

BOOK REVIEW

Carlo Buzzetti, *Bibbia per noi*. Leggere, attualizzare, comunicare, Editrice Queriniana, Brescia 1997, ISBN 88-399-1858-2, 151pp.

A very short book that may prove to serve as a useful tool in the hands of pastors, catechists, or leaders of groups. Carlo Buzzetti offers such folks of whatever denomination, since ignorance of the Scriptures has been found to be endemic of all churches whatever their theological mark, this 'manual' or 'guide' [the author himself describes it as a 'libretto guida' (p.10)] to help them formulating a down-to-earth and practical programme of biblical pastoral ministry for school classes, groups, or even parishes or churches. For while all agree that Scripture reading is essential to Christian living, not everybody knows how to teach Scripture in a way that marries scientific knowledge of the text with helping people to build their spiritual life through the text of the Bible. Biblical pastoral ministry is supposed not simply to diffuse the message of the Scriptures but to help people discover that the Scriptures are relevant to their daily life.

Carlo Buzzetti, the author of this short volume, has been well prepared for writing this pastoral manual. He has studied at the Theological Seminary of Bergamo, Italy, then at the Pontifical University of the Gregoriana, and finally at the Pontifical Biblical Institute in Rome from where he received his doctorate with a thesis on Bible translation under the direction, among others, of Cardinal Carlo Maria Martini. He worked for the Bible Society in Italy on the inter-confessional translation of the Bible, *Parola del Signore. La Bibbia in Lingua Corrente* published in the eighties, and is currently involved in the revision of this Bible as well as in the revision of the official Bible of the Italian Bishops' Conference. CB is a Salesian priest teaching translation principles at the Pontifical Salesian University as well as at the Pontifical Biblical Institute but at the same time he works for the United Bible Societies as Translation Consultant for Europe and the Middle East.

This volume consists of a presentation (pp.5-8) by don Giuseppe Bettori who was then at the head of the department for Catechesis and Evangelization for the Conference of Italian Bishops, and is now Bishop and secretary of the Bishops Conference in Italy, three pages of introduction by CB himself in which he explains the aims of his work (pp.9-11), six chapters covering several areas attached to

biblical pastoral ministry, in which the author means(cf. p.11) to give readers particular skills(pp.15-92), a number of exercises in the form of questions on each chapter(pp.93-101), and copious notes in which CB situates his contribution within the Church's and modern biblical pastoral ministry(pp.103-152). One should not think of reading CB's text without consulting these notes very carefully.

What does CB offer in this short volume? He offers answers to a number of questions that should be asked by people involved in this branch of pastoral ministry. What does a scientific approach to the Scriptures mean? How may one pass from a historical-critical reading of a biblical text to its use as 'Word of God' for its reader? What is fundamentalism in Scripture reading and how to avoid falling into it? How may one decipher what his 'constituency' actually need regarding biblical pastoral ministry? Suppose I understand correctly what a biblical text says, how am I to communicate its message? How are we to choose the right biblical texts for our constituency? How to plan a continuous biblical pastoral ministry with our constituency? What is '*lectio divina*'? How may one arrive to a correct understanding of a biblical text when one is not an expert in biblical languages? CB's answers to these and other questions are usually clear, short(and hence not very detailed though in the notes he refers to other contributions of his own and to those of others, in Italian and at times in other languages), and accessible to readers without enormous theological preparation(though some preparation is necessary to understand and make use of this manual). People with huge pastoral responsibilities and little time will find this contribution handy. It is a good service to the Church and the publishing house has done well to include this volume in its series 'guides for ecclesial praxis'. Perhaps this manual merits to be put at the service of a wider audience by having it translated into English.

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