the tools of diachronic analysis are Source Criticism, Form Criticism, Tradition Criticism, and Redaction Criticism (Pabillo, p. 138-139).

Ex. Gospel of St. Luke – Why was this gospel written, to whom was it intended? Did Jesus actually say this statement? Or did the gospel writers from the early Christian communities merely put the words in His mouth?

Diachronic method is like the forensic method of the National Bureau of Investigation (NBI) or Federal Bureau of Investigation (FBI). From pieces of evidence of a crime, the forensic experts will reconstruct the crime scene and come up with conclusions as motives of the crime. Likewise, from biblical, cultural and social information, diachronic methods will help reconstruct the biblical events to gain further spiritual insights.

In Filipino, we can term diachronic method as *“saliksik method”*.

#### B. Synchronic Methods

**B**iblical scholars have encouraged the use of synchronic method for the past twenty years. “The synchronic methods take the text as it is and study it as it now stands. These methods came partly as a development of the diachronic studies and partly as a reaction against them” (Pabillo, p. 139). Among synchronic studies used are Canonical Criticism, Structuralism, and Rhetorical Criticism.

Basically, synchronic methods focus on the details of the biblical stories and texts. Like in the Gospel of St. Luke 24,28-35, Jesus on the road to Emmaus:

<sup>28</sup>As they approached the village to which they were going, he gave the impression that he was going on farther. <sup>29</sup>But they urged him, "Stay with us, for it is nearly evening and the day is almost over." So he went in to stay with them. <sup>30</sup>And it happened that, while he was with them at table, he took bread, said the blessing, broke it, and gave it to them. <sup>31</sup>With that their eyes were opened and they recognized him, but he vanished from their sight. <sup>32</sup>Then they said to each other, "Were not our hearts burning [within us] while he spoke to us on the way and opened the scriptures to us?" <sup>33</sup>So they set out at once and returned to Jerusalem where they found gathered together the eleven and those with them <sup>34</sup>who were saying, "The Lord has truly been raised and has appeared to Simon!" <sup>35</sup>Then the two recounted what had taken place on the way and how he was made known to them in the breaking of the bread.

Focusing on the details of the Emmaus story, in verse 29: as the two disciples and Jesus were approaching the village, what did the disciples advise Jesus as He gave the impression of going farther? The disciples told Him: "Stay with us, for it is nearly evening and the day is almost over." And Jesus stayed with them and eventually took the bread, said the blessing, broke it, and gave it to them. And yet, in contrast with verse 29, after they had realized in verse 32, that their hearts were burning within as Jesus explained to them the scriptures, in verse 33, they went back to Jerusalem at once, meaning, that same evening, signifying that it was very urgent for them to share with the apostles their experience of the Risen Christ.

Another example of minding the details is the story of Bartimaeus in Mark 10,46-52.

<sup>46</sup>They came to Jericho. And as he was leaving Jericho with his disciples and a sizable crowd, Bartimaeus, a blind man, the son of Timaeus, sat by the roadside begging. <sup>47</sup>On hearing that it was Jesus of Nazareth, he began to cry out and say, "Jesus, son of David, have pity on me." <sup>48</sup>And many rebuked him, telling him to be silent. But he kept calling out all the more, "Son of David, have pity on me." <sup>49</sup>Jesus

stopped and said, "Call him." So they called the blind man, saying to him, "Take courage; get up, he is calling you." <sup>50</sup>He threw aside his cloak, sprang up, and came to Jesus. <sup>51</sup>Jesus said to him in reply, "What do you want me to do for you?" The blind man replied to him, "Master, I want to see." <sup>52</sup>Jesus told him, "Go your way; your faith has saved you." Immediately he received his sight and followed him on the way.

In verse 46, Mark introduced Bartimaeus as a blind man, begging at the roadside. However, when he met Jesus and got his sight, in verse 52, Bartimaeus followed Jesus along the road or followed him on the way. And for St. Mark, this is indicative of discipleship.

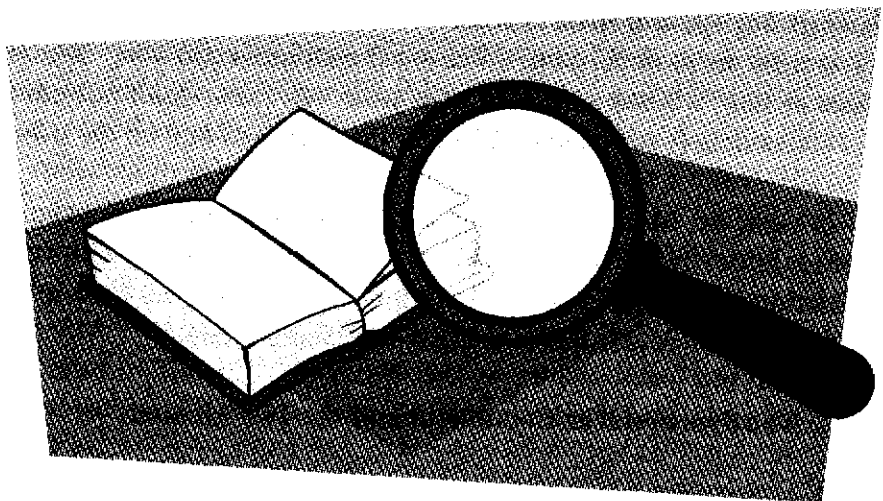
### C. The Syncretic or Combination of the Two Methods

Syncretism is generally described as a combination of different, often contradictory beliefs, or approaches, while blending practices of various schools of thoughts. Syncretic methods mean a combination of diachronic and synchronic methods. The full meaning of a biblical text can be best ascertained if both synchronic and diachronic methods of analyses are applied.

