

**PASTORAL INSTITUTE  
DIOCESE OF BROOKLYN**

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## ***MEMORANDUM***

**TO:** Old Testament Instructors  
**FROM:** Nelsa I. Elías  
**SUBJECT:** Comments Regarding Course  
**DATE:** Summer 2011

The Pastoral Institute has made some changes to program procedures that will affect all instructors. The most significant is the use of *the PI Online Classroom* (Aula en Línea del Instituto Pastoral). Beginning last year, most of the participants' required reading materials (except for books) were posted on the PI Online Classroom. We ask that you remind the participants that they are responsible for downloading and printing these resources.

This year many of the instructors' materials will be posted online as well, for example the course outlines, memos to instructors, and some of the instructors' background reading materials. We ask for your patience as we transition to this new procedure. We are aware that change is not always easy and want to remind you that we are here to assist you.

It is important that participants in the lay formation program have every opportunity to become acquainted with the course goals and objectives which will guide your presentation of the course material as well as indicate what they are expected to have learned by the completion of the course. Therefore, we ask you to please review the course purpose and the objectives of the participants' education/formation experience at the first session of the course. We ask that you allocate time for questions or comments from the group.

Also, the enclosure lists the required reading (English and Spanish) and the course outline indicates the material that is to be covered. Please feel free to cover the topics and assign the reading from Scripture (including the introductory material in the Bible), the text and articles in the order that you find most comfortable.

*Please Note: With regard to the integration paper, we continue requiring that the instructors (both English and Spanish tracks) offer the participants a choice of three or four of the topics/questions from among the enclosed list **only** (see course outline.) These topics/questions ensure that the participant will have an opportunity to show an understanding of the course material, as well as a chance to integrate the theology with ministerial experience. If you any questions about this procedure, please contact me.*

At the end of this material is a supplemental reading and resource list. This list will be given to the participants when they complete the program as part of an overall comprehensive packet of information. There is no need for you to make copies and distribute in the class; however, if someone asks for a reading list feel free to make a copy for him or her.

Thank you for all your efforts on behalf of the Pastoral Institute. Please let me know if you have any questions regarding this or any of the course material.

Enc.

**Pastoral Institute ♦ Diocese of Brooklyn  
Lay Ministry Program**

**Course Title: Introduction to the Old Testament  
Yahweh's Relationship with a People in History**

**Course Length:**

12 hours

**Purpose:**

This course will present the concepts, themes, documents and tools of interpretation relevant to studying and understanding the bible as a whole. Participants will understand the steadfast love of God who establishes a covenantal relationship with a people in history.

**Objectives:**

1. To present through the use of various resources, especially a study bible, the guidelines for scripture interpretation and critical tools for understanding the bible as encouraged by *Divino Afflante Spiritu* and Vatican Council II.
2. To present the Exodus event as a journey of faith for the Hebrew people.
3. To highlight the call and role of the prophets in this journey of faith including how this relates to the call to ministry in the present day.
4. To present God's creation *ex nihilo* of all things good, as well as the human responsibility for evil.
5. To highlight the lessons to be drawn from the Wisdom literature, especially through the suffering and redemption of Job in the Book of Job.

**Required Reading:**

Billon, Gérard y Gruson, Phillippe. *Para leer el Antiguo Testamento*. Estella, Spain. Editorial Verbo Divino, 2009.

Brown, S.S., Raymond E. *Responses to 101 Questions on the Bible*. New York, NY. Paulist Press, 1990. Questions 21-24.

*Catechism of the Catholic Church*. Part One, Section One, Article 3: Sacred Scripture. (Available in English and Spanish)

*Dei Verbum: Dogmatic Constitution on Divine Revelation*. (Available in English and Spanish)

*La Biblia Latinoamericana*. Editorial Verbo Divino. (Por favor recomiéndeles a los participantes que usen esta versión de la Biblia, ya que es la que recomendamos.)

