

INTRODUCTION

Proposition 1

Documents that were presented to the Supreme Pontiff

Presented for the consideration of the Supreme Pontiff -- in addition to the documents on the Word of God in the life and mission of the Church relating to this Synod, namely the lineamenta, the instrumentum laboris, the reports before and after discussion, and the texts of the interventions, whether those presented in the hall or those written, the reports of the minor circles and their discussions -- above all some specific proposals, which the fathers held to be of particular importance.

The synodal fathers humbly requested the Holy Father to take the opportunity to offer a document on the mystery of the Word of God in the life and mission of the Church, also in the light of the Year dedicated to St. Paul, Apostle of the Gentiles, on the 2,000th anniversary of his birth.

Proposition 2

From the dogmatic constitution "Dei Verbum" to the synod on the Word of God

The synodal fathers, at more than 40 years after the promulgation of the dogmatic constitution on the divine revelation "Dei Verbum" to the work of the Vatican II ecumenical council, acknowledge with gratitude the great benefits contributed by this document to the life of the Church, at the exegetic, theological, spiritual, pastoral and ecumenical level.

Throughout the history of the "intellectus fidei" and of Christian doctrine, this constitution brought to light the Trinitarian and historic salvific horizon of revelation.

In these years the ecclesial awareness has undoubtedly grown that Jesus Christ, God's Word incarnate, "by the very fact of his presence and with the manifestation he makes of himself with words and works, with signs and miracles, and especially with his death and his resurrection from the dead, and at last with the sending of the Spirit of truth, fulfills and completes Revelation and corroborates it with the divine testimony, that is that God is with us to deliver us from the darkness of sin and death and resurrect us for eternal life" ("Dei Verbum," 4).

All this has allowed for further reflection on the infinite value of the Word of God that is given to us in sacred Scripture, as inspired testimony of revelation, which with the living Tradition of the Church constitutes the supreme rule of faith (cf. "Dei Verbum," 21). It is this same Word that is kept and interpreted faithfully by the Magisterium (cf. "Dei Verbum," 10), which is celebrated in the sacred Liturgy and which gives itself to us in the Eucharist as bread of eternal life (cf. John 6).

Treasuring all that emerged in these years, the Church feels today the need to reflect further on the mystery of the Word of God in its different articulations and pastoral implications. Hence, this synodal assembly expresses the hope that all the faithful will grow in the awareness of the mystery of Christ, only savior and mediator between God and men (cf. 1 Timothy 2:5; Hebrews 9:15), and the Church renewed by the religious hearing of the Word of God might undertake a new missionary season, proclaiming the Good News to all men.

FIRST PART: THE WORD OF GOD IN THE FAITH OF THE CHURCH

Proposition 3

Analogy "Verbi Dei"

The expression Word of God is analogical. It refers first of all to the Word of God in Person who is the Only-begotten Son of God, born of the Father before all ages, Word of God made flesh (cf. John 18) is the unique and definitive Word entrusted to humanity. To receive the Revelation, man must open his mind and heart to the action of the Holy Spirit that makes him understand the Word of God present in the sacred Scriptures. Man responds to God in full liberty with the obedience of the faith (cf. Romans 1:5; 2 Corinthians 10:5-6; "Dei Verbum," 5).

Mary, Mother of Jesus, personifies this obedience of the faith in an exemplary manner, she is also the archetype of the faith of the Church that hears and receives the Word of God.

Proposition 4

Dialogical Dimension of Revelation

When dialogue refers to Revelation it implies the primacy of the Word of God addressed to man. In his great love, in fact, God willed to encounter humanity and took the initiative to speak to men calling them to share in his very life. The specificity of Christianity is manifested in the event of Jesus Christ, summit of Revelation, fulfillment of the promises of God and mediator of the encounter between man and God. He, "that has revealed God to us" (cf. John 1:18), is the unique and definitive Word entrusted to mankind. To receive the Revelation, man must open his mind and heart to the action of the Holy Spirit who makes him understand the Word of God present in the sacred Scriptures. Man responds to God in full liberty with the obedience of the faith (cf. Romans 1:5; 2 Corinthians 10:5-6; "Dei Verbum," 5).

Mary, Mother of Jesus, personifies this obedience of the faith in an exemplary way; she is also archetype of the faith of the Church that listens to and receives the Word of God.

Proposition 5

Holy Spirit and Word of God

The sacred Scriptures, being a gift entrusted by the Holy Spirit to the Church Bride of Christ, have in the Church their own hermeneutical place.

The Spirit himself, who is Author of the sacred Scriptures, is also guide of their correct interpretation in the formation of the "fides Ecclesiae" through time.

The Synod recommended to pastors to remind all those baptized of the role of the Holy Spirit in inspiration (cf. "Dei Verbum," 11), in the interpretation and understanding of the sacred Scriptures (cf. "Dei Verbum," 12).

Consequently, all of us disciples are invited to invoke the Holy Spirit frequently, so that he will lead us to ever more profound knowledge of the Word of God and to the testimony of our faith (cf. John 15:26-27). They remind the faithful that the sacred Scriptures close evoking the common cry of the Spirit and the Bride: "Come Lord Jesus" (cf. Revelation 22:17-20).

Proposition 6

Patristic reading of Scripture

Not to be neglected for the interpretation of the biblical text, is the Patristic reading of Scripture, which distinguishes two senses: literal and spiritual. The literal sense is that signified by the words of Scripture and found among the scientific instruments of critical exegesis. The spiritual sense concerns also the reality of the events of which Scripture speaks, taking into account the living Tradition of the whole Church and of the analogy of the faith, which implies the intrinsic connection of the truths of the faith among them and in the totality of the design of divine Revelation.

Proposition 7

Unity between Word of God and Eucharist

It is important to consider the profound unity between the Word of God and the Eucharist (cf. "Dei Verbum," 21), as expressed by some particular texts, such as John 6:35-58; Luke 24:13-35, in such a way as to overcome the dichotomy between the two realities, which is often present in theological and pastoral reflection. In this way the connection with the preceding Synod on the Eucharist will become more evident.

The Word of God is made sacramental flesh in the Eucharistic event and leads Sacred Scripture to its fulfillment. The Eucharist is a hermeneutic principle of Sacred Scripture, as Sacred Scripture illumines and explains the Eucharistic mystery. In this sense the Synodal Fathers hope that a theological reflection on the sacramentality of the Word of God might be promoted. Without the recognition of the real presence of the Lord in the Eucharist, the intelligence of Sacred Scripture remains unfulfilled.

