Catholic Church Documents related to Biblical Studies
compiled by Felix Just, S.J., Ph.D.

Documents from Recent Ecumenical Councils:

- **SECOND VATICAN COUNCIL: DEI VERBUM** ("Dogmatic Constitution on Divine Revelation" - November 18, 1965)
  - English translation from the Vatican website; other copies in English also at CIN
  - Spanish translation and several other languages also available from the Vatican website
  - See also my Outline of Dei Verbum, as compared to the biblical section of the Catechism of the Catholic Church

- First Vatican Council: *Dei Filius* ("Dogmatic Constitution on the Catholic Faith" - April 24, 1870)
  - Session III, see esp. Chapter II - "On Revelation"; Chapter III - "On Faith"; Canon II - "On Revelation"; and Canon III - "On Faith"

- Council of Trent (ed. J. Waterworth, 1848; another copy online at EWTN Library):
  - Session IV, First Decree ("Concerning the Canonical Scriptures" - April 8, 1546)
  - Session IV, Second Decree ("Concerning the Edition and Use of the Sacred Books" - April 8, 1546)
  - Session V, Second Decree ("Concerning Reform" - June 17, 1546)

**Catechism of the Catholic Church** (2nd edition; October 11, 1992 - from the Vatican website):

- **Part One**: The Profession of Faith; **Section One**: "I Believe" - "We Believe"; **Chapter Two**: God Comes to Meet Man
  - Article 1 (par. 51-73): "The Revelation of God"
  - Article 2 (par. 74-100): "The Transmission of Divine Revelation"
  - Article 3 (par. 101-141) " Sacred Scripture"
  - Spanish translation and several other languages also available from the Vatican website
  - Article 1; Article 2; Article 3 also available in English at the ChristusRex website

Documents of the Pontifical Biblical Commission:

- **"The Interpretation of the Bible in the Church"** (April 23, 1993) - one large file, or several smaller files for faster download
  - Published in *Origins* 23.29 (Jan. 6, 1994) 497-524; another online copy available at the EWTN Library
  - See also "Interpreting the Bible: Three Views" - three analyses of this PBC document, from First Things Magazine

- **"Instruction on the Historical Truth of the Gospels"** (a.k.a. "Sancta Mater Ecclesia"; April 21, 1964)
  - See also J. Fitzmyer, "The Biblical Commission's Instruction on the Historical Truth of the Gospels," *TS* 25 (1964) 386-408
  - A different English translation is also available in *CBQ* 26 (1964) 299-312.

- **All documents issued by the PBC** - listed in reverse chronological order, from the Vatican Website
  - See esp. "The Jewish People and Their Sacred Scriptures in the Christian Bible" (May 24, 2001)
  - See also Cardinal Joseph Ratzinger: "On the Relationship between the Magisterium and Exeges" (May 10, 2003) - an address presented "On the 100th Anniversary of the Pontifical Biblical Commission"; another copy at EWTN Library

**Papal Documents** (most available from the Vatican Website):

- **Pope Leo XIII**:
  - Encyclical *Providentissimus Deus* ("On the Study of Holy Scripture" - November 18, 1893)
  - Apostolic Letter *Vigilantiae Studiique* ("Instituting a Pontifical Commission for Biblical Studies" - October 30, 1902)

- **Pope Pius X**:
Apostolic Letter *Quoniam in re biblica* ("On the Study of Scripture in Seminaries" - March 27, 1906)
o Encyclical *Pascendi Dominici Gregis* ("On the Doctrines of the Modernists" - September 8, 1907) - another copy at CIN
o Apostolic Letter *Praestantia Scripturae Sacrae* ("On the Decisions of the Biblical Commission" - November 18, 1907 - from EWTN Library)

- **Pope Benedict XV:**
o Encyclical *Spiritus Paraclitus* ("On St. Jerome" - September 15, 1920)

- **Pope Pius XI:**
o Apostolic Letter *Bibliorum Scientiam* ("On Academic Standards for Teachers of Scripture" - April 27, 1924)

