



Society
of the
Divine
Word

The
Word of
the Lord
endures
FOREVER

1 Pet 1:25

*Dei
Verbum*

Biblical – Pastoral Course
September 3 – November 1, 2026

Centro Ad Gentes
Via dei Laghi bis, 52
00074 Nemi (Rome), Italy

The Church has always venerated the divine Scriptures just as she venerates the body of the Lord [...].

Therefore, like the Christian religion itself, all the preaching of the Church must be nourished and regulated by Sacred Scripture.

- Constitution of Vatican II on Divine Revelation *Dei Verbum*, 21

Origin and History

The *Dei Verbum* course takes its name from the Second Vatican Council's dogmatic constitution on Divine Revelation, *Dei Verbum*. This landmark document placed Sacred Scripture at the center of Church life, describing it as "the bread of life" alongside the Eucharist (DV, 22). It underscored the Church's mission to make the Word of God accessible to all the faithful (DV, 23).

The course was directly inspired by Saint Pope John Paul II's fervent appeal to the Catholic Biblical Federation's Executive Committee on April 7, 1986: "There is a great need for the solid formation of ministers of the Word of God, of all who teach and preach the Gospel of salvation... Ministers of God's Word – priests, deacons, and other lay people – should be immersed in the Scriptures through constant reading and diligent study, accompanied by prayer. As far as possible, they should be acquainted with the insights of modern biblical scholarship."

Responding to this call, the Society of the Divine Word, in collaboration with the Catholic Biblical Federation, established the Biblical-Pastoral Formation Institute in Nemi, Italy. Its primary mission was to train qualified personnel for biblical apostolate. This effort gave rise to the *Dei Verbum* Course.

The inaugural *Dei Verbum* Course launched on August 9, 1987, under Fr. John Füllenbach, SVD. Open to lay people, religious, and clergy from across the globe, it was held annually until 2015. After a period of restructuring, the course was offered again in 2019, and, most recently, in 2023.

Objectives

The *Dei Verbum* Course is designed to provide comprehensive formation for dedicated Catholics engaged in Biblical Pastoral Ministry. In an era marked by profound change and uncertainty, both within the Church and the world, this mission is more vital than ever. Many Catholics today seek firm foundations for their faith, while others long for clarity amidst the cacophony of conflicting voices. In such times, the Word of God stands as a source of guidance, reassurance, and enduring hope, because: "The Word of the Lord endures forever" (1 Pet 1:25). In this context, the 2026 course pursues a threefold objective.



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Personal Level: To deepen participants' connection with the Word of God through prayer, meditation, sharing, and the inspiration from teachers and fellow participants.

Formative Level: To understand the overarching flow of salvation history as revealed in Scripture and to recognize the unique role of each biblical book within this grand narrative.

Pastoral Level: To acquire the tools and methods needed for an effective and transformative Biblical Apostolate.

Content

The course spans eight intensive lecture weeks, blending both formative and practical studies. The formative component emphasizes building a comprehensive understanding of the Bible's grand narrative, focusing on key sections such as the primordial narratives, the prophets, the Gospels, and the letters of St. Paul.

The practical segment equips participants with essential tools for biblical ministry, offering hands-on experience with methods like Bible sharing, Bible study, Bibliodrama, and various models of biblical ministry.

Additionally, participants will create a written project that synthesizes their acquired knowledge, skills, and insights, tailored to their specific context and future biblical ministry endeavors.

The Synod called for a particular pastoral commitment to emphasizing the centrality of the word of God in the Church's life, and recommended a greater "biblical apostolate", not alongside other forms of pastoral work, but as "a means of letting the Bible inspire all pastoral work". This does not mean adding a meeting here or there in parishes or dioceses, but rather of examining the ordinary activities of Christian communities, in parishes, associations and movements, to see if they are truly concerned with fostering a personal encounter with Christ, who gives himself to us in his word.

Post-Synodal Apostolic Exhortation
Verbum Domini, 73

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Who Is This Course Intended For?

The course welcomes all those dedicated to the biblical apostolate—priests, religious, and lay members of the Church, both men and women—who possess a deep personal commitment and a genuine passion for the Word of God. Applicants should have some prior experience in biblical ministry.

Admission Requirements

To be considered for the course, applicants must meet the following criteria:

- **Fluency in English**
- **Bachelor's Degree or Equivalent Undergraduate Level Education.**
- **Theological Background:** Foundational knowledge in theology is essential.
- **Age Limit:** Applicants must be under 60 years old.
- **Recommendation Letter:** A formal letter from an ecclesial authority (such as a bishop, religious superior, or Catholic Church institution) is required. This letter should confirm the applicant's commitment to applying their training in future biblical-pastoral work and must be included with the application.

Application Closing Date

All applications must be submitted no later than
January 31, 2026

Contact

For additional information or to apply, please write to:

Fr. Wojciech Szypula, SVD
Dei Verbum Course Director
deiverbumcourse@gmail.com

Course Fee

The total course fee is **Euro 4450**, which includes board, lodging, course materials, and guided excursions to Rome and Assisi. Please note that travel and personal expenses are not included. A limited number of partial scholarships may be offered, depending on available funding.

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Centro “Ad Gentes”

“In the light of St. Arnold Janssen’s vision for periodic religious missionary renewal, the Centro Ad Gentes aims to serve as a venue for ongoing formation for Divine Word Missionaries, members of the Arnoldus Family, their mission partners, and for lay people, religious, and clerics, as a Church called to share in the mission of Jesus, the Word Incarnate.”

From the “Mission Statement of CAG”