Proposition 8

Word of reconciliation and conversion

The Word of God is word of reconciliation because in it God reconciles all things to himself (cf. 2 Corinthians 5:18-20; Ephesians 1:10). God's merciful forgiveness, incarnated in Jesus, raises the sinner.

The importance of the Word of God in the sacraments of healing (Penance and Anointing) must be underlined. The Church must be the community that, reconciled by that Word that is Jesus Christ (cf. Ephesians 2:14-18; Colossians 1:22), offers all a space of reconciliation, of mercy and of forgiveness.

The healing force of the Word of God is a living call to a constant personal conversion in the listener himself and an incentive to a courageous proclamation of reconciliation offered by the Father in Christ (cf. 2 Corinthians 5:20-21).

In these days of conflicts of all kinds and of inter-religious tensions, in fidelity to the work of reconciliation fulfilled by God in Jesus, Catholics are committed to give example of reconciliation, seeking to share the same human, ethical and religious values in their relationship with God and with others. Thus they seek to construct a just and peaceful society.

Proposition 9

Encounter with the Word in reading sacred Scripture

This Synod re-proposes forcefully to all the faithful the encounter with Jesus, Word of God made flesh, as event of grace that reoccurs in the reading and hearing of the Sacred Scriptures. Taking up a thought shared by the Fathers, Saint Cyprian reminds: "Attend assiduously to prayer and to *lectio divina*." When you pray you speak with God, when you read it is God who speaks with you" (*Ad Donatum*, 15).

Hence, we sincerely hope that from this assembly a new season will spring of great love for sacred Scripture on the part of all the members of the People of God, so that from their prayerful and faithful reading in time the relationship with the very person of Jesus will be deepened. In this perspective, it is hoped -- in so far as possible -- that each of the faithful will personally possess the Bible (cf. Deuteronomy 17:18-20) and enjoy the benefits of the special indulgence connected with the reading of Scripture (cf. *Indulgentiarum Doctrina*, 30).

Proposition 10

The Old Testament in the Christian Bible

Jesus prayed the psalms and read the laws and the prophets, quoting them in his preaching and presenting himself as the fulfillment of Scripture (cf. Matthew 5:17; Luke 4:21; 24:27; John 5:46). The New Testament has drawn constantly from the Old Testament the words and expressions that allow it to recount and explain the life, death and resurrection of Jesus (cf. Matthew 1-2 and *Es passim*; Mark 6:3; Luke 24:25-31). At the same time, of the rest, his death and resurrection "gave these same texts a fullness of meaning that at first was inconceivable" (Pontifical Biblical Commission, *The Interpretation of the Bible in the Church*, III A 2).

Consequently, apostolic faith in Jesus is proclaimed "according to the Scriptures" (cf. 1 Corinthians 15) and presents Jesus Christ as the "yes" of God to all the promises (cf. 2 Corinthians 1:20).

For these reasons, knowledge of the Old Testament is indispensable for those who believe in the Gospel of Jesus Christ, because -- according to the word of St. Augustine -- the New Testament is concealed in the Old and the Old is revealed in the New (cf. "Quaestiones in Heptateucum," 2, 73).

Hence, we hope that in the preaching and in catechesis due account will be taken of the pages of the Old Testament, explaining it appropriately in the context of the history of salvation and help the People of God to appreciate it in the light of faith in Jesus Lord.

Proposition 11

Word of God and charity toward the poor

One of the characteristic features of sacred Scripture is the revelation of God's predilection for the poor (cf. Matthew 25:31-46). Jesus of Nazareth, Word of God incarnate, went through this world doing good (cf. Acts 10:35). The Word of God, willingly received, generates abundantly in the Church charity and justice towards all, above all towards the poor.

As the encyclical "Deus Caritas Est" teaches, the first to have the right to the proclamation of the Gospel are in fact the poor, in need not only of bread but also of words of life. However, the poor are only the recipients of charity, but also agents of evangelization, in as much as they are open to God and generous in sharing with others. Pastors are called to listen to them, to learn from them, to guide them in their faith and to motivate them to be architects of their own history. Deacons in charge of the service of charity have a particular responsibility in this ambit. The Synod encourages them in their ministry.

Proposition 12

Inspiration and truth of the Bible

The Synod proposes that the Congregation for the Doctrine of the Faith clarify the concepts of inspiration and truth of the Bible, as well as their reciprocal relationship, in order to understand better the teaching of "Dei Verbum" 11. In particular, it is necessary to highlight the originality of the Catholic biblical hermeneutics in this field.

Proposition 13

Word of God and natural law

The synodal fathers are well aware of the great challenges present in the current historical moment. One of these touches the enormous development that science has realized in regard to knowledge of nature.

Paradoxically, the more this knowledge increases the less one sees the ethical message that stems from the same. In the history of thought, ancient philosophers already used to call this principle "lex naturalis" or natural moral law. As Pope Benedict XVI has recalled, this expression seems to have been made incomprehensible today "because of a concept of nature that is no longer metaphysical, but only empirical. The fact that nature, being itself is no longer permeable to a moral message, creates a sense of disorientation that makes decisions of daily life precarious and uncertain" (Feb. 12, 2007).

In the light of the teaching of sacred Scripture, as recalled above all by the Apostle Paul in the Letter to the Romans (cf. Romans 2:14-15), it is good to underline that this law is written in the depth of the heart of each person and each one can access it. Its basic principle is that one must "do good and avoid evil"; a truth that is evidently imposed on all and from which other principles stem that regulate ethical judgment on the rights and duties of each one. It is good to recall that to be nourished by the Word of God also increases knowledge of the natural law and allows for progress of the moral conscience. Hence, the synod recommends to all pastors that they have special solicitude in which the ministers of the Word are sensitive to the rediscovery of the natural law and its function in the formation of consciences.

SECOND PART: THE WORD OF GOD IN THE LIFE OF THE CHURCH

Proposition 14

Word of God and liturgy

The assembly, convoked and gathered by the Spirit to hear the proclamation of the Word of God, is transformed by the same action of the Spirit that is manifested in the celebration.

In fact, there, where the Church is, Lord's Spirit is; and where the Lord's Spirit is, the Church also is (cf. Saint Irenaeus, "Adversus Haereses," III, 24, 1).