Hermeneutics, which is the science or art of Biblical interpretation, involves the use of both the diachronic and synchronic methods to arrive at a correct interpretation of biblical texts. Accordingly, the Bible student extracts the meaning of the biblical texts using the synchronic method, by focusing on some details of the story, then gathers information from the commentaries, footnotes, and cross references (i.e. those featured in the participants' Bibles) using the diachronic method. This method using both synchronic and diachronic methods is the one used in Liturgical Bible Study.

Some recommended commentaries and resources may include *Jerome Biblical Commentary*, *Second Vatican Council Documents (Dei Verbum)*, *Catechism of the Catholic Church* as well as the *Catechism for Filipino Catholics*, books, articles and journals on Biblical interpretation among others.





#### D. CONFERENCE 4: WORKSHOPS

*Merriam-Webster.com* defines *workshop* as a class or series of classes in which a small group of people learn the methods and skills used in doing something. One cannot underestimate the dynamics and power of learning methods and skills through workshops. This part of the Liturgical Bible Study Seminar (LBSS) is one of the most exciting and rewarding.

#### OBJECTIVES OF THE WORKSHOPS

1. To make the participants engage in the conduct of LBS.
2. To train the participants to become facilitators of LBS.
3. To enhance the participants' skills in asking questions leading to the discovery of the connections of the sets of liturgical readings.
4. To enable the participants to experience the wisdom of the Holy Spirit and the Church from the liturgical readings.
5. To lead the participants into closer relationship with each other through the word of God and their own faith experiences.

#### THINGS NEEDED

1. A copy of Bible for every participant
2. Black/white Board
3. Chalk and eraser/ marking pen
4. Handout #8: *Structure of Liturgical Bible Study*

#### THE FACILITATOR AND HIS/HER ROLE

In these workshops, the question-and-answer format is utilized predominantly so that the Liturgical Bible Study becomes interactive, drawing answers from the participants. All questions are formulated from the biblical text and all the answers may also be derived from the same texts. The use of creativity and imagination is very much encouraged especially in visualizing the Biblical text with close attention to details. Facilitators are therefore, expected to be prepared by making his or her own study of the liturgical texts in advance. This way, he or she may be able to guide the group toward a deeper understanding of the Word of God.

The facilitator of Liturgical Bible Study is not a teacher and the participants are not students who are simply listening to their teacher. The facilitator is the one who leads the group into a discussion or into an experience of learning through the participation of its members. A facilitator is an enabler and the catalyst in a group activity encouraging its members to get involved. The skill of facilitating is best learned through exposure to the conduct of the method and constant self-evaluation of his/her experiences of the LBS. Here are some functions of an LBS facilitator:

- a. to ensure fruitful, inter-personal, equal opportunity for everyone to speak and participate;
- b. to encourage quiet and shy members of the group to actively take part in the LBS;
- c. to direct the discussion of the biblical text according to its natural flow by asking questions verse by verse, and the participants answering aloud based on the text;

- d. to limit the discussion within the perimeter of the liturgical readings. For example, if the gospel for the following Sunday is about the multiplication of the loaves and fish in Luke 9: 10-17, the facilitator should not entertain any participant's contribution of the same story but written in John 6: 1-15 or others by Mark or by Matthew.

## OUTLINE OF THE CONFERENCE

### I. LITURGICAL BIBLE STUDY: HANDS-ON

- Workshop 1: Experiencing the Details of the Story
- Workshop 2: On How To Ask Questions
- Workshop 3: Full-length Liturgical Bible Study

### II. FACILITATING LITURGICAL BIBLE STUDY

- Workshop 4: Conduct of LBS in Two Groups
- Workshop 5: Group A to Group B
- Workshop 6: Group B to Group A

### I. LITURGICAL BIBLE STUDY: HANDS-ON

#### Workshop 1: Experiencing the Details of the Story

To develop skills on focusing on the details of the biblical text  
(*paghihimay*)

In this workshop, the trainer acts as facilitator, formulating questions guiding the participants to focus on some details of the biblical text.

#### A. Experience

Mark 15,33-39

(Someone from the group reads the text as everybody stands to honor the Gospel.)

<sup>33</sup>At noon darkness came over the whole land until three in the afternoon. <sup>34</sup>And at three o'clock Jesus cried out in a loud voice, "Eloi, Eloi, lemasabachthani?" which is translated, "My God, my God, why have you forsaken me?" <sup>35</sup>Some of the bystanders who heard it said, "Look, he is calling Elijah." <sup>36</sup>One of them ran, soaked a sponge with wine, put it on a reed, and gave it to him to drink, saying, "Wait, let us see if Elijah comes to take him down." <sup>37</sup>Jesus gave a loud cry and breathed his last. <sup>38</sup>The veil of the sanctuary was torn in two from top to bottom. <sup>39</sup>When the centurion who stood facing him saw how he breathed his last he said, "Truly this man was the Son of God!"