Mitchell, Ph.D., Alan C. *The Need for Biblical Criticism*. Scripture from Scratch. Cincinnati, OH. St. Anthony Messenger Press, 2000.

*New American Bible, The.* Catholic Bible Press.

Rohr, Richard and Martos, Joseph. *The Great Themes of Scripture: Old Testament.* Cincinnati, OH. St. Anthony Messenger Press, 1988.

Schneiders, I.H.M., Sandra. *Interpreting the Bible: The Right and the Responsibility.* Scripture from Scratch. Cincinnati, OH. St. Anthony Messenger Press, 1997.

### **Instructor's Background Reading:**

Pius XII. *Divino Afflante Spiritu.*

*Outline of the Book of Job, An.*

*Praying with the Psalms.*

Pope Benedict XVI. Post-Synodal Apostolic Exhortation *Verbum Domini* September 2010. Especially Part I: *The Interpretation Of Sacred Scripture In The Church.*  
[http://www.vatican.va/holy\\_father/benedict\\_xvi/apost\\_exhortations/documents/hf\\_ben-xvi\\_exh\\_20100930\\_verbum-domini\\_en.html](http://www.vatican.va/holy_father/benedict_xvi/apost_exhortations/documents/hf_ben-xvi_exh_20100930_verbum-domini_en.html)

El Santo Papa Benedicto XVI. Exhortación Apostólica Postsinodal *Verbum Domini.* Septiembre 2010. *Sobre La Palabra de Dios en la Vida y en la Misión de la Iglesia.* Especialmente Parte 1: *La interpretación de las Sagradas Escrituras en la Iglesia.*  
[http://www.vatican.va/holy\\_father/benedict\\_xvi/apost\\_exhortations/documents/hf\\_ben-xvi\\_exh\\_20100930\\_verbum-domini\\_sp.html](http://www.vatican.va/holy_father/benedict_xvi/apost_exhortations/documents/hf_ben-xvi_exh_20100930_verbum-domini_sp.html)

**Pastoral Institute ♦ Diocese of Brooklyn  
Lay Ministry Program**

**Course Title: Introduction to the Old Testament  
Yahweh's Relationship with a People in History**

**Course Outline**

Part I: Overview: The Catholic Approach to Understanding the Bible

- The nature and meaning of revelation
  - What is revelation?
  - Why is revelation important?
  - How does God reveal?
- The nature and meaning of inspiration and inerrancy
  - What does it mean to say the Bible is inspired?
  - What does it mean to say the Bible is inerrant?
- The nature and meaning of canonicity
- Participant readings
  - *Dei Verbum* Chapter I, II, III, IV
  - *Catechism of the Catholic Church*, #50-#108 and #120-#123
  - *La Biblia Latinoamericana* and *The New American Bible* (Old Testament introductory material)
  - *Responses to 101 Questions on the Bible*, Questions 21-24.
  - Selections from Rohr/Martos or Charpentier

Part II: Studying the Bible

- Various texts, versions, and translations of the Bible
  - Septuagint
  - Masoretic text
  - Codices
  - Vulgate
  - Survey of Bible translations in English/Spanish

- Critical approaches to the bible (with particular emphasis on the historical-critical method)
  - Historical criticism
  - Textual criticism
  - Literary criticism
  - Form criticism
  - Redaction criticism
  - Other critical approaches
  
- Interpreting the Bible
  - How do Catholics interpret the Bible?
  
