

Kazimierz Romaniuk

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KAZIMIERZ ROMANIUK, WARSZAWA

**POST-VATICAN BIBLICAL CRITICISM
AND
THE LIVING TRADITION AND THE MAGISTERIUM
OF THE CHURCH**

In the *Final Relatio* of the Synod of Bishops of 1985 we find, among other statements, the following:

Ecclesia verbum Dei religiose audiens ad illud fideliter proclamandum mittitur (cf. DV 1). Itaque praedicatio Evangelii inter praecipua munera Ecclesiae, et imprimis episcoporum, eminet et hodie maximi momenti est (cf. LG 25). In hoc contextu apparet momentum Constitutionis Dogmaticae „Dei Verbum“, quae forsitan nimis neglecta fuit sed tamen a Paulo VI in Exhortatione Apostolica „Evangelii nuntiandi“ (1975) modo profundiore et omnino actuali iterum proposita est. Etiam pro hac Constitutione necessarium est partialem lectionem evitare. Praecipue exegesis sensus originalis S. Scripturae, quae a Concilio enixe commendatur (cf. DV 12), non potest separari a viva traditione Ecclesiae (cf. VD 9) neque ab autentica interpretatione Magisterii Ecclesiae (cf. VD 10)

The above excerpt taken from the Synod's *Final Relatio* refers to the methodology of transmitting the contents of Divine Revelation. It is addressed foremost, of course, to the bishops (*imprimis episcoporum*), but in no less a degree to Biblical scholars as well. It seems only natural, therefore, that it should be, above all, this latter group that would feel the need for making an examination of conscience, one of its very own which would encompass in its range the entire body of its didactic-biblical endeavours of the past two decades since Vatican II. It behooves us, it seems, to speak thus of an "examination of conscience", inasmuch as the synodal *Final Relatio* appears to perceive in this twenty-year period following the Vatican Council some serious shortcomings in the method of handing on to the faithful the inspired Word of God.

Some of these deficiencies as the *Relatio* presents them are:

1. The Dogmatic Constitution *Dei Verbum* has remained overly

neglected. Moreover, the *Relatio* seems to suggest that this failure to give the Constitution due consideration is all the more regrettable since its directives were called to mind for us by Pope Paul VI in his Apostolic Exhortation, *Evangelii Nuntiandi*.

2. The reading of the Constitution not in its total context, but in partial, fragment-selective reading.

3. In the researches for the original meaning of the Sacred Scriptures, there was an evident lack of taking into proper account the living tradition of the Church (cf. DV 9), as well as the official teaching of the Magisterium.

Let us try, therefore, to analyze somewhat more thoroughly these three synodal "observations" — as we shall call them to avoid saying "charges" — in the perspective of the Biblical criticism of the last two decades.

1. Neglect of the Constitution „*Dei Verbum*”

It seems that the above synodal reproach can be directed in particular to the various Biblical Conferences and Congresses, especially inter-faith meetings, though not simply to this latter group alone. The by-passing in silence of the Constitution *Dei Verbum* at inter-faith gatherings was prompted most often by ecumenical concerns. Yet we could assume that such fears are groundless, that is, fears that a more frequent appeal to the Constitution on Revelation might be a setback to the ecumenical movement. After all, it is this very Constitution that belongs to the most ecumenical documents of the Second Vatican Council, a fact frequently adverted to even by our separated brethren¹. And so, it is to these Biblical Conventions and Congresses that we must address the Synod's pointed remark on the undervaluation (*neglectio*) of the Constitution.

¹ In the opinion of O. Cullmann, the Constitution on Revelation contains veritable „pearls” on the subject of the Holy Scriptures (cf. *Życie i Myśl*, 16, 1966, 175). A little further this same exegete asserts: „Without any reservations we rejoice in the statements from which it follows that research into Holy Scriptures is the very soul of theology... We are delighted with the greater number of the enunciations of the last chapter of the schema on Revelation.” L. Vischer speaks in similar fashion in his article entitled *Nach der vierten Session des zweiten Vatikanischen Konzils*, ÖR 15 (1966) 81. According to M. Thurian the Constitution may be regarded as the first phase in the movement for Christian unity (cf. *Le Monde* 14.11.1965). The previously cited author O. Cullmann says: „As an exegete, I agree in principle fully with the commentary in Chapter 5 on the New Testament. Within the scope of the commentary was achieved basic unanimity of thought.” And finally, with a direct reference to ecumenism: „The ecumenical design manifests itself especially clearly in the texts treating of the role and mission of Divine Revelation, where it is also proposed that in the work of translations of the Scriptures there should be cooperation with our separated brethren.”