F: *In v. 33, what time of the day did this event happen?*

P: *From noon until three in the afternoon.*

F: *In the same verse, describe what happened.*

P: *Darkness came over the whole land.*

F: *In v. 34, what did Jesus cry out at three o'clock in the afternoon?*

P: *"Eloi, Eloi, lemasabachthani?"*

F: *Meaning?*

P: *"My God, my God, why have you forsaken me?"*

F: *In v. 35, what did the bystanders, who heard Jesus, say?*

P: *"Look, he is calling Elijah."*

F: *In v. 36, what else did they do to Jesus and say?*

P: *One of them ran, soaked a sponge with wine, put on a reed, and gave it to him to drink, saying, "Wait, let us see if Elijah comes to take him down."*

F: *In v. 37, what happened to Jesus after that?*

P: *Jesus gave a loud cry and breathed his last.*

F: *In v. 38, what happened in the sanctuary?*

- P: *The veil of the sanctuary was torn in two from top to bottom.*
- F: *For the details, why was the veil torn from top to bottom? Who tore the veil and for what purpose?*
- P: *It must be God who tore the veil because it started from top to bottom. Ordinarily, we tear a hanging curtain starting from bottom to top. Maybe the purpose of Mark with the description was to tell his readers that God welcomes everyone into His sanctuary and not only the Jews, that Christ's salvation resulting from His death is universal.*
- F: *In v. 39, what did the centurion say when he saw how Jesus breathed his last?*
- P: *"Truly this man was the Son of God!"*
- F: *What does this imply?*
- P: *It means that even if the centurion was not a Jew, he can also attain salvation because he believed in Jesus as the Son of God.*

Another good example for the workshop regarding the details of a biblical text is the story of Zacchaeus, the tax collector.

Luke 19,1-6.

*"<sup>1</sup>He came to Jericho and intended to pass through the town. <sup>2</sup>Now a man there named Zacchaeus, who was a chief tax collector and also a wealthy man, <sup>3</sup>was seeking to see who Jesus was; but he could not see him because of the crowd, for he was short in stature. <sup>4</sup>So he ran ahead and climbed a sycamore tree in order to see Jesus, who was about to pass that way. <sup>5</sup>When he reached the place, Jesus looked up and said to him, "Zacchaeus, come down quickly, for today I must stay at your house." <sup>6</sup>And he came down quickly and received him with joy."*

F: *In v. 1, where did Jesus go?*

P: *He came to Jericho.*

F: *What was His intention?*

P: *He was just passing through the town.*

F: *In v. 2, what was the name of the man there?*

P: *His name was Zacchaeus.*

F: *What were his descriptions?*

P: *He was the chief tax collector and a wealthy man.*

F: *In v. 3, what was the intention of Zacchaeus?*

P: *He wanted to see Jesus.*

F: *But what was his problem?*

P: *He could not see Jesus because of the crowd and because he was short in stature.*

F: *So what did Zacchaeus do to see Jesus?*

P: *Zacchaeus ran ahead and climbed a sycamore tree.*

F: *Do you find it unusual for Zacchaeus to run ahead and climb a sycamore tree?*

P: *It was unusual for Zacchaeus because he was the chief tax collector and a wealthy man. He could have instructed his bodyguards to make a way for him to see Jesus.*

F: *In v. 5, when Jesus reached the place, what did He do and say?*

P: *Jesus looked up and said: "Zacchaeus come down quickly, for today I must stay at your house"*

F: *In v. 6, what was the reaction of Zacchaeus?*

P: *He came down quickly and received Jesus with joy.*

## B. Deepening

The trainer will ask the participants about their observations and realizations regarding their experience focusing on the details of the biblical texts. Some questions may be addressed at this time.

## Workshop 2: On How To Ask Questions

To conduct a drill among the participants on how to ask questions based on the biblical text in every verse.

The Liturgical Bible Study is an interactive process between the facilitator and the participants utilizing the question-and-answer scheme. This workshop presents sample biblical texts, preferably flashed on a screen (if there is a projector), or by simply asking the participants locate the sample texts on their bibles. The workshop trainer then assigns each verse to every participant who will formulate questions based on the text and answerable from the text itself. The trainer may then request other participants to judge whether the question as formulated is clear or not.

### A. Experience

For example: Jonah 1,1-6

*"1The word of the LORD came to Jonah, son of Amittai. 2Set out for the great city of Nineveh, and preach against it; for their wickedness has come before me. 3But Jonah made ready to flee to Tarshish, way from the LORD. He went down to Joppa, found a ship going to Tarshish, paid the fare, and went down in it to go with them to Tarshish, away from the LORD.*

*"4The LORD, however, hurled a great wind upon the sea, and the storm was so great that the ship was about to break up. 5Then the sailors were afraid and each one cried to his god. To lighten the ship for themselves, they threw its cargo into the sea. Meanwhile, Jonah had gone down into the hold of the ship, and lay there fast asleep. 6The captain approached him and said, 'What are you doing asleep? Get up, call on your god! Perhaps this god will be mindful of us so that we will not perish.'"*

Reference:

P<sub>1</sub>, P<sub>2</sub>, P<sub>3</sub>: Individual participants

A: Answers from the rest of the participants

P<sub>1</sub>: *In v. 1, what came to Jonah?*

A: *The word of the Lord.*

P<sub>2</sub>: *In v. 2, what was the word of the Lord to Jonah?*

A: *Set out for the great city of Nineveh, and preach against it; for their wickedness has come before me.*

P<sub>3</sub>: *In v. 3, what was the reaction of Jonah?*

A: *But Jonah made ready to flee to Tarshish, way from the LORD. He went down to Joppa, found a ship going to Tarshish, paid the fare, and went down in it to go with them to Tarshish, away from the LORD.*

P<sub>4</sub>: *In v. 4, what did the Lord do?*

A: *The LORD, however, hurled a great wind upon the sea, and the storm was so great that the ship was about to break up.*

P<sub>5</sub>: *In v. 5, what was the reaction of the sailors?*

A: *The sailors were afraid and each one cried to his god.*

P<sub>5</sub>: *What else did they do to prevent their ship from sinking?*

A: *To lighten the ship for themselves, they threw its cargo into the sea.*

P<sub>5</sub>: *And where was Jonah?*

A: *Jonah had gone down into the hold of the ship, and lay there fast asleep.*

P<sub>6</sub>: *In v. 6, what did the captain tell Jonah?*

A: *The captain approached him and said, "What are You doing asleep? Get up, call on your god! Perhaps this god will be mindful of us so that we will not perish."*

### B. Deepening

The trainer shall ask the participants about their observations and realizations regarding their experience. Some questions may be addressed at this time.