- Tools for studying the Bible
  - Bible concordances
  - Biblical commentaries
  - Biblical handbooks
  - Biblical dictionaries
  - Introductions to books of the Bible and footnotes
  
- Participant readings
  - *Catechism of the Catholic Church*, #109-#119
  - *La Biblia Latinoamericana* and *The New American Bible* (Old Testament introductory material)
  - *The Need for Biblical Criticism* (Scripture from Scratch)
  - *Interpreting the Bible: The Right and the Responsibility* (Scripture from Scratch)
  - Selections from Rohr/Martos or Charpentier

### Part III: God, creation and humankind

- God's Good Creation (Gen. 1-11)
  - Why God creates
    - Our own questions about life, God, the world
    - Two creation accounts (Yahwist and Priestly)
    - "Myth"
  
  - All is created good
  - Human responsibility for evil
    - Sin and grace
  
  - The relational dynamic of good and evil

- Abraham: beginnings in faith (Gen. 12-50)
  - Abraham's call and response
  - Abraham's journey
  - God's faithfulness
  - Abraham's trust in the Lord
- Participant reading
  - *La Biblia Latinoamerica* and *The New American Bible* (including introductory material)
  - Selections from Rohr/Martos or Charpentier

#### Part IV: Exodus: journey of faith

- The escape from Egypt
- The wandering in the desert
- The ten commandments
- Covenant
- Participant reading
  - *La Biblia Latinoamerica* and *The New American Bible* (including introductory material)
  - Selections from Rohr/Martos or Charpentier

#### Part V: Transitions in the journey

- The Book of Joshua
- The Book of Judges
- 1 and 2 Samuel
- 1 and 2 Kings
  - Elijah
  - Elisha
- "History" as "story"
- Participant reading
  - *La Biblia Latinoamerica* and *The New American Bible* (including introductory material)
  - Selections from Rohr/Martos or Charpentier

## Part VI: The Prophets

- The call of the prophet
- What it means to be a prophet
  - “Preacher” vs. “prophet”
  - Selections from the writings of the major and minor prophets
- The impact of Jonah’s call
  - The call to ministry
  - Different types of “call”
- Participant reading
  - *La Biblia Latinoamerica* and *The New American Bible* (including introductory material)
  - Selections from Rohr/Martos or Charpentier

## Part VII: Good and evil revisited

- Wisdom literature, especially the Psalms
- Lessons from the Book of Job
  - Why is there suffering?
  - Why do the good suffer along with the evil?
  - What is suffering?
- The perennial question: If God is good why do people suffer?
- Belief in the resurrection: What difference does it make in our lives?
- Participant reading
  - *La Biblia Latinoamerica* and *The New American Bible* (including introductory material)
  - Selections from Rohr/Martos or Charpentier

**Questions for Integration Paper**  
**(Please use these questions/themes ONLY)**

Participants are asked to answer one from among these questions only. Make sure that all parts of the question are answered. The paper should be between 3-5 pages in length, double-spaced. A self-addressed stamped envelope and two copies of the paper are to be handed in on the due date.

1. Choose a person of importance in the Old Testament. How is the person characterized in his/her relationship with God and to the people? Why? What impact does the study of this person have in your life and ministry? Answer all the parts of this question.
2. Read a book of the Old Testament and present a summary of the book, the message of the book, and its relevance in your life and ministry.
3. From the theological concepts discussed in this course, select one or two that were not important to you before this course started, but have become important because you now see that they will have a powerful effect on your future ministry. For each theological concepts you choose:
  - a. State the concept briefly and clearly in words that make sense to you. Explain the theological concepts providing examples from two different Old Testament books by citing Book/Chapter/Verses and giving a brief description of how that citation is an example of the theological concept that you are discussing.
  - b. Give at least two specific examples of how you will use the theological concepts in planning your own present or future ministry to help people “find answers . . . that reflect God’s creative and saving will for all people” as noted by Sr. Sandra Schneiders in *Interpreting the Bible: The Right and the Responsibility*.
4. Choose one of the themes in Richard Rohr’s Old Testament text “*The Great Themes of Scripture*”. Explain the theme in detail citing scripture passages and what you have learned in this course. Indicate how this theme is appropriate for you at this point in your life and ministry.