The synodal fathers reaffirm that the liturgy is the privileged place in which the Word of God is fully expressed, both in the celebration of the sacraments as above all in the Eucharist, in the Liturgy of the Hours and in the liturgical year. The mystery of salvation narrated in sacred Scripture finds in the liturgy its own place of proclamation, listening and acting.

For this reason, it is imperative that:

- The book of sacred Scripture, even outside liturgical action, has a visible and honorable place in the church.
- Silence should be encouraged after the first and second reading and after the homily is finished, as suggested in the General Order of the Roman Missal (cf. No. 56).
- Celebrations of the Word of God are provided, centered on the Sunday readings.
- Readings of sacred Scripture be proclaimed from worthy liturgical books, namely the lectionaries and the Gospel, to be treated with the most profound respect for the Word of God they contain.
- Highlight the role of the servers of the proclamation: readers and cantors.
- Men and women lectors be adequately formed, so that they can proclaim the Word of God in a clear and comprehensible way. The latter must be invited to study and witness with their life the contents of the Word they read.
- The Word of God be proclaimed in a clear way, with control of the dynamics of communication.
- Persons for whom the reception of the Word of God, communicated in the usual way is difficult as well as persons with sight or hearing disabilities not be forgotten.
- Competent and effective use be made of acoustic instruments.

Moreover, the synodal fathers feel the duty to remind of the grave responsibility of those who preside over the Eucharist so that the texts of sacred Scripture are never substituted by other texts. No text of spirituality or literature can have the value and wealth contained in sacred Scripture, which is the Word of God.

Proposition 15

Homiletic updating and "Directory on the Homily"

The homily that updates the proclaimed Word: "Today this scripture has been fulfilled in your hearing" (Luke 4:21). It leads to the mystery celebrated, invites to mission and shares the joys and sorrows, the hopes and fears of the faithful, thus disposing the assembly both to the profession of faith (Creed) as well as the universal prayer of the Mass.

There should be a homily in all Masses "cum populo," even during the week. It is necessary that preachers (bishops, priests, deacons) prepare themselves in prayer, so that they preach with conviction and passion. They must ask themselves three questions:

-- What do the proclaimed readings say?

-- What do they say to me?

-- What must I say to the community, taking into account its concrete situation?

The preacher should above all allow himself to be questioned first by the Word of God he proclaims. The homily must be nourished by doctrine and transmit the teaching of the Church to strengthen the faith, call to conversion in the framework of the celebration and prepare for the action of the Eucharistic paschal mystery.

To help the preacher in the ministry of the Word, and in continuity with the teaching of the post-synodal apostolic "Exhortation Sacramentum Caritatis" (No. 46), the synodal fathers desire the elaboration of a "Directory on the Homily," which should show, together with the principles of homiletics and of the art of communication, the content of the biblical topics that appear in the lectionaries that are used in the liturgy.

Proposition 16

Lectionary

It is recommended that an examination of the Roman Lectionary be initiated to see if the present selection and ordering of the readings are really adequate to the mission of the Church at this historic moment. Specifically, the relation of the reading of the Old Testament with the evangelical pericope should be reconsidered, so that it does not imply a too restrictive reading of the Old Testament or the exclusion of important passages.

The revision of a Lectionary could be done in dialogue with ecumenical counterparts who use this common Lectionary.

It is desirable that an authoritative examination of the problem of the Lectionary be carried out in the liturgies of Oriental Catholic Churches.

Proposition 17

Ministry of the Word and women

The synodal fathers acknowledge and encourage the service of the laity in the transmission of the faith. On this point, women especially have an indispensable role above all in the family and in catechesis. In fact, they are able to awaken interest in the Word, the personal relationship with God, and to communicate the meaning of forgiveness and evangelical sharing.

It is desirable that the ministry of the lector be open also to women, so that the Christian community will recognize their role as heralds of the Word.

Proposition 18

Celebrations of the Word of God

The celebration of the Word of God is recommended according to the different forms received from the liturgical tradition (cf. SC 35). Many ecclesial communities, which do not have the possibility of the Sunday Eucharistic celebration, find in the celebration of the Word the food for their faith and for Christian testimony.

The celebration of the Word is one of the privileged places of encounter with the Lord, because in this proclamation, Christ makes himself present and continues to speak to his people (cf. SC 7). Even in the midst of today's noise, which

makes effective listening very difficult, the faithful are encouraged to cultivate a disposition of interior silence and of listening to the Word of God that transforms life.

The Synodal Fathers recommend that ritual directories be formulated, based on the experience of Churches in which formed catechists regularly lead Sunday assemblies round the Word of God. The purpose is to avoid such celebrations being confused with the Eucharistic liturgy.

Reception of the Word, the prayer of praise, thanksgiving and petition, which make up the celebration of the Word of God, are manifestations of the Spirit in the heart of the faithful and in the Christian assembly, gathered round the Word of God. The Holy Spirit, in fact, makes the proclaimed and celebrated Word of God fruitful in the heart and life of those who receive it.

We also believe that pilgrimages, celebrations, different forms of popular piety, the missions, spiritual retreats and special days of penance, reparation and forgiveness are a concrete opportunity, offered to the faithful to celebrate the Word of God and enhance their knowledge.

Proposition 19

Liturgy of the Hours

The Liturgy of the Hours is a privileged way to hear the Word of God because it puts the faithful in contact with sacred Scripture and with the living Tradition of the Church. Hence, the Synod hopes that the faithful will participate in the Liturgy of the Hours, above all in lauds and vespers. Hence, it would be useful to prepare a simple form of the Liturgy of the Hours where it does not exist yet.

Bishops, priests, deacons, religious and those already delegated to it by the Church must remember their sacred duty to pray the Liturgy of the Hours. This is very much recommended to the lay faithful, so that this liturgy becomes, in an even greater sense, the prayer of the whole Church.

Proposition 20

Word of God, marriage and family

The Word of God is at the origin of marriage (cf. Genesis 2:24). Jesus himself inscribed marriage among the institutions of his Kingdom (cf. Matthew 19:4-8), giving it a sacramental statute. In the sacramental celebration, the man and woman pronounce a prophetic word of reciprocal self-giving, being "one flesh," sign of the mystery of the union of Christ and the Church (cf. Ephesians 5:32). Through the fidelity and unity of family life, spouses are to their children the first heralds of the Word of God. They must be supported and helped in developing prayer in the family, the domestic celebration of the Word, reading of the Bible and other forms of prayer.

Spouses must remember that the Word of God is a valuable support also in the difficulties of conjugal and family life.