In this workshop, the participants become aware of how to formulate their questions. This basic skill will help them to become effective LBS facilitators.

### Workshop 3: Full-length Liturgical Bible Study

To enable participants experience actual Liturgical Bible Study, leading to some insights from Sunday liturgical readings.

Again, the trainer as facilitator conducts the LBS with the participants. Copies of handout #8: *Structure of Liturgical Bible Study* (p.122) are distributed to the participants. The trainer goes over the LBS structure explaining every part of it. Then the group goes through the Liturgical Bible Study with the liturgical readings from a Sunday mass.

#### A. Experience

1st Sunday of Lent (Cycle C)

#### I. OPENING PRAYER OR SONG

F: *Let's all stand.*

*In the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit, Amen.*

*Heavenly Father, we thank You for gathering us here to be nourished by Your word. Thank You for fixing our schedule today and enable us to be blessed by your word in order to know You more and love You more. Please send us the Holy Spirit so that we may have the wisdom to understand Your word which You set for Your church. This we ask You through Jesus Christ, the Divine Word, with the Holy Spirit.*

P: *Amen.*

#### II. LITURGICAL BIBLE STUDY PROPER

##### A. Gospel

F: *Please remain standing as we honor the Gospel.*

*The Gospel for the 1st Sunday of Lent is from Luke 4,1-13. (Someone from the group will read the gospel.)*

R: *A reading from the holy Gospel according to St. Luke.*

P: *Glory to you, O Lord.*

R: <sup>1</sup>*Filled with the holy Spirit, Jesus returned from the Jordan and was led by the Spirit into the desert <sup>2</sup>for forty days, to be tempted by the devil. He ate nothing during those days, and when they were over he was hungry. <sup>3</sup>The devil said to him, "If you are the Son of God, command this stone to become bread." <sup>4</sup>Jesus answered him, "It is written, 'One does not live by bread alone.'" <sup>5</sup>Then he took him up and showed him all the kingdoms of the world in a single instant. <sup>6</sup>The devil said to him, "I shall give to you all this power and their glory; for it has been handed over to me, and I may give it to whomever I wish. <sup>7</sup>This will be yours, if you worship me." <sup>8</sup>Jesus said to him in reply, "It is written: 'You shall worship the Lord, your God, and him alone shall you serve.'"*

<sup>9</sup>*Then he led him to Jerusalem, made him stand on the parapet of the temple, and said to him, "If you are the Son of God, throw yourself down from here, <sup>10</sup>for it is written: 'He will command his angels concerning you, to guard you,' <sup>11</sup>With their hands they will support you, lest you dash your foot against a stone.'"*

<sup>12</sup>*Jesus said to him in reply, "It also says, 'You shall not put the Lord, your God, to the test.'" <sup>13</sup>When the devil had finished every temptation, he departed from him for a time.*

R: *The Gospel of the Lord.*

P: *Praise to you, O Lord, Jesus Christ.*

F: *Let's all be seated.*

*In v. 1, where did Jesus come from?*

P: *From the Jordan, filled with the Holy Spirit.*

F: *What does from the Jordan mean?*

P: *It means, after the baptism of Jesus in Jordan.*

F: *Where did the Holy Spirit lead Jesus?*

P: *Led by the Spirit into the desert*

F: *In v. 2, for how many days?*

P: *For forty days.*

F: *For what?*

P: *To be tempted by the devil*

F: *What did Jesus do in the desert for forty days?*

P: *He ate nothing during those days, and when they were over he was hungry.*

F: *In v. 3, what did the devil say to Jesus?*

P: *"If you are the Son of God, command this stone to become bread."*

F: *In v. 4, what did Jesus answer?*

P: *"It is written, 'One does not live by bread alone.'"*

F: *In v. 5, what did the devil do to Jesus next?*

P: *Then he took him up and showed him all the kingdoms of the world in a single instant.*

F: *In vs. 6 and 7, what did the devil say to Jesus?*

P: *"The devil said to him, 'I shall give to you all this power and their glory; for it has been handed over to me, and I may give it to whomever I wish. 'This will be yours, if you worship me.'"*

F: *What was the answer of Jesus?*

P: *"It is written: 'You shall worship the Lord, your God, and him alone shall you serve.'"*

F: *In v. 9, next, where did the devil lead Jesus?*

P: *Then he led him to Jerusalem, made him stand on the parapet of the temple.*

F: *In vs. 9-11, what did the devil tell Jesus to convince him?*

P: *"If you are the Son of God, throw yourself down from here, <sup>10</sup>for it is written: 'He will command his angels concerning you, to guard you,' <sup>11</sup>With their hands they will support you, lest you dash your foot against a stone.'"*

F: *In v. 12, what was the reply of Jesus?*

P: *"It also says, 'You shall not put the Lord, your God, to the test.'"*

F: *In v. 13, what was the reaction of the devil?*

P: *When the devil had finished every temptation, he departed from him for a time.*