- **Pope Pius XII:**
o Encyclical *DIVINO AFFLANTE SPIRITU* ("On the Most Opportune Way to Promote Biblical Studies" - September 30, 1943) - another copy from CIN
o Encyclical *Humani Generis* ("On Certain False Opinions Threatening to Undermine the Foundations of Catholic Doctrine" - August 12, 1950) - see esp. paragraphs 21-25 & 35-39

- **Pope Paul VI:**
o Apostolic Letter *Sedula Cura* ("On New Laws Regulating the Pontifical Biblical Commission - June 27, 1971)
o Address to the Members of the Pontifical Biblical Commission: "On the Ecclesial Role of Biblical Studies" (March 14, 1974) - in French only

- **Pope John Paul II:**
o Apostolic Constitution *Scripturarum Thesaurus*: "Promulgating the Neo-Vulgate Edition of the Holy Bible" (April 25, 1979) - Latin text from the Vatican Website; English Translation at EWTN Library
o Address to the Members of the Pontifical Biblical Commission: "On the Biblical Sciences and the Teaching Office of the Church" (April 26, 1979) - original French text; Italian translation also available on the Vatican Website
o Address Commemorating the 25th Anniversary of *Dei Verbum* (Dec. 14, 1990)
o Address to the Members of the Pontifical Biblical Commission: "On the Nature of Catholic Interpretation of the Bible" (April 11, 1991)
o Address on the Interpretation of the Bible in the Church (April 23, 1993) - in Italian only
o Address to the Pontifical Academy of Sciences: "Truth Cannot Contradict Truth" (October 22, 1996) - from the New Advent website
o Address to a Conference on Biblical Language and Media (Sept. 28, 1998) - brief welcoming address
o Address to the Members of the Pontifical Biblical Commission (April 29, 2003) - brief welcoming address
o Address to the Members of the Pontifical Biblical Commission (April 20, 2004) - brief welcoming address

- **Pope Benedict XVI:**
o Address to the Participants in the International Congress Organized to Commemorate the 40th Anniversary of the Dogmatic Constitution on Divine Revelation "Dei Verbum" (Sept. 16, 2005) - brief welcoming address
o Weekly Angelus Message (Nov. 6, 2005) - brief comments focusing on Dei Verbum and the Sacred Scriptures
o Address to the Members of the Pontifical Biblical Commission (April 27, 2006) - brief welcoming address
o General Audience (Nov. 7, 2007) - focusing on fourth-century biblical scholar St. Jerome (part 1)
o General Audience (Nov. 14, 2007) - focusing on fourth-century biblical scholar St. Jerome (part 2)

**Neo-Vulgate Bible:**

- *Nova Vulgata Bibliorum Sacrorum Editio* - entire Latin text, from the Vatican website - another copy at Domus Ecclesiae

**Other Biblically-Related Writings:**

- "*The Word of God in the Life and Mission of the Church*" - the "Instrumentum Laboris" of the XII Ordinary General Assembly of the Synod of Bishops (meeting in Rome on Oct. 5-26, 2008)
- *Liturgiam authenticam* (Fifth Instruction "For the Right Implementation of the Constitution on the Sacred Liturgy of the Second Vatican Council"); from the Congregation for Divine Worship and the Discipline of the Sacraments (March 28, 2001)

• "The Fundamentalist Challenge" - a four-page flyer, by biblical scholar Raymond E. Brown, S.S. (May 1990, Catholic Update series)

• "Toward Your Happiness: Catholicism and Fundamentalism: A Contrast" - A Pastoral Letter to Catholics in Mississippi and Alabama (June 29, 1989)

• "A Pastoral Statement for Catholics on Biblical Fundamentalism" - from the U.S. bishops' Ad Hoc Committee on Biblical Fundamentalism (Washington: USCCB, 1987)

• "The Proclamation of the Birth of Christ" - a.k.a. the Christmas Proclamation; published by the USCCB; here is my own comparative analysis of Old and New Translations

**Published Collections of Church Documents** (some out-of-print by now, but still available in good libraries):


• Most of the above documents are also on a CD, "Welcome to the Catholic Church," by Harmony Media, Inc.  http://www.harmonymedia.com/cdrom/welcome/welcome.htm