Proceeding then with our analysis of this same Synodal observation, we need to make now the following distinction: a distinction between writings on the subject of the Constitution itself and the actual appropriation of the Constitution whether in commentaries, in introductions to Biblical studies, in theologies or in Biblical catecheses of the Post-Vatican period. Perhaps, we ought to note here that the Constitution as such has been submitted to multi-faceted analyses, especially in the first several years after its appearance. The literature on the subject *Dei Verbum* is impressively rich². We may daresay, therefore, that the twenty-year Post-Vatican period had quite adequately worked out for us a detailed and a profound theory on the Constitution.

The same cannot be said, however, about the implementation of the Constitution on the practical level. Thus, for example, there did not appear any specifically new Introductions to Biblical Studies, worked out on the principles enunciated in the *Dei Verbum*³. Nor do we have to date any distinctively new theory on divine inspiration⁴ and the canon of Holy Scriptures. There is little evidence, moreover, of any significant influence of the Constitution on the commentaries, especially on the "classic" commentaries of the past two decades. In short, certain particular constitutive elements of the Constitution did not enter into the regular life mainstream of Catholic Biblical criticism.

² A compilation of the most important positions published up to 1968 is given by A. Kubiś. „A Bibliography on the Conciliar Constitution on Divine Revelation" *Idee przewodnie konstytucji soborowej o Bożym Objawieniu* (The Dominant Notions in the Conciliar Constitution on Divine Revelation) Kraków 1968, 191—205.

³ Among the very few exceptions in this regard we can include the work of the Italian exegete V. Manucci, *Bibbia come parola di Dio. Introduzione generale alla sacra Scrittura*, Brescia 1981. The 5th edition was published in 1985. In the reviews of this work, we find comments such as the following: „La costituzione conciliare Dei Verbum, tra i suoi vari risultati concreti, ha avuto anche quello di orientare secondo nuove prospettive ogni introduzione generale alla S. Scrittura. Mons. Valerio Manucci offre la piu testimonianza del quadro metodologico per un approccio globale al testo biblico." C. M. Martini Oss. Rom. 27.9.1981. Also „C'è aria indubbiamente nuova, quella che si respira già, benché condensata entro poche tormentate pagine, nella *Dei Verbum*..." G. Giavini, SC 110, 1 (1982) n. 97.

⁴ In Polish literature consult on this point several articles by Fr. J. Homerski, e.g. in *Ruch Biblijny i Liturgiczny* 17 (1964) 261—274; *Ateneum Kapłańskie* 56 (1964) 193—201; and also in *Ateneum Kapłańskie* 61 (1969) 388—383. See in particular in *Idee przewodnie...*, cited previously, pp. 67—68. Also the essay by Bishop H. Muszyński, *Słowo natchnione* (The Inspired Word. An outline of the theological contents of biblical inspiration) Kraków 1983.

2. The Partial or Selectively Fragmentary Acceptance of the Constitution „*Dei Verbum*”

The second point of note, admittedly a critical one, touches on the question of the Post-Vatican acceptance of the Constitution *Dei Verbum*. It speaks of the fragmentary nature of the text acceptance that characterized this period. True, the synodal observation is very general in character, inasmuch as it does not identify the fragment-elements, some of which were ignored, while others were selected for incorporation into the Bible studies of these past twenty years.

Nevertheless, a closer look at the publications on Scriptural studies of almost the entire last quarter-century allows us to conclude that the writers of the *Final Relatio* had in mind the Biblicists' very enthusiastic adoption — sometimes extended perhaps too far — of specifically those elements by which the Constitution cleared for us the way to a better understanding with non-Catholic Biblical scholarship. To put it more exactly, we are speaking here of those elements which won for themselves, already in the Encyclical, *Divino afflante Spirito*, the designation — “the green light”.

It was the reiteration of precisely these directives of the Constitution, their elaboration, and the strong emphasis given to them that led to the warm reception accorded to the Constitution *Dei Verbum* by Biblical scholars at large, not only by Catholic groups. “Number 19” of the Constitution became generally acknowledged as the official encouragement for taking full advantage of the methods promulgated by the *Form- und Redaktionsgeschichte* theories.