### **B. First Reading**

F: *We will now read the 1st reading taken from Deuteronomy 26,4-10. Anybody would like to read the 1st reading?*

R: *A reading from the Book of Deuteronomy.*

*<sup>4</sup>The priest shall then take the basket from your hands and set it in front of the altar of the LORD, your God. <sup>5</sup>Then you shall declare in the presence of the LORD, your God, "My father was a refugee Aramean, who went down to Egypt with a small household and lived there as a resident alien. But there he became a nation great, strong and numerous. <sup>6</sup>When the Egyptians maltreated and oppressed us, imposing harsh servitude upon us, <sup>7</sup>we cried to the LORD, the God of our ancestors, and the LORD heard our cry and saw our affliction, our toil and our oppression. <sup>8</sup>Then the LORD brought us out of Egypt with a strong hand and outstretched arm, with terrifying power, with signs and wonders, <sup>9</sup>and brought us to this place, and gave us this land, a land flowing with milk and honey. <sup>10</sup>Now, therefore, I have*

*brought the first fruits of the products of the soil which you, LORD, have given me." You shall set them before the LORD, your God, and you shall bow down before the LORD, your God.*

*The Word of the Lord.*

P: *Thanks be to God.*

F: *In v. 4, what was the instruction of Moses to his people?*

P: *The priest shall then take the basket from your hands and set it in front of the altar of the LORD, your God.*

F: *In v. 5, what was the declaration of the people?*

P: *My father was a refugee Aramean, who went down to Egypt with a small household and lived there as a resident alien. But there he became a nation great, strong and numerous.*

F: *In v. 6, when they became a great and strong nation, how did the Egyptians treat them?*

P: *When the Egyptians maltreated and oppressed us, imposing harsh servitude upon us.*

F: *In v. 7, what was the reaction of the people?*

P: *We cried to the LORD, the God of our ancestors, and the LORD heard our cry and saw our affliction, our toil and our oppression.*

F: *In vs. 8 and 9, what did the Lord do to the people and what did the Lord give them?*

P: *Then the LORD brought us out of Egypt with a strong hand and outstretched arm, with terrifying power, with signs and wonders, and brought us to this place, and gave us this land, a land flowing with milk and honey.*

F: *In v. 10, what else did the Lord give him?*

P: *Now, therefore, I have brought the first fruits of the products of the soil, which you, LORD, have given me.*

F: *And what was his last instruction to the people?*

P: *You shall set them before the LORD, your God, and you shall bow down before the LORD, your God.*

### **Connecting the Gospel with the First Reading**

F: *After going through the details of the Gospel and the First Reading, do you find any connections, similarities or significant relationships between them?*

P: *Both readings are accounts of hardships. In the Gospel, Jesus ate nothing for forty days and He was hungry. In the first reading, the people of Israel were maltreated, oppressed and were treated as slaves by the Egyptians.*

P: *Both have temptations and trials coming from someone. In the Gospel, it was the temptation of Jesus by the devil. And in the first reading, it was the trial of the people by the Egyptians.*

P: *Both readings mentioned about possessions and worship of God. In the Gospel, Jesus was offered all the kingdoms of the world, if Jesus would worship the devil. In the first reading, the people of Israel were given a land flowing with milk and honey and the first fruits of the products of the soil were offered as they shall bow down before the Lord.*

P: *Both readings mentioned the presence of God. In the Gospel, Jesus was filled with the Holy Spirit. And in the first reading, God heard the cry of the people and brought them out of Egypt.*

P: *Both readings present victory over temptations and hardships. In the Gospel, Jesus overcame all the temptations of the devil and in the first reading, the people came out of Egypt as they were led by God and given a land flowing with milk and honey.*

F: *We will now go to the second reading taken from Romans 10,8-13.*



### C. Second Reading

F: *Anybody would like to read the second reading?*

R: *A reading from the letter of St. Paul to the Romans.*

*"<sup>8</sup>But what does the scripture say? 'The word is near you, in your mouth and in your heart' (that is, the word of faith that we preach),<sup>9</sup>for, if you confess with your mouth that Jesus is Lord and believe in your heart that God raised him from the dead, you will be saved. <sup>10</sup>For one believes with the heart and so is justified, and one confesses with the mouth and so is saved. <sup>11</sup>For the scripture says, 'No one who believes in him will be put to shame.' <sup>12</sup>For there is no distinction between Jew and Greek; the same Lord is Lord of all, enriching all who call upon him. <sup>13</sup>For 'everyone who calls on the name of the Lord will be saved.'"*

*The word of the Lord.*

P: *Thanks be to God.*

F: *In v. 8, what was the quotation from the scripture?*

P: *"The word is near you, in your mouth and in your heart" (that is, the word of faith that we preach).*

F: *In v. 9, in order to be saved, what should be done by the Romans according to St. Paul?*

P: *The Romans should confess with their mouth that Jesus is Lord and believe in their heart that God raised him from the dead.*

F: *In v. 10, what is the effect when one believes with the heart? And when one confesses with the mouth?*

P: *<sup>10</sup>For one believes with the heart and so is justified, and one confesses with the mouth and so is saved.*

F: *In v. 11, what does the scripture say regarding anyone who believes in Jesus?*

P: *"For the scripture says, "No one who believes in him will be put to shame."*

F: *In v. 12, what is the difference between Jews and Greeks with regards to their faith in Jesus?*

P: *There is no distinction between Jew and Greek; the same Lord is Lord of all, enriching all who call upon him.*

