



# The Holy See

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**MESSAGE OF HIS HOLINESS BENEDICT XVI  
TO THE PRESIDENT OF THE PONTIFICAL BIBLICAL COMMISSION ON THE OCCASION  
OF THE ANNUAL PLENARY ASSEMBLY**

*To My Venerable Brother  
Cardinal William Joseph Levada  
President of the Pontifical Biblical Commission*

I am pleased to send to you, Venerable Brother, to Cardinal Prosper Grech, OSA, to the Secretary and to all the members of the [Pontifical Biblical Commission](#) my cordial greetings on the occasion of the Annual Plenary Assembly which was held to discuss the important theme “Inspiration and Truth of the Bible”.

As we know, this topic is crucial for a correct hermeneutic of the biblical message. Indeed, inspiration as the action of God makes it possible for the Word of God to be expressed in human words. Consequently, the theme of inspiration is decisive for a correct approach to Sacred Scripture. Indeed, an interpretation of sacred texts that ignores or forgets their inspiration does not take into account their most important and valuable characteristic, namely, their origin in God. In my Post-Synodal Apostolic Exhortation *Verbum Domini*, I called to mind that “The Synod Fathers also stressed the link between the theme of inspiration and that of the truth of the Scriptures. A deeper study of the process of inspiration will doubtless lead to a greater understanding of the truth contained in the sacred books” (n. 19).

Through the charism of inspiration the books of Sacred Scripture have a direct, concrete power of appeal. But the Word of God must not remain confined to writing. If, in fact, the act of Revelation concluded with the death of the last Apostle, the revealed Word continues to be proclaimed and interpreted by the living Tradition of the Church. Thus the Word of God, set down in sacred texts, is not an inert deposit within the Church but becomes a supreme law of her faith and life force. The Tradition, which originates from the Apostles, progresses with the help of the Holy Spirit and grows with the reflection and the study of believers, with personal experience of spiritual life and

preaching of the Bishops (cf. *Dei Verbum*, nn. 8, 21).

In studying the theme “Inspiration and Truth of the Bible”, the Pontifical Biblical Commission is called to offer its specific and qualified contribution to this necessary in-depth examination. It is in fact essential and fundamental for the life and mission of the Church that sacred texts be interpreted according to their nature; Inspiration and Truth are constitutive characteristics of this nature. Thus your duty will truly be useful for the life and mission of the Church.

With best wishes to each of you for a fruitful continuation of your work, I would like to express my lively appreciation of the work of the Biblical Commission, committed to promoting the understanding, study and reception of the Word of God in the world. With these sentiments I entrust each one of you to the maternal protection of the Virgin Mary, whom with the whole Church we invoke as *Sedes Sapientiae*, and I warmly impart to you, Venerable Brother, and to all the Members of the Pontifical Biblical Commission a special Apostolic Blessing.

*From the Vatican, 18 April 2012*

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