Time and again it has been proven that the Constitution very clearly expands and renders flexible the concept of historicity as such⁵. It does so principally by virtue of adopting such formulations as: “The sacred authors wrote the four Gospels, selecting some things from the many which had been handed on by word of mouth or in writings, reducing some of them to a synthesis, explaining some things in view of the situation of their churches” (n. 19). Or even in an earlier statement where the document speaking of the Old Testament says: “The books, although they also contain some things which are incomplete and temporary, nevertheless show us a true divine pedagogy” (n. 15).

⁵ In connection with this see J. A. Fitzmyer, *Die Wahrheit der Evangelien*, Stuttgart 1965. The author is actually focusing here on the Instructions from the Biblical Commission: *De historica Evangeliorum veritate* issued April 21, 1964. However, it is generally recognized that this Instruction is at the basis of the 5th Chapter of the Constitution on Revelation. See on this point K. Romaniuk, *Problemy egzegezy Nowego Testamentu w Konstytucji dogmatycznej o Boskim Objawieniu* (Problems in the exegesis of the New Testament Noted in the Dogmatic Constitution on Divine Revelation) *Ruch Biblijny i Liturgiczny* 14 (1967) 5—18.

Almost one entire paragraph of the Constitution *Dei Verbum* consists of such formal directives, alerting commentators on Holy Scriptures to the fact that "due attention must be paid to the customary and characteristic styles of feeling, speaking and narrating which prevailed at the time of the sacred writer". (n. 12). This is nothing else than the Church's official encouragement to Biblicists to engage in probing studies, extra-Biblical ones as well, of various literary forms, and to use these as criteria in their critical interpretations of the Bible.

But it has come to pass that analyses drawn up on the rules of literary criticism have been stretched to such limits in the post-Conciliar era that they have begun to weary even those who had been enthusiastically pursuing such analyses themselves until now. Testifying to this ennui is, among other things, the ever-more-frequently evident reluctance among commentators to break up larger literary wholes and to see perforce in every book of the Bible, even in those of but a few chapters, a kind of artificial "pastiche" of some few or at times even of several compositions⁶.

These, then, are some examples of this sort of partial or "piece-wise" acceptance of the Constitution *Dei Verbum*. Moreover, it was primarily in this direction that the reading of the document went during the past two decades.

On the other hand and significantly enough, there never appeared in any larger publication a full development of the fifth point of the Constitution which treats of the need of obedience in faith in these matters. And yet, it would seem to have been indicated as necessary in an age marked by a crisis of authority in all spheres and at a time of widespread secularism. References to number 10 of the Constitution were likewise infrequent, and when they did occur, it was largely for the purpose of expounding very specifically on the teaching role of the Church.

Furthermore, full advertence has not as yet been made, at least not everywhere, to the postulates constitutive of the whole sixth chapter of the *Dei Verbum* which speaks of the Scriptures in the life of the Church. Here we wish to acknowledge that the emergence and subsequent activities of the World Catholic Federation of the Biblical Apostolate have shown themselves to be a significant achievement in this specific regard.

⁶ This kind of reluctance is rather easily detected in the several volumes of the excellent *Herders Theologischer Kommentar zum Neuen Testament*.

3. The Search for the Meaning of the Holy Scriptures and the Living Tradition and Official Teaching of the Church

The text-formulation of the *Final Relatio* has us dealing here quite clearly, on the one hand, with patristic exegesis — and perhaps also with post-patristic (*viva traditio*) — and on the other hand, with the teaching office of the Church which authentically interprets the Holy Scriptures. In reminding us that there can be no discord (disharmony) between some "private" inquiry into the meaning of the Word of God and tradition and the Magisterium, the writers of the *Relatio* give us to understand that in the past twenty years, things were not always so, or to put it simply, they were otherwise. Let us look, therefore, into this matter from these two aspects: first, at contemporary Biblical scholarship and patristic exegesis, and the official enunciations of the Church.

a. Contemporary Biblical Studies and Patristic Exegesis

There is no need to hide the fact that the Fathers of the Church are not held as the greatest authorities in the field of exegesis by contemporary Scriptural scholars. A large number of factors enter into explaining this state of affairs. Some of these are:

The Philological Inadequacies of Patristic Exegesis

It is well known that contemporary Biblical scholarship is based on a sound knowledge of languages, principally of the languages in which the Scriptures were written, but often of more languages than these. The majority of the Scriptural commentators from the patristic age, however, neither set such knowledge of languages as their basis, nor do they give any evidence of possessing it. The Fathers of the Western Church, with but a few exceptions, are commenting on Scriptures written in their Latin translations; more exactly — first in the Old Latin form, then later in the Vulgate version of Jerome. Granted, the Fathers of the Eastern Church are versed in the Greek language, but scarcely any of them can claim the ability to read the Scriptures in the Hebrew language.