Proposition 21

Word of God and small communities

The synod recommends the formation of small ecclesial communities where the Word of God is heard, studied and prayed, also in the form of the rosary as biblical meditation (cf. John Paul II, Apostolic Letter "Rosarium Virginis Mariae"). In many countries there are already small communities, which can be made up of families living in the parishes or connected to the different ecclesial movements and new communities.

They meet regularly, around the Word of God, to share among themselves, and receive strength from it.

Some only rarely have the possibility to celebrate the Eucharist. They experience the sense of community and encounter the Word of God personally. Through the reading of the Bible they feel themselves loved personally by God. The service

of the laity that leads these communities must be appreciated and promoted as they carry out a missionary service to which all the baptized are called.

Proposition 22

Word of God and prayerful reading

The synod proposes that all the faithful, including young people, be exhorted to approach the Scriptures through "prayerful" and assiduous "reading" (cf. "Dei Verbum," 25), in such a way that the dialogue with God becomes a daily reality of the people of God.

Therefore, it is important:

-- That the prayerful reading be profoundly related to the example of Mary and the saints in the history of the Church, as those who carried out the reading of the Word according to the Spirit;

-- That it be ensured that pastors, priests and deacons, and in a very special sense future priests, have adequate formation so that, in turn, they can form the people of God in this spiritual dynamic;

-- That the faithful be initiated -- in keeping with the circumstances, categories and cultures -- in the most appropriate method of prayerful reading, personal and/or community ("lectio divina," spiritual exercises in daily life, "Seven Steps" in Africa and in other places, various methods of prayer, sharing in the family and in the grassroots ecclesial communities, etc.);

-- That the practice of prayerful reading be encouraged, using liturgical texts that the Church proposes for the Sunday and daily Eucharistic celebration, to better understand the relation between Word and Eucharist;

-- That care be taken that the prayerful reading of the Scriptures, above all by the community, result in a commitment to charity (cf. Luke 4:18-19).

Conscious of the present widespread diffusion of "lectio divina" and of other similar methods, the synodal fathers see in them a true sign of hope and encourage all ecclesial leaders to multiply their efforts in this sense.

Proposition 23

Catechesis and sacred Scripture

Preferably, catechesis should have its roots in Christian revelation. It should take as model Jesus' pedagogy on the road to Emmaus.

On the road to Emmaus, Jesus opens the heart of the disciples to an understanding of the Scriptures (cf. Luke 24:27). His way of proceeding shows that the catechesis that plunges its roots in Christian revelation implies an explanation of the Scriptures, inviting us also to approach the men of today to transmit to them the Gospel of salvation:

-- With special attention to the youngest children;

-- To those in need of a more profound formation rooted in the Scriptures;

-- To catechumens who must be supported on their path, showing them the plan of God through the reading of sacred Scripture, preparing them to encounter the Lord in the sacraments of Christian initiation, to be committed in the community, and to be missionaries.

The pre-baptismal catechumenate is followed by a post-baptismal mistagogy, a continuing formation in which sacred Scripture and the Catechism of the Catholic Church must hold center place.

Proposition 24

Word of God and consecrated life

Consecrated life is born from listening to the Word of God; it receives the Gospel as its norm of life. In the school of the Word, it rediscovers its identity continually and becomes a "testificatio evangelica" for the Church and the world.

Called to be living "exegesis" of the Word of God (cf. Benedict XVI, Feb. 2, 2008), it itself is a word with which God continues speaking to the Church and the world.

The synod thanks consecrated persons for their testimony of the Gospel and their willingness to proclaim it in the geographical and cultural frontiers of the mission through their charismatic services.

At the same time, it exhorts them to take care of the personal and community spaces of listening to the Word of God, and to promote schools of biblical prayer open to the laity, above all young people.

They must be able to listen to the Word of God with the heart of the poor and express their response in a commitment to justice, peace and the integrity of creation.

The synod highlights the importance of contemplative life and its valuable contribution to the tradition of "lectio divina." Monastic communities are schools of spirituality and give strength to the life of local Churches. "The monastery, as spiritual oasis, points today's world to what is most important, in a word, the only decisive thing: there is an ultimate reason which makes life worth living, namely, God and his inscrutable Love" (Benedict XVI, Angelus, Nov. 18, 2007).

In contemplative life, the Word is received, prayed and celebrated. Care must be taken, therefore, so that these communities receive the biblical and theological formation appropriate to their life and mission.

Proposition 25

Need for two levels in exegetical research

The biblical hermeneutic proposed in "Dei Verbum," 12, continues to be of great present importance and efficacy, which envisages two different and correlative methodological levels.

The first level corresponds, in fact, to the so-called historical-critical methods that, in modern and contemporary research, often was used with fruitfulness and that entered the Catholic field, above all with the encyclical "Divino Afflante Spiritu" of the servant of God Pius XII. This method is necessary by the very nature of the history of salvation, which is not mythology, but a true history with its apex in the incarnation of the Word, divine and eternal, who comes to dwell in men's time (cf. John 1:14). The Bible and the history of salvation, therefore, also call for study with the methods of serious historical research.

The second methodological level necessary for a correct interpretation of the sacred Scriptures, corresponds to the nature, also divine, of human biblical words. The Second Vatican Council justly recalls that the Bible must be interpreted with the help of the same Holy Spirit who guided its writing.

Biblical hermeneutic cannot be considered carried out if -- along with the historical study of the texts -- it does not also seek its theological dimension in an adequate manner. "Dei Verbum" identifies and presents the three decisive references to arrive at the divine dimension and, therefore, to the theological meaning of the sacred Scriptures. It is a question of the content and the unity of the whole of Scripture, of the living tradition of the whole Church and, finally, of attention to the analogy of the faith. "Only where the two methodological levels are observed, the historical-critical and the theological, can one speak of a theological exegesis, an exegesis adequate to this book" (Benedict XVI, Oct. 14, 2008).

Proposition 26

To enlarge the perspective of today's exegetical study

The positive fruit contributed by the use of modern historical-critical research is undeniable; at the same time, however, it is necessary to look at the state of present-day exegetical studies by looking also at the difficulties. While current academic exegesis, including the Catholic, works at a very high level as regards the historical-critical methodology, including its happy and most recent integrations (cf. Pontifical Biblical Commission, "The Interpretation of the Bible in the Church"), the same cannot be said about the study of the theological dimension of the biblical texts. Sadly, the theological level indicated by the three elements of "Dei Verbum," 12 very often is almost absent.