F: *In v. 13, who then will be saved?*

P: *"Everyone who calls on the name of the Lord will be saved."*

### Connecting the Gospel with the First Reading and the Second Reading

F: *Do you find any connections, similarities or significant relationships between the Gospel, first reading and the second reading?*

P: *In the Gospel, Jesus used the scriptures to counteract the devil's temptations. In the second reading, St. Paul used the scriptures to give assurance of salvation to the Romans who believed in Jesus.*

P: *In the three readings, they mentioned about victory and salvation over temptations, trials and hardships for those who bow down before the Lord, for those who believe in God.*

P: *In the three readings, using the word of God or scriptures means presence of God. This presence of God in the first reading where God saved the people of Israel from Egypt is the same as the presence of God in the Gospel where Jesus overcame the temptations with the scriptures. Likewise, in the second reading, there is the presence of God promising salvation for the Romans through the word of God.*

### D. One-Thread Message

F: *After finding the connections and relationships of the three liturgical readings, we will go now to the one-thread message or hiblea that somehow will capture the theme of the readings this coming Sunday?*

P: *The participants will now suggest different themes drawn from the liturgical readings*

*"With God, there is salvation."*

*"Use the word of God to overcome your temptations, trials and hardships in life."*

*"There is always God's presence for those who believe."*

*"No one is exempted from any temptations or hardships because even Jesus went through temptations."*

F: *Now, we will check our one-thread insights with the Responsorial Psalm. Our response for this Sunday is: "Be with me, Lord, when I am in trouble." Now we can see that the 1st Sunday of Lent is all about temptations, trials and troubles. But God has assured us of His loving presence and salvation if we believe in Him.*

### III. ACTUALIZATION / APPLICATION

F: *For our application question leading us to group sharing: Have you experienced some trials or hardships lately? Please share your experiences and how were you able to overcome them? (The group is now divided into smaller groups for faith sharing.)*

### IV. CLOSING PRAYER/SONG

F: *Let us now conclude with our closing prayer.  
In the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit.  
Amen.*

P: *Lord God, thank you for being with us in our Liturgical Bible Study. Thank You for being there for us when we are in trouble. Thank You for Your assurance of salvation and victory over our trials. Make us always faithful to You, Lord. Make us always believe in You, O Lord, no matter what happens. All these we ask in Jesus' name. Amen.*

*Let us now bless each other on the forehead with the sign of the cross, telling each other: "God bless you."*

The trainer will again ask the participants about their observations and realizations regarding their experience. Some questions may be addressed this time.

## II. FACILITATING LITURGICAL BIBLE STUDY

### Workshop 4: Conduct of LBS in Two Groups

To make the participants experience how to facilitate the Liturgical Bible Study among themselves.

Instructions for Group assignments:

1. Have a headcount of all participants.
2. Divide the sum total number of participants into two – Group A and Group B. It will be helpful if Groups A and B are seated separately.
3. Again have a headcount of each group making the members call out their corresponding numbers. Then, divide Group A into three smaller groups, calling the first as Gospel group, the second as 1st reading group and the third as the 2nd reading group. Do the same with Group B. For example, if in Group A, there are 30 members, members with numbers 1-10 belong to Gospel group, 11-20 belong to 1st reading group, and 21-30 belong to 2nd reading group. Do likewise with Group B.
4. Now to make the final LBS groupings for Group A, with Gospel group 1-10, 1st reading group 11-20, 2nd reading group 21-30, those members with numbers 1, 11 and 21 will now compose Group A-1, those with 2, 12, and 22 will compose Group A-2, those with 3, 13, and 23 will make Group A-3, and so on. Therefore, Group A-1 will have three members, one is assigned to facilitate the Gospel, the second member is to facilitate the 1st Reading and the third is to facilitate the 2nd Reading, likewise with Group A-2 up to Group A-10. The ones to facilitate the Gospel reading are the leaders of the LBS groups.

Do the same procedure for Group B.

And if there are 1 or 2 extra participants, you may distribute them to other groups.

**A. Experience**

Instructions for Liturgical Readings:

1. For Group A, LBS 1-10, assign the Liturgical Readings for the coming Sunday, for example, 2nd Sunday of Lent.
2. For Group B, with LBS 1-10, assign the next Sunday of lent, for example, 3rd Sunday of Lent.
3. The LBS shall be conducted by all LBS groups, simultaneously.
4. The process for this workshop may take only up to the sharing of the one-thread message. The application question and sharing may be omitted. This workshop may consume about an hour or less.

**B. Deepening**

1. The trainer may ask the participants about their observations and realizations after their experience of LBS.
2. The trainer may explain further the LBS process.

**Workshop 5: Group A to Group B**

To make the participants belonging to Group A experience how to facilitate the LBS to Group B.

Instructions: 2nd Sunday of Lent for Group A

1. Group A-1 will facilitate the study of 2nd Sunday of Lent with Group B-1.
2. Group A-2 with Group B-2, and so on and so forth up to Group A-10 with Group B-10.
3. Group A will conduct the LBS with Group B up to the sharing of one-thread message. Application question and sharing may be omitted. This process should consume an hour or less.

**Workshop 6: Group B to Group A**

To make the participants belonging to Group B experience how to facilitate the LBS to Group A.

Instructions: 3rd Sunday of Lent for Group B

1. Group B-1 will facilitate the study of 3rd Sunday of Lent with Group A-1.
2. Group B-2 with Group A-2, and so on and so forth up to Group B-10 with Group A-10.
3. Group B will conduct the LBS with Group A up to one-thread message. Application question and sharing may be omitted. This process should consume an hour or less.