That is why it is possible to justify — at least in part — the charge advanced against patristic Biblical studies that the writers are, for all purposes, commenting on Scriptural texts significantly at variance with the original texts which, moreover, appear in the Scriptures issued today. To the category of weaknesses in the philological area must also be added the almost total absence with the

Fathers (with the single exception of Origen) of any attempts at textual criticism. As a result, therefore, the object under analysis is, in the case of the patristic exegesis, a text quite different from that under critical study by contemporary Biblicists.

The Excessively Allegorizing Tendencies that Characterize Patristic Commentaries

For many Fathers of the Church, the literal sense of the Scriptures is of little import, and in their view, ought not to be the object of discovery in reading the Word of God⁷. The Pauline admonition about the "killing" function of the letter (2 Cor. 3 : 6) is repeated by them over and over and in various ways. All that the Bible speaks of must have a spiritual and a deeper sense⁸.

This understanding of the Bible, originating already with Philo⁹, and later carefully cultivated in the renowned exegetical-catechetical School of Alexandria¹⁰, enjoyed great popularity in antiquity in spite of the appearance in time of the Antioch Center which sought to promote a more literal exegesis¹¹.

The fact remains that there prevailed at the time an almost universally held conviction, basing itself, moreover, on the teaching of St. Paul, that whatever is written in the divinely inspired Books was written for our instruction (Rom. 15:4)¹². While this assertion

⁷ In Augustine's view, restricting oneself in the reading to the literal sense would be an affront to the very dignity of God. „Haec si spiritualiter non intelligantur nonne fabulae sunt? Nisi aliquid habeant secreti, nonne indignae sunt Deo?" (In Ps. 76,2).

⁸ These are the terms with which St. Augustine designates this sense or meaning: *sensus spiritualis* — In Ps. 33 (sermo 4,1); *intellectus spiritualis* — In Ps. 103 (sermo 1,1); *illustris intellectus* — In Ps. 108,1; *interpretatio allegorica* — In Ps. 77,26; *transitus ad Christum* — In Ps. 7,1; *mystica significatio* — In Job. tr. 9,2.

⁹ Cf. S. G. Sowers, *The Hermeneutics of Philo and Hebrews*, Richmond 1965.

¹⁰ Cf. L. Ginzberg, *Allegorical Interpretations*, Jewish Encyclopedia n. 403; also W. Burghardt, *On Early Christian Exegesis*, ThS 11 (1950) 78—116.

¹¹ Cf. C. Hay, *Antiochen Exegesis and Christology*, Austral. Bibl. Rev. 12 (1964) 10—235; R. E. Brown notes with good reason: „However, with Hilary (d. 367), Ambrose (d. 397) and especially Augustine (d. 430), the wave of Alexandrian allegorical exegesis swept into the West." *The Jerome Biblical Commentary* II, 612.

¹² St. Jerome, while not one of the greatest allegorical commentators in patristic exegesis, also says: „Non sunt, ut quidam putant, in scripturis, verba simplicia, plurimum in his absconditum est. Aliud littera, aliud mysticus sermo significat." EP. 18, 12 (PL 22,368). See yet on this point: A. Penna, *Principi e carattere dell'esegesi di S. Girolamo*, Roma 1950. This same method of interpreting Scriptures was dominant among the commentators of the Middle Ages. See C. Spica, *Pourquoi le moyen-âge n'a-t-il pas pratiqué davantage l'exégèse littérale?* RSPT 28 (1939) 139—179; By the same author: *Esquisse d'une histoire de l'exégèse latine au Moyen Age*, Paris 1944.

itself is readily acceptable, the point at issue here is that none of the patristic commentators proposed any criteria on the basis of which could be discovered the spiritual sense of the many things, the people and the events entering into and forming the total structure of the Biblical universe. In consequence, there rules in their writing absolute freedom and a subjectivism difficult to reconcile with the rigors of the scholarly Biblical investigations of our times¹³. This state of affairs is made worse by the fact that some of the Fathers of the Church, among them such luminaries in other respects as St. Augustine, relying exclusively on the Septuagint, come to regard it as being itself an inspired text. Hence, they perceive certain deviations from the original Hebrew that occur in the Septuagint translation as a sign by which God Himself mandates the reader to search out in these instances the spiritual sense of the given Biblical passage¹⁴.