The first consequence of such absence is that the Bible becomes for present-day readers a mere book of the past, incapable of speaking to our time. In these conditions, biblical exegesis runs the risk of becoming pure historiography and history of literature.

The second consequence, perhaps even graver, is the disappearance of the hermeneutics of the faith pointed out in "Dei Verbum." Instead of believing hermeneutics, what is then insinuated in fact is a positivist and secular hermeneutics that denies the possibility of the presence and access of the divine in the history of man.

The synodal fathers, while sincerely thanking the many exegetes and theologians that have given and give essential help in the profound discovery of the Scriptures, request from all a growing commitment in order to reach with greater force and clarity the theological level of biblical interpretation. To truly arrive at a growing love for the Scriptures, hoped for by the Council, greater care must be taken to apply the principles that Dei Verbum itself pointed out with thoroughness and clarity.

Proposition 27

To overcome the dualism between exegesis and theology

For the life and mission of the Church, and for the future of the faith within contemporary cultures, it is necessary to overcome the dualism between exegesis and theology. Sadly, not infrequently an unproductive separation between exegesis and theology occurs even at the highest academic levels.

A worrying consequence is uncertainty and scarce solidity in the intellectual formative path including that of some future candidates to ecclesial ministries. Biblical theology and systematic theology are two dimensions of that unique reality that we call theology.

The synodal fathers, therefore, with esteem address an appeal, both to theologians as well as exegetes, so that, with a clearer and more harmonious collaboration, they will not fail to give contemporary theology the force of the Scriptures, and not reduce the study of the Scriptures to the historiographic dimension of the inspired texts.

"When exegesis is not theology, Scripture cannot be the soul of theology and, vice-versa, when theology is not essentially interpretation of Scripture in the Church, such theology loses its foundation" (Benedict XVI, Oct. 14, 2008).

Proposition 28

Dialogue between exegetes, theologians and pastors

Episcopal conferences are requested to favor regularly meetings between pastors, theologians and exegetes to promote greater communion in service to the Word of God.

We hope that exegetes and theologians will be able to share ever better the fruits of their science for the enhancement of the faith and the edification of the People of God, always keeping in mind the characteristic dimensions of the Catholic interpretation of the Bible (cf. Pontifical Biblical Commission, "The Interpretation of the Bible in the Church," III).

Proposition 29

Difficulty in the reading of the Old Testament

At times difficulties arise in reading the Old Testament because of texts that contain elements of violence, injustice, immorality and scarce exemplarity, even in important biblical figures.

Consequently, an adequate preparation of the faithful is required for reading these passages and a formation that teaches them to read the texts in their historical and literary context, so that a Christian reading is favored. The latter has as central hermeneutical key the Gospel and the new commandment of Jesus Christ fulfilled in the paschal mystery. Hence, it is recommended that the reading of the Old Testament not be neglected, which, despite some difficulties, is essential to fully understand the history of salvation (cf. "Dei Verbum," 15).

Proposition 30

Biblical pastoral ministry

"Dei Verbum" exhorts that the Word of God not only be made the soul of theology but also the soul of the whole of pastoral care, of life and of the mission of the Church (cf. "Dei Verbum," 24). Bishops must be the first promoters of this dynamic in their dioceses. To be a herald and a credible herald, the bishop must first nourish himself with the Word of God, so that he can sustain and make ever more fruitful his own episcopal ministry. The synod recommends increasing "biblical pastoral ministry" not in juxtaposition to other forms of pastoral care but as biblical animation of the whole of pastoral care.

Under the guidance of pastors, all the baptized participate in the mission of the Church. The synodal fathers wish to express their most profound esteem and gratitude, as well as to encourage the service of evangelization that so many lay people, especially women, offer with generosity and commitment in communities spread throughout the world, following the example of Mary Magdalene, first witness of paschal joy.

Proposition 31

Word of God and priests

The Word of God is indispensable to form the heart of a good pastor, minister of the Word. To this end, "Pastores Dabo Vobis" recalls: "The priest must be the first 'believer' of the Word, with full consciousness that the words of his ministry are not 'his' but of him who has sent him. He is not the owner of this Word; he is servant. He is not the sole owner of this Word; he is debtor vis-à-vis the People of God" (John Paul II, post-synodal apostolic exhortation "Pastores Dabo Vobis," 26). Priests, especially parish priests, are called to nourish themselves every day with the sacred Scriptures and to communicate them with wisdom and generosity to the faithful entrusted to their care.

Proposition 32

Formation of candidates to holy orders

Candidates to the priesthood must learn to love the Word of God. Therefore, Scripture should be the soul of their theological formation, underlining the indispensable circularity between exegesis, theology, spirituality and mission. Hence, the formation of priests should include multiple approaches to Scripture.

-- Prayerful reading of "lectio divina," both personal as well as in community, in the framework of a first reading of the Bible. It will be necessary to continue it during the whole process of formation, taking into account what the Church establishes in regard to retreats and spiritual exercises in the education of seminarians.

-- Nourish himself assiduously with the Word of God, also through the richness of the Divine Office.

-- The discovery of exegesis in its various methods. A precise and ample study is necessary of the hermeneutical rules to overcome the risks of an arbitrary interpretation. The methods of the exegesis must be understood in an appropriate manner, with its possibilities and limits, allowing for correct and fruitful understanding of the Word of God.

-- Knowledge of the history of what produced the reading of the Scriptures in the Fathers of the Church, the saints, the doctors and the masters of spirituality down to our day.

-- Intensification, during the seminary years, of the formation for preaching, and vigilance of permanent formation during the exercise of the ministry, so that the homily can speak to those who hear it (cf. Acts 2:37).

-- Parallel to formation in the seminary, future priests will be invited to take part in meetings with lay groups or associations, gathered around the Word of God. These meetings, held during a sufficiently long amount of time, will foster in future ministers the experience and taste for hearing what the Holy Spirit inspires in believers gathered as Church, whether they are young or old. Serious study of philosophy must not be neglected; it will lead to evaluate with clarity the assumptions and implications contained in the various hermeneutics applied to the study of the Bible (cf. "Optatam Totius," 15).

To this end, it is hoped that philosophic and cultural thought (art and music) open to transcendence will be addressed and taught in philosophic faculties, so that disciples can hear and understand better the Word of God, the only one that can satisfy the desires of the human heart (cf. "Fides et Ratio," 83).

What is hoped for is a renewal of academic programs (cf. John Paul II, apostolic constitution "Sapientia Christiana") so that the systematic study of theology in the light of sacred Scripture is manifested better.