## E. CONFERENCE 5: THE CALL TO BE DISCIPLES OF THE WORD

### OBJECTIVES OF THE CONFERENCE

1. To make the participants understand the implications of the Emmaus story;
2. To make the individuals realize the need and urgency of becoming disciples of the Word of God in the community.

### THINGS NEEDED

1. Individual Bibles
2. Black/white board
3. Chalk and eraser/marking pen

### OUTLINE OF THE CONFERENCE

- I. Introduction
- II. Study of the Word
- III. Synthesis: The Call to be Disciples of the Word
- IV. Conclusion

### CONFERENCE PROPER

#### I. Introduction

After doing examples of interpreting biblical texts by using the synchronic method, that is, paying more attention to the details, this time the method will be used again in the Study of the Word and reflecting together. The text, Luke 24,13-35, will be the object of study and discussion for this fifth conference. The participants are invited to read the text individually trying to focus on the details of the story. Then, a participant from the group stands and reads the text aloud as everybody also stands to honor the Gospel. After the reading, everyone sits and the facilitator begins to ask questions based on the text and the participants respond.

## II. Study of the Word: Luke 24,13-35

R: A Reading from the Holy Gospel according to St. Luke 24,13-35.

*<sup>13</sup>Now that very day two of them were going to a village seven miles from Jerusalem called Emmaus, <sup>14</sup>and they were conversing about all the things that had occurred. <sup>15</sup>And it happened that while they were conversing and debating, Jesus himself drew near and walked with them, <sup>16</sup>but their eyes were prevented from recognizing him. <sup>17</sup>He asked them, "What are you discussing as you walk along?" They stopped, looking downcast. <sup>18</sup>One of them, named Cleopas, said to him in reply, "Are you the only visitor to Jerusalem who does not know of the things that have taken place there in these days?" <sup>19</sup>And he replied to them, "What sort of things?" They said to him, "The things that happened to Jesus the Nazarene, who was a prophet mighty in deed and word before God and all the people, <sup>20</sup>how our chief priests and rulers both handed him over to a sentence of death and crucified him. <sup>21</sup>But we were hoping that he would be the one to redeem Israel; and besides all this, it is now the third day since this took place. <sup>22</sup>Some women from our group, however, have astounded us: they were at the tomb early in the morning <sup>23</sup>and did not find his body; they came back and reported that they had indeed seen a vision of angels who announced that he was alive. <sup>24</sup>Then some of those with us went to the tomb and found things just as the women had described, but him they did not see." <sup>25</sup>And he said to them, "Oh, how foolish you are! How slow of heart to believe all that the prophets spoke! <sup>26</sup>Was it not necessary that the Messiah should suffer these things and enter into his glory?" <sup>27</sup>Then beginning with Moses and all the prophets, he interpreted to them what referred to him in all the scriptures. <sup>28</sup>As they approached the village to which they were going, he gave the impression that he was going on farther. <sup>29</sup>But they urged him, "Stay with us, for it is nearly evening and the day is almost over." So he went in to stay with them. <sup>30</sup>And it happened that, while he was with them at table, he took bread, said the blessing, broke it, and gave it to them. <sup>31</sup>With that, their eyes were opened and they recognized him, but he*

vanished from their sight. <sup>32</sup>Then they said to each other, "Were not our hearts burning [within us] while he spoke to us on the way and opened the scriptures to us?" <sup>33</sup>So they set out at once and returned to Jerusalem where they found gathered together the eleven and those with them <sup>34</sup>who were saying, "The Lord has truly been raised and has appeared to Simon!" <sup>35</sup>Then the two recounted what had taken place on the way and how he was made known to them in the breaking of the bread.

R: *The Gospel of the Lord.*

P: *Praise to you, O Lord, Jesus Christ.*

F: *In v. 13, how many disciples were going towards Emmaus?*

P: *There were two disciples?*

F: *How far is Emmaus from Jerusalem?*

P: *Around 7 miles or 11 kilometers.*

F: *What day they were going to Emmaus?*

P: *On the same day, meaning that day when Jesus was reported to have risen from the dead. Must be Sunday.*

F: *In v. 14, what were they talking about?*

P: *And they were conversing about all the things that had occurred.*

F: *In v. 15, what happened while they were conversing and debating?*

P: *Jesus himself drew near and walked with them.*

F: *In v. 16, did they recognize Jesus?*

P: *But their eyes were prevented from recognizing him.*

F: *In v. 17, what did Jesus ask them?*

P: *"What are you discussing as you walk along?"*

F: *In v. 18, as they stopped and looking downcast, what did Cleopas, one of the two disciples, answer?*

P: *One of them, named Cleopas, said to him in reply, "Are you the only visitor to Jerusalem who does not know of the things that have taken place there in these days?"*

F: *In v. 19, what did Jesus ask them and what was their answer?*

P: *And he replied to them, "What sort of things?" They said to him, "The things that happened to Jesus the Nazarene, who was a prophet mighty in deed and word before God and all the people.*

F: *In v. 20, what else did the disciples narrate to Jesus?*

P: *How our chief priests and rulers both handed him over to a sentence of death and crucified him.*

F: *In v. 21, what was their expectation of Jesus? What were they hoping for?*

P: *But we were hoping that he would be the one to redeem Israel; and besides all this, it is now the third day since this took place.*

F: *In v. 22, what else did they narrate to Jesus?*

P: *Some women from our group, however, have astounded us: they were at the tomb early in the morning.*

F: *What time did the women go to the tomb?*

P: *Early in the morning, of the same day.*

F: *In v. 23, when they did not find the body of Jesus, what was their reaction?*

P: *They came back and reported that they had indeed seen a vision of angels who announced that he was alive.*