The Evident Deficiencies in Patristic Exegesis in the Areas of Biblical History, Geography and Archeology

These weaknesses are the natural consequences of their total indifference to the literary sense of the Bible¹⁵. Moreover, the role of archeology as an auxiliary discipline in exegesis was as yet unknown, while the available geographical-historical data were, for the most part, interpreted allegorically also.

The "Homiletical Character" of Patristic Exegesis

The minds of the scholars of our times, including Biblical scholars, are geared to the rigors of strict logical thinking and they find no pleasure in this type of "homiletical" exposition. But that is precisely the distinctive characteristic of many of the exegetical commentaries of the Fathers of the Church. The commentaries are, in fact, no more than sermons which were usually listened to by

¹³ M. Pontet, an exceptional authority on St. Augustine, writes thus on the allegorical exegesis of this Father of the Church: „De plus, il y a dans son exégèse un curieux mélange de remarques aiguës et de naïvetés." *L'exégèse de S. Augustin* n. 230. Similarly R. E. Brown who observes: „The Fathers and Scholastics had found in the New Testament theological insights of which the original authors were innocent." *The Jerome Biblical Commentary* II, 613.

¹⁴ See for this M. Pontet, *L'exégèse de S. Augustin prédicateur*, Paris 1944, n. 182.

¹⁵ The Encyclical *Divino afflante Spiritu* confirms this, as we read in it: „Non enim pauca, inter ea praesertim quae ad historiam spectant, aut vix, aut non satis explicata sunt a superiorum saeculorum explanatoribus, quippe quibus fere omnes notitiae deessent ad illa magis illustranda necessariae." EB 555. For a rather unusual notion of history see the treatise which still remains a classic in its field: *Saint Augustin et la fin de la culture antique*, Paris 1938, 132 pp, by H. I. Marrou.

the simple people of God. The point is that such an exegesis may be allowed certain predetermined prerogatives otherwise forbidden, mainly for this reason that as sermon, the exegesis must not only convince the mind of the listener but it must also touch his emotions and stir him to action. That is why this selfappropriated *licentia homiletica* is a phenomenon quite permissible in a sermon, even though it is hardly suitable for use in the field of scholarly Biblical criticism.

Admittedly then, patristic exegesis does not present an especially attractive field of investigation in the view of contemporary Biblical scholarship which inquires above all into the literal sense of the inspired word of God. While this stance of the modern scholar has our understanding, it is regrettable, nevertheless, that current Biblical theology does not avail itself of patristic sources to a greater degree. The penetrating intellectual insights of the Fathers of the Church, their proneness to treat both Testaments jointly with an admirable fidelity to the principle: *In Vetere Novum latet et in Novo Vetus patet*¹⁶ (The new is hidden in the old, while the old stands open to the new) could undoubtedly prove helpful in the construction of Biblical theologies both of the individual books of the Bible and of the whole of both Testaments as well. A more frequent reaching out for the Fathers of the Church could very well save our exegesis and our Biblical theology from more than one instance of over-philologizing and of an exaggerated seeking of parallels in closely bound religions.

b. Biblicistics of the Last Twenty Years and the Official Teaching Function of the Church

Some Biblical scholars have this against the official pronouncements of the Church that in time they lose their binding force, as the history of biblicistics shows¹⁷. And they cite many examples to support this claim. Thus, it is pointed out that even at the beginning

¹⁶ Ireneus expresses this same thought in such formulation as: „Inseminatus est ubique in Scripturis... Filius Dei." *Adv. haer.* IV, 20. or „Disseminaverunt ... Sermonem de Christo patriarchae et prophetae" *Adv. haer.* IV, 39. Augustine speaks in like way: „Moses omne quod scripsit, de Christo est." *Contra Faust*, 16,9.

