

Carlo Buzzetti & Mario Cimosa, "Dei Verbum". *Testo e Commento*, Libreria Ateneo Salesiano, Roma 2004, 60pp.

This is an abstract from a wider work by the two authors, *Bibbia. Parola scritta e Spirito, sempre. Ispirazione delle Sacre Scritture, Manuali e sussidi per lo studio della teologia*, Libreria Ateneo Salesiano, Roma 2004, pp.105-157. But it appears here as an independent publication. In this small book the authors offer a particular type of commentary on the text of the Dogmatic Constitution 'Dei Verbum' of the Second Vatican Council. This they do on the occasion of the fortieth anniversary from the issue of such important document in 1965.

This 'commentary' or rather 'catechism' reproduces the text of the document as it appears in one of its electronic versions, on www.vatican.va, paragraph per page, with the opposite page taken by a number of questions and answers on that paragraph. There are no footnotes which usually crowd the bottom of each page in official versions of the document, though these are at times mentioned in the commentary itself. The commentary is targeted to 'common Christians' who would like to read the document, but would surely find embarking on such a project arduous given that the language of Church documents is normally addressed to experts rather than to the common man in the street, and to students of theology who are just coming to grips with this science and its terminology. The authors seek therefore to ease the reading of the document itself and not to substitute this reading with a paraphrase of its contents.

Just to give the reader of this review an example of what sort of questions are offered, we have simply to read those for the first paragraph of the document: 'What are the first words of the document?' 'What image of the Church appears in this introductory paragraph?' 'To what authorities does *Dei Verbum* refer?' 'What is the basic sentiment of the Council?' 'What kind of revelation would one expect to find in the document given this initial paragraph?' The authors attempt to answer these questions basing themselves solely on the text. This book is therefore a guide to the understanding of the text; it does not offer the usual 'redaction criticism' one meets in standard commentaries to the Constitution, that seek to reconstruct also the history of the document's redaction; this is a commentary to the *Text Finale* of the document. This reading or 'quasi-commento', as the authors define the series of questions provided for each paragraph (p.5), is said to owe a great deal to the commentary to *Dei Verbum* written by Bruno Maggioni. Unfortunately, because the booklet originated as part and parcel of a larger work, the authors forgot to provide

details of this publication within this commentary. An editorial slip.

Has the project succeeded in its intent? This depends upon how useful the individual reader finds it as he/she approaches the text of *Dei Verbum*. The answers to the questions relative to each paragraph of the document are very short and this may not always facilitate understanding by the 'common reader' of the ideas expounded in the document. But the book's merits a second edition when time is ripe for that, and merits also to be translated into other languages, though publishers should make sure that the text of the commentary fits the relative translation. On the fortieth anniversary of *Dei Verbum* this booklet constitutes a good service which would make the text of the document available to a wider readership.

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