F: *In v. 24, what was the reaction of some disciples who heard the announcement from the women?*

P: *Then some of those with us went to the tomb and found things just as the women had described, but him they did not see.*

*In vs. 25-26, on hearing these accounts from the two disciples, what did Jesus tell them?*

*Oh, how foolish you are! How slow of heart to believe all that the prophets spoke! Was it not necessary that the Messiah should suffer these things and enter into his glory?*

*In v. 27, what did Jesus do from there?*

*Then beginning with Moses and all the prophets, he interpreted to them what referred to him in all the scriptures.*

*In v. 28, as they were nearing Emmaus, what was Jesus trying to impress upon the two disciples?*

*As they approached the village to which they were going, he gave the impression that he was going on farther.*

*In v. 29, what was the answer of the disciples and the reaction of Jesus?*

*But they urged him, "Stay with us, for it is nearly evening and the day is almost over." So he went in to stay with them.*

*In v. 30, while Jesus was at table with them, what did he do with the bread?*

*While he was with them at table, he took bread, said the blessing, broke it, and gave it to them.*

*In v. 31, what was the reaction of the two disciples?*

*With that, their eyes were opened and they recognized him.*

*What happened to Jesus?*

*Jesus vanished from their sight.*

*In v. 32, what was the realization of the two disciples?*

*Were not our hearts burning [within us] while he spoke to us on the way and opened the scriptures to us?*

*F: In v. 33, what was the immediate reaction of the two disciples?*

*P: They set out at once and returned to Jerusalem where they found gathered together the eleven and those with them.*

*F: Why did the disciples go back to Jerusalem at once? Why can they not postpone it? Remember they advised Jesus not to go on farther because the day was almost over?*

*P: Because there is a sense of urgency. The experience of the Risen Jesus was so intense and exciting that they could not wait to announce it in Jerusalem.*

*F: When they arrived in Jerusalem, whom did they find gathered together?*

*P: They found gathered together the eleven and those with them.*

*F: In v. 34, what did the eleven and those with them tell the two disciples from Emmaus?*

*P: "The Lord has truly been raised and has appeared to Simon!"*

*F: In v. 35, what did the two disciples narrate before the eleven and those with them?*

*P: Then the two recounted what had taken place on the way and how he was made known to them in the breaking of the bread.*

*F: Last questions, who were the two disciples here in the road to Emmaus?*

*P: The first disciple one was Cleopas. The second one was unnamed.*

*F: Did St. Luke forget to write the name of the second disciple or was it intentional not to name the disciple?*

*P: It was intentional.*

*F: What does it mean?*

*P: It means that anybody who reads the word of God must proclaim it to others and become a disciple of the word of God.*

### III. Synthesis: The Call To Be Disciples the Word

When we started this seminar, we opened it with the pilgrimage. Together, we journeyed by the roadside. Before we came here, we had our own set of pre-conceived ideas about our faith. When we first began reading the Word of God, we naturally resorted to our traditional ways of trying to understand it. Like the blind Bartimeus, we could not yet see or discern the important details that were in the text. Then, when we had our first activity, our eyes and minds gradually opened up and we were able to understand things about the Scripture. Slowly, as we went on with our conferences, we realized we could now uncover and clarify things; we had been able to tear apart the curtain of ignorance, fears and apprehensions that prevented us from understanding what is written in the Bible.

And so we have come to realize why, in the story of the two disciples going to Emmaus in the gospel of Luke, the second disciple remained unnamed. St. Luke must have intended it that way: that whoever may come to read the story, he/she would realize that he/she is the second disciple, who having heard the Word and felt it burn in his heart had been invited to the banquet of the Eucharist.

This afternoon/evening we will 'break bread' just like the disciples did with Jesus. Each one of us here belongs to a particular group, and just like the disciples in the story, I am certain each of us feels an urgency to share what we have discovered, what we have learned and what we have heard. We, therefore, become disciples of the Word.

### IV. Conclusion

To be effective disciples of the Word, we are challenged to do on-going studies and formation in the Bible. This includes learning the other methods of interpretation, particularly the diachronic methods continue obtaining the tools and resources that could help us build our capabilities for the ministry of the Word. Knowing the different methods, the tools and resources will enable us to communicate the true and objective message of God's Word to others and help them actualize the biblical message in their lives.

## V. CELEBRATION OF THE HOLY MASS

The culminating activity for the Liturgical Bible Study Seminar is the celebration of the Holy Mass. This is the celebration of the Word and the Eucharist. The priest-celebrant may take the Mass of the day.

### SPECIFIC OBJECTIVES

1. To lead the participants to a celebration of the Word of God and the Eucharist as a fitting culmination of the Liturgical Bible Study Seminar
2. To encourage the parish priest/Spiritual Director's participation in the celebration so that he is made aware of the accomplishments of his parishioners or members of the community.
3. To distribute participants' certificates as a gesture of the individuals' active participation in the seminar.

### THINGS NEEDED

1. Mass kit
2. Table for the participants' Bibles for blessing
3. Holy water

### PERSONS INVOLVED

1. Mass celebrant – assigned priest/spiritual director
2. Readers/Lectors
3. Choir/music ministry
4. Altar servers
5. 2 participants offering 2 candles for the Liturgy of the Word:
  - 1 participant for the offering of the Lectionary;
  - 1 participant for the Gospel Book (if there is).
6. 2 participants offering 2 candles for the Liturgy of the Eucharist:
  - 1 participant for the offering of water, wine and hosts;
  - 1 participant for the offering of hosts and chalice.