¹⁷ „Today, with the approval of the same commission, most of these directives are regarded as *passé* by Catholic scholars." R. E. Brown, *The Jerome Biblical Commentary* II, 620. We can find, however, some very eloquent statements on this point coming from some theologians of renown. Thus, for example, Card. L. Billot counsels the literary forms should be regarded as „generi di vanità, nei quali o non c'è scusa alcuna, o se c'è l'ignoranza scusa l'errore, e la temerità scusa l'ignoranza." *De inspiratione Sacrae Scripturae*, Roma⁴ 1929, 154. Cited by L. Alonso Schökel, *Dove va l'esegesi cattolica*, Civ. Catt. 11 (1960) 451.

of this century, the Papal Biblical Commission did not allow (although in truth, written documents to this effect are difficult to find) the use of various literary forms in the interpretation of the Scriptures. And it was only with strong reservations (this again in compliance with the same Commission's directives) that scholars were to draw from researches in the field of form criticism, viz., *Formgeschichte*, the theory of the two sources of literary criticism¹⁸. Similarly, the new hypotheses on the Deutro- and Trito-Isaiah themes found no acceptance¹⁹. In the official documents of the Church, the Letters to the Hebrews was almost always ascribed to St. Paul²⁰; and there are other such examples.

On all these problematic questions, and we could easily list many more, there was shed in time a completely different light in the official enunciations of the Church. It is the relativism of these pronouncements that Biblical scholars find so discouraging, as some are quick to confess, protesting at the same time at the restrictions imposed on the creative initiative of Catholic exegetes.

But positions staked on such claims are not always well-founded. In all fairness, they need be corrected by bringing forth a whole list of documents attesting to the extraordinary freedom that was given to Catholic scholars, at least since World War II, in their construction of all sorts of investigative hypotheses: In fact, the period from 1941—1948 is regarded as the renaissance of Catholic Biblical studies, mainly because of the issuance of several important Papal documents²¹.

We are obliged to look from a somewhat different perspective on the question of the Church's later adopting a more liberal position in matters relating to the interpretation of the Bible. After all, the so-called "relativism" of the earlier pronouncements can be also readily seen as in a sense a certain resiliency (elasticity) of the Magisterium and its sensitive awareness of the ever new achievements on the Biblical scene. It is in its own way an expression of respect for these achievements. For the Church takes these findings into account to this extent that from time to time, directly under the influence of these researches, it modifies and corrects its own outlook. This fact certainly merits the appreciative recognition of scholars. We can well imagine what some would say were the Magisterium never to show any flexibility. No doubt it would be charged, and rightly so, with petrification and an insensitive disregard of the fruits of the arduous labors (researches) of so many men of learning.

¹⁸ An Allusion to the Pronouncement of the Biblical Commission of June 24, 1912 (EB 417—418).

¹⁹ See the Pronouncement from June 28, 1908 (EB 276—80).

²⁰ The response from June 24, 1914 (EB 411—413).

²¹ Cf. R. E. Brown, *The Jerome Biblical Commentary* II, 625.

Finally, we must remember that the greater number of the Biblical Commission's pronouncements issued at the beginning of this century were made in the face of actual historical dangers threatening the Church of that day from the onslaught of Modernism. In its concern to preserve the purity of faith of its believers, the Church saw fit to protect them in this way from the evils that were rampant at the time.

Conclusion

The wish of these reflections was that they might be an expression of a heart-stirred response to the remarks of the Synod on the problem of the neglect of the Conciliar Constitution on Divine Revelation. May the thoughts voiced herein testify to the fact that the observations made by the participants at the Synod were perused carefully by those in the field at issue.

Ours was also the concern to point out the kind of obstacles that professional Biblical commentators are faced with, even those who are truly receptive to the voice of the teaching office of the Church. The recalling of these unsettling obstacles was in no way an attempt at justifying this neglect of the Constitution *Dei Verbum* during the past twenty years. Our hope was rather to indicate ways of overcoming these difficulties — difficulties that at times were, in fact, not even actual.

Without minimizing the instructions left us by the *Final Relatio*, we must assert, nonetheless, that when we take full stock of the last two decades and strike a more equitable balance, we find that the "biblical" fruits of the Second Vatican Council are already perceivable even in the daily life of the Catholic Church. What remains is simply to continue the work that was begun with greater fidelity now to the principles of the *Dei Verbum* and in compliance to the directives of the *Final Relatio* of the Synod of Bishops.