Moreover, a revision of the courses in seminaries and in houses of formation must take care that the Word of God has its due place in the various dimensions of formation.

Proposition 33

Biblical formation of Christians

Love of the Bible is a grace of the Holy Spirit that permeates the whole life of the believer. Hence, Christians must be formed in appreciation of this gift of God. "If you knew the gift of God" (John 4:10), says the Lord.

Hence, it is hoped that in each cultural region centers of formation will be established for the laity and for missionaries of the Word, where they learn to understand, live and proclaim the Word of God. Moreover, that institutes specialized in biblical studies are created so that exegetes may have solid theological understanding and sensibility to the contexts of their mission. This can also be done by a re-examination or reinforcement of existing structures, such as seminaries and faculties.

Finally, it is necessary to offer adequate formation in biblical tongues to persons who are translators of the Bible into various modern languages.

Proposition 34

Promoting the Bible among the youth

As Jesus invited a youth to follow him, so the invitation must be proposed again today to boys, adolescents and young men so that they can find the answer to their search in the word of the Lord. In promoting the Bible among youth, Benedict XVI's invitation will be taken into account: "Dear young people, I exhort you to acquire familiarity with the Bible, to have it at hand so that it will be for you as a compass that indicates the path to follow (Message to the 20th World Youth Day, April 9, 2006). It is hoped that Scripture will be presented in its vocational implications, so that it will help and orient many young people in their vocational decision, even up to total consecration. That the Christian community receive, hear and support the young generations with love, so that they are initiated in knowledge of the Scriptures by educators, true and impassioned witnesses of the Word of God. In this way, that young people may also be led to love and communicate the Gospel, above all to their contemporaries.

Proposition 35

Bible and health ministry

During his life, Jesus took care of and healed the sick and showed in this service of his a sign of the presence of the Kingdom of God (cf. Luke 7:22). Yet today, Scriptures continue to offer the sick and all those who suffer a word of consolation and encouragement, and also of spiritual and physical healing. The prayer of the Psalms touches one profoundly and gives each one the very words of God to express their own suffering, and also their own hope. Hence, the synodal fathers exhort all those who approach persons afflicted by all sorts of evil to take to them humbly but audaciously the vivifying Word of the Lord Jesus both in Scripture as well as in the Eucharist. Indispensable also today is that the Word of God inspire the whole of health pastoral care, leading the sick to discover through faith that their suffering makes them capable of participating in the redeeming suffering of Christ (cf. 2 Corinthians 4:8-11. 14).

Proposition 36

Sacred Scripture and Christian unity

The Bible is truly a privileged place of encounter between the different Churches and ecclesial communities. To listen to the Scriptures together makes us live a real though not full communion (cf. "Relatio Post Disceptationem," 36).

"To listen together to the Word of God, to practice the 'lectio divina' of the Bible (...) is a path to follow to attain the unity of the faith, as response to the listening of the Word" (Benedict XVI's Address, Jan. 25, 2007). Hence, common listening of the Scriptures stimulates the dialogue of charity and makes that of truth grow. An open ecumenical problem is the understanding of the individual authorized in the interpretation of the Church (especially the magisterium); therefore, common study and biblical research should be intensified. Likewise, common efforts in the translations and diffusion of the Bible must be intensified, as well as inter-confessional celebrations of listening to the Word of God.

Proposition 37

Presence of His Holiness Bartholomew I

The synodal fathers thank God for the presence and interventions of the fraternal delegates, representatives of other Churches and ecclesial communities and, in a special way, for the prayer of Vespers presided over by the Holy Father Benedict XVI, together with His Holiness Bartholomew I, ecumenical patriarch of Constantinople. The words of the ecumenical patriarch addressed to the synodal fathers have made it possible to experience a profound spiritual joy and to have a living experience of real and profound communion, though still not perfect; in them we have tasted the beauty of the Word of God, read in the light of the sacred liturgy and of the fathers, a spiritual reading strongly contextualized in our time.

Thus, we have seen that, going to the heart of sacred Scripture, we really find the Word in the words, which opens the eyes of the faithful to respond to the challenges of today's world. Moreover, we have shared the joyful experience of having common Fathers in the East and West. May this meeting become a fervent prayer to the one Lord that Jesus' prayer "Ut omnes unum sint" may be a reality as soon as possible (John 17:20).

THIRD PART: THE WORD OF GOD IN THE MISSION OF THE CHURCH

Proposition 38

Missionary task of all the baptized

The mission to proclaim the Word of God is a task of all the disciples of Jesus Christ as a consequence of their baptism. This awareness must be deepened in every parish, community and Catholic organization. Initiatives must be proposed that make the Word of God reach all, especially baptized brothers who are not sufficiently evangelized. Given that the Word of God was made flesh to communicate with men, a privileged way to know it is through an encounter with witnesses that make it present and alive. By the force of their own charism experience, a special collaboration is contributed in the mission by missionary institutes. Moreover, the reality of the new ecclesial movements is an extraordinary richness of the

evangelizing force of the Church at this time, so much so as to stimulate the Church to develop new forms of proclaiming the Gospel.

The laity is called to rediscover its responsibility to execute its prophetic task, which stems for them directly from their baptism, and witness to the Gospel in daily life: at home, at work and wherever they are. This witness often leads to persecution of the faithful because of the Gospel. The synod appeals to leaders in public life to guarantee religious liberty. Moreover, it is necessary to open itineraries of Christian initiation in those who, through listening to the Word, the celebration of the Eucharist and brotherly love lived in community, might practice an ever more adult faith. To be considered is the new question stemming from mobility and the migratory phenomenon, which opens new prospects of evangelization, because immigrants not only need to be evangelized but they themselves can be agents of evangelization.

Proposition 39

Word of God and commitment in the world

The Word of God, contained in the sacred Scriptures and in the living Tradition of the Church, helps the mind and heart of men to understand and love all the human realities and creation. In fact, it helps to recognize the signs of God in all man's fatigues directed to making the world more just and habitable; it helps in identifying the "signs of the times" present in history; stimulates believers to commit themselves in favor of those who suffer and are victims of injustices. The struggle for justice and transformation is an integral part of evangelization (cf. "Evangelii Nuntiandi," 19).

The synodal fathers direct a special thought to those who, as believers, are committed to political and social life. They desire that the Word of God sustain their forms of testimony as well as inspire their action in the world, in search of the true good of all, and in respect of the dignity of every person. Hence, it is necessary that they be prepared through an adequate education according to the principles of the social doctrine of the Church.

