



The Holy See

MESSAGE OF JOHN PAUL II TO THE PRESIDENT OF THE CATHOLIC BIBLICAL FEDERATION

*To the Most Reverend Vincenzo Paglia
Bishop of Terni-Narni-Amelia
President of the Catholic Biblical Federation*

On the occasion of the Sixth Plenary Assembly of the Catholic Biblical Federation taking place in Beirut on 3 - 12 September 2002, the theme of which is "*You show me the ways of life*" (*Ps* 16:11; cf. *Acts* 2:28), I extend warm greetings to the Delegates and Participants and assure them of my closeness in prayer during these days of work and reflection.

From East and West, from North and South you have gathered together to share your experiences and renew your commitment to the Biblical Apostolate under the guidance of the Holy Spirit, in the conviction that the Word of God, the true source of life, is a blessing for all the nations. The very venue of your meeting is particularly significant: Lebanon is one of the lands of the Bible from which the Word, the fulfilment of the promise of blessing for all peoples, set out on its journey throughout a diversified and pluralistic world.

Trusting in the force and power of the Word of God, the Catholic Bible Federation is given the great responsibility — one belonging to the whole Church — of making the Divine Word accessible to people in all parts of the world so that it can take root and thrive in their hearts. Indeed, "the Church has always venerated the divine Scriptures as she venerated the Body of the Lord . . . She has always regarded, and continues to regard the Scriptures, taken together with Sacred Tradition, as the supreme rule of her faith" (*Dei Verbum*, 21).

Your commitment to bringing about a renewed listening to the Word of God, which is a necessary element of the new evangelization, also reinforces the bonds of unity that already exist among all Christians. In the ecumenical dialogue itself the sacred Word is "a precious instrument in the

mighty hand of God for attaining to that unity which the Saviour holds out to all human beings" (*Unitatis Redintegratio*, 22).

It is my prayer that the Sixth Plenary Assembly of the Catholic Biblical Federation will provide you with a fruitful opportunity to evaluate what has been achieved so far and to determine what needs yet to be done to proclaim the Word of God in a world longing for truth.

May the Holy Spirit, the principal agent of our mission, who teaches the Church, who moves the heart and converts it to God, who opens the eyes of the mind and makes it possible for all to accept and believe the divine truth, guide your work during these days.

In the love of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Word made Flesh, I extend to all of you my Apostolic Blessing.

From Castel Gandolfo, 30 August 2002

IOANNES PAULUS II