## Preguntas para el Trabajo de Integración

*\*\*Instructores- por favor solo escoja de entre estas preguntas.*

Se le pedirá a los participantes que contesten una pregunta entre éstas solamente. Asegúrese que conteste todas las partes de la pregunta. El papel debe de constar de 3 a 5 páginas, con 2 espacios entre renglones. En la fecha indicada el participante debe entregar 2 copias del trabajo y un sobre con su dirección y suficientes sellos/estampillas para regresarle el papel calificado.

1. Escoja una persona de importancia del Antiguo Testamento. ¿Cómo se caracteriza la persona en cuanto su relación con Dios y el pueblo? ¿Qué impacto tiene el estudio de esta persona en su vida y ministerio?
2. Lea un libro del Antiguo Testamento. Presente un resumen del libro, el mensaje del libro y la importancia que éste tiene en su vida y ministerio.
3. Refiérase a los conceptos teológicos tratados en este curso, seleccione uno o dos que no consideraba importantes antes de que empezara este curso, pero que ahora considera importante ya que ahora entiende el efecto poderoso que tendrá sobre su futuro ministerio. Por cada concepto teológico que escoja:
  - a. Indique el concepto breve y claramente en palabras que tienen sentido para usted. Explique los conceptos teológicos que dando ejemplos de dos libros diferentes de Antiguo Testamento citando Libro/Capítulo/Verso y de una descripción breve de cómo esa citación es un ejemplo del concepto teológico que usted discute.
  - b. Dé por lo menos dos ejemplos específicos de cómo utilizará los conceptos teológicos para planear su ministerio y ayudar a las personas “hallar las respuestas que reflejan la voluntad creativa y salvadora de Dios para todas las personas.”
4. En el Antiguo Testamento vemos una y otra vez como Dios llama a los profetas. Hoy día Dios sigue llamando a profetas. Escoja dos profetas del Antiguo Testamento y para cada uno explique Parte a y Parte b:
  - a. ¿Por qué se le considera profeta? ¿Como fue el llamado de ese profeta? ¿Cuál fue su misión? Brevemente explique cuáles fueron los desafíos que afrontó.
  - b. ¿Cómo fue su propio llamado para el ministerio? Explique brevemente cuales son o serán los desafíos que se le presentarán al ejercer su ministerio.

**Pastoral Institute ♦ Diocese of Brooklyn  
Lay Ministry Program**

**Course Title: Introduction to Hebrew Scripture:  
Yahweh's Relationship with a People in History**

**Supplementary Reading and Resources**

Bergant, C.S.A., Dianne. *People of the Covenant: An Invitation to the Old Testament*. Franklin, WS. Sheed and Ward, 2001.

*Bible Documents, The: A Parish Resource*. Chicago, IL. Liturgy Training Publications, 2001.

Brown, S.S., Raymond E. *Responses to 101 Questions on the Bible*. New York, NY. Paulist Press, 1990.

Brown, S.S., Raymond, et al., eds. *The New Jerome Biblical Commentary*. Upper Saddle River, NJ. Prentice Hall, 1990.

*Collegeville Bible Handbook, The*. Collegeville, MN. Liturgical Press, 1997.

Dempsey, Carol J. and Loewe, William P., eds. *Theology and Sacred Scripture*. Maryknoll, NY. Orbis Books, 2002.

Link, S.J., Mark. *Path Through Scripture*. Allen, TX. Tabor Publishing, 1995.

Miranda, José Miguel. *Lecciones Bíblicas*. Mexico. Publicaciones Paulinas, 1995.

Mueller, Steve. *The Seeker's Guide to Reading the Bible: A Catholic View*. Chicago, IL. Loyola Press, 1999.

Ralph, Ph.D., Margaret Nutting. *Scripture: Nourished by the Word*. Chicago, IL. Loyola Press, 2002. (Also available in Spanish as *La Sagrada Escritura: alimentados por la palabra*.)

Soulen, Richard N. and Soulen, R. Kendell, eds. *Handbook of Biblical Criticism*. 3<sup>rd</sup> ed. Louisville, KY. Westminster John Knox Press, 2001.