Proposition 40

Word of God and liturgical art

The great tradition of East and West has always esteemed all the artistic expressions, specifically sacred images, inspired in sacred Scripture.

We appreciate all artists enamored of beauty: poets, men of letters, painters, sculptors, musicians, people of the theater and cinema. They have contributed to the decoration of our churches, to the celebration of our faith, to the enrichment of our liturgy and, at the same time, many of them have helped to make the invisible world perceptible and to translate the divine message in the language of forms and figures. For all this, the synod manifests its profound gratitude.

In every cultural area a new epoch must be aroused in which art can re-encounter biblical inspiration and be an instrument capable of proclaiming, singing, and enabling contemplation of the manifestation of the Word of God.

In the construction of churches, bishops, duly helped, must endeavor to make these places adequate for the proclamation of the Word, for meditation and for the Eucharistic celebration. Sacred spaces, also outside liturgical action, must be eloquent, presenting the Christian mystery related with the Word of God.

Proposition 41

Word of God and culture

The Word of God is addressed to all mankind. It must be acknowledged that, in the course of the centuries, it has inspired different cultures, generated fundamental moral values, excellent artistic expressions and exemplary lifestyles. In the Word of God are found different applications that can help both science in its discovery of ever new conquests as well as enhance the dialogue with all those who share our own faith. Hence, the synodal fathers encourage a dialogue between the Bible and culture, above all given the questions about meaning present in our time, so that the definitive answer to the search will be found.

It would be good to organize biblical reading groups, including in secularized environments or among nonbelievers, as a way to open the world to God through the Word of the Bible.

Proposition 42

Bible and translation

The synod recommends that, in compatible cultures and in similar linguistic regions, the same translation of the Bible be approved and used, both in the liturgical use as well as in private.

Many Churches spread around the world are still deprived of Bibles translated into their local languages. Important above all, therefore, is the formation of specialists dedicated to the various translations of the Bible.

Proposition 43

Bible and dissemination

The synod wishes to remind how necessary it is that all the faithful be able to have easy access to the reading of sacred texts. Together with this, it requests a general mobilization so that sacred texts are disseminated as much as possible and with all the instruments available that modern technologies offer, above all for people with different abilities, who have our preferred attention.

Such an endeavor calls for an exceptional form of collaboration between the Churches so that those that dispose of more means share more to respond to the needs of the Churches that are in greater difficulty. The synodal fathers recommend support of the commitment of the Catholic Biblical Federation for ample access to sacred Scripture (cf. "Dei Verbum," 22) so that there is an ultimate increase in the number of translations of sacred Scripture and its capillary dissemination. This should be done in collaboration with the various Biblical societies.

Proposition 44

Means of social communications

The synod underlines the importance of the means and languages of communication for evangelization.

The proclamation of the Good News finds new amplitude in present-day communication, characterized by the interaction of the means.

The Church is called not only to disseminate the Word of God through the means but also and above all to integrate the message of salvation in the new culture that communication creates and amplifies.

The new communicative context allows us to multiply the ways of proclamation and in-depth study of sacred Scripture. The latter, with its wealth, calls for reaching all communities, including the most remote through these new instruments.

It recommends thorough knowledge of the means of communication, a sympathetic attitude to its rapid changes, and more investment in communication through the different instruments that are offered, such as television, radio, newspapers, Internet. They are, in any case, ways that can facilitate the exercise of obedient listening to the Word of God. It is necessary to prepare competent Catholics of conviction in the field of social communication.

Proposition 45

Word of God and world congress

In these times, meetings of worldwide character are multiplied. Hence, it is not considered opportune to institute a specific congress on the Word of God. Episcopal conferences are invited to support and promote events to disseminate the Bible.

Proposition 46

Faithful reading of Scripture: historical authenticity and fundamentalism

Faithful reading of sacred Scripture, practiced since antiquity in the Tradition of the Church, seeks the truth that saves for the life of each faithful and for the Church. This reading acknowledges the historic value of the biblical tradition. It is precisely because of this value of historic testimony that it desires to rediscover the profound meaning of sacred Scripture destined also for the life of today's believer.

Such a reading of Scripture differs from "fundamentalist interpretations," which ignore the human mediation of the inspired text and its literary genres. To use "lectio divina" fruitfully, the believer must be educated "not to confuse unknowingly the human limits of the biblical message with the divine essence of the message itself" (cf. Pontifical Biblical Commission, *The Interpretation of the Bible in the Church*, I F).

Proposition 47

The Bible and the phenomenon of sects

We are profoundly concerned over the increase and mutation of the phenomenon of sects. In fact, the sects of various origins seem to offer an experience of God's closeness to a person's life and promise an illusory happiness through the Bible, often interpreted in a fundamentalist way.

We propose:

- Through a vital correct hermeneutic of the biblical pages, to intensify pastoral activity to provide the food of the Word to the faithful seeking it;
- To learn from the rich experience of the first centuries of the Church, which, however, knew similar phenomena (cf. 1 John 2:19; 4:2-3);
- To know better the peculiar characteristics, the causes and promoters of the sects exactly as they present themselves today;
- To help the faithful to distinguish well the Word of God from private revelations;
- To stimulate groups that share and meditate in order to counteract the attraction of the sects and fundamentalism.

It is necessary that priests are adequately prepared to address this new situation, making them capable of proposing a biblical animation of pastoral care, adapted to the problems that people face today.

We ask the Holy See to study, in collaboration with the episcopal conferences and the competent structures of the Catholic Eastern Churches, the phenomenon of the sects in its global scope and also in its local repercussions.

Proposition 48

Bible and inculturation

Revelation was constituted by taking from the different human cultures the authentic values capable of expressing the truth that God communicated to men for our salvation (cf. "Dei Verbum," 11). The Word of God, in as much as revelation, introduced in cultures the knowledge of truth that would otherwise have been unknown and created cultural progress and development. The Lord's command to the Church to proclaim the Word of God implies taking the Word of God to all peoples on earth and their cultures. This implies the same process of inculturation of the Word of God as occurs in Revelation.

Hence, the Word of God must penetrate every environment so that culture produces original expressions of life, liturgy and Christian thought (cf. "Catechesi Tradendae," 53). This takes place when the Word of God, proposed to a culture, "fertilize as from within the spiritual qualities and traditions of each people, confirms them, perfects them and recapitulates them in Christ" ("Gaudium et Spes," 58), thus eliciting new expressions of Christian life.

For a genuine inculturation of the evangelical message, the formation of missionaries with adequate means must be ensured, to know in-depth the vital ambience and the socio-cultural conditions, so that they can be inserted in the environment, the language and the local cultures. It corresponds to the local Church in the first place to achieve a genuine inculturation of the evangelical message, paying attention of course to the risk of syncretism. The quality of inculturation depends on the degree of maturity of the evangelizing community.

Proposition 49

Mission "ad gentes"

The Word of God is a good for all men, which the Church must not keep to herself but share with joy and generosity with all peoples and cultures, so that they also can find in Jesus Christ the Way, the Truth and the Life (cf. John 14:6).

Looking at the example of St. Paul, of the Apostles and of so many missionaries that, in the course of history, took the Gospel to peoples, this Synod reaffirms the urgency of the mission "ad gentes" also in our time -- a proclamation that must be explicit, made not only within our churches but everywhere and must be accompanied by a coherent testimony of life, which makes the content evident and reinforces it.

Bishops, priests, deacons, persons of consecrated life and laymen must also be close to persons who do not participate in the liturgy and do not frequent our communities. The Church must go out to all with the strength of the Spirit (cf. 2 Corinthians 2:5) and continue to defend prophetically the right and liberty of persons to listen to the Word of God, seeking the most effective means to proclaim it, not excluding the risk of persecution.

Proposition 50

Bible and interreligious dialogue

The dialogue with non-Christian religions is a significant moment in the life of the Church and in the dialogue with men. Monotheisms, the traditional religions of Africa and Australia, the ancient spiritual traditions of Asia have values of respect and collaboration that can greatly foster understanding between persons and societies. The guidelines of this dialogue are in the declaration "Nostra Aetate" of Vatican II. The synod also reminds of the need to effectively ensure for all believers the freedom to profess their own faith in private and public, as well as freedom of conscience.

Proposition 51

Holy Land

Paul VI called the Holy Land the "Fifth Gospel." The synod recommends pilgrimages and, if possible, the study of the sacred Scriptures in the Holy Land, and following in the steps of St. Paul. Through this experience, pilgrims and students will be able to understand better the physical and geographical environment of the Scriptures and especially the relation between the two Testaments. The stones on which Jesus walked could become for them stones of living memory. In the meantime, Christians in the Holy Land need the communion of all Christians, especially in these days of conflict, poverty and fear.

Proposition 52

Dialogue between Christians and Jews

The dialogue between Christians and Jews belongs to the nature of the Church. Faithful to his promises, God does not revoke the Old Covenant (cf. Romans 9 and 11). Jesus of Nazareth was a Jew and the Holy Land is the motherland of the

Church. Christians and Jews share the Scriptures of the Jewish people, which Christians call the Old Testament. As Abraham's descendants, Jews and Christians can be a source of blessing for humanity (cf. Genesis 17:4-5).

Jewish understanding of the Bible can help Christians in the understanding and study of the Scriptures.

Christian biblical interpretation is based on the unity of the two Testaments in Jesus, Word made flesh. He realizes in his person the full meaning of the Scriptures with continuity and discontinuity as regards the inspired books of the Jewish people.

It is suggested that episcopal conferences promote meetings and dialogues between Jews and Christians.

Proposition 53

Dialogue between Christians and Muslims

"The Church also looks with esteem at Muslims that adore the one God" (NA, 3). They refer to Abraham and render worship to God above all with prayer, alms and fasting. Dialogue with them allows for better knowledge of one another and collaboration in promoting ethical and spiritual values.

In this dialogue, the synod stresses the importance of respect for life, human rights and women's rights, as well as the distinction between the socio-political order and the religious order in the promotion of justice and peace in the world. Another important topic in this dialogue is reciprocity and freedom of conscience and religion.

It is suggested to the episcopal conferences of countries where it is beneficial to promote circles of dialogue between Christians and Muslims.

Proposition 54

Cosmic dimensions of the Word of God and custody of creation

The Word of God communicates to us the beauty of God through the beauty of creation and also through sacred images, such as icons of the incarnate Word. They are modalities with which the invisible mystery of God is in some way made visible and perceptible to our senses. The Fathers of the Church, moreover, always affirmed the cosmic dimensions of the Word of God made flesh; each creature bears in a certain sense a sign of the Word of God. In Jesus Christ, dead and risen, all created things find definitive recapitulation (cf. Ephesians 1:10). All things and persons, therefore, are called to be good and beautiful in Christ.

Sadly, the man of our time has lost the habit of contemplating the Word of God in the world he inhabits that has been given by God. Hence, the rediscovery of the Word of God, in all its dimensions, impels us to denounce all the actions of contemporary man that do not respect nature as creation.

To receive the Word of God attested in sacred Scripture and in the living Tradition of the Church generates a new way of seeing things, promoting a genuine ecology, which has its deepest root in the obedience of the faith that receives the Word of God. Hence, we hope that, in the pastoral action of the Church, commitment in favor of the safeguarding of creation will be intensified, developing a renewed theological sensibility to the goodness of all things created in Christ, Word of God incarnate.

CONCLUSION

Proposition 55

Mary "Mater Dei" and "Mater Fidei"

The synod, whose intention is above all to renew the faith of the Church in the Word of God, looks at Mary, the Virgin Mother of the Word Incarnate, who with her yes to the Word of the Covenant and to its mission, perfectly fulfills

humanity's divine vocation. The Synodal Fathers suggests the dissemination of the Angelus prayer among the faithful, daily memorial of the Word Incarnate and of the Rosary.

The Church of the New Testament lives where the Word Incarnate is received, loved and served in full availability to the Holy Spirit. Mary's faith then develops in the love with which it accompanies the Incarnate Word's growth and mission. Under the Son's cross, faith and love become the hope with which Mary accepts to become the Mother of the beloved disciple and of redeemed humanity.

Devout and loving attention to Mary's figure, as model and archetype of the Church's faith, is of capital importance to realize also today a concrete change of paradigm in the relation of the Church with the Word, both in the posture of prayerful listening as well as generosity in the commitment to the mission and the proclamation. The synodal fathers, united to the Holy Father in prayer so that the synod "will carry fruits of genuine renewal to each Christian community" (Benedict XVI, Angelus in Pompeii, Oct. 19, 2008), invite pastors and faithful to look at Mary and ask the Holy Spirit for the grace of a lively faith in the Word of God made flesh.