

NURIA CALDUCH-BENAGES – FABRIZIO FICCO – PAOLO ROCCA (edd.), *Il fuoco della Parola. Il lezionario e l'eucologia della solennità di Pentecoste* (Lectio 15), GBPress-San Paolo, Roma-Cinisello Balsamo 2023, pp. 237, € 38, ISBN 978-88-9224-087-2.

This volume brings together the Proceedings of the Study Day of the Department of Biblical Theology of the Pontifical Gregorian University, which took place on 22 March 2022. To the six contributions that were presented at the event, others have been added in the present publication. Together, these texts are a follow on to an earlier volume entitled *La Bibbia si apre a Pasqua. Il lezionario della Veglia pasquale: storia, esegesi, liturgia* (ed. J.-P. SONNET, Lectio 9, GBPress-San Paolo, Roma-Cinisello Balsamo 2016), dedicated to the Easter Vigil lectionary.

The liturgy of the Solemnity of Pentecost includes an evening Mass with the possibility of organizing a Vigil in which four readings from both the Old and New Testament are read. In addition, a Mass of the Day in which the first reading is always Acts 2:1-11, while the second reading and the Gospel for the Mass changes according to the year (cycle A, B or C respectively).

In the volume, a chapter is dedicated to each of the readings for the Solemnity in question, to which other texts of a liturgical and dogmatic nature are also added. On the one hand, this inclusion broadens the horizons of biblical exegesis, and, on the other, they foster interdisciplinarity and dialogue between different theological aspects.

The notable characteristic of this book is to be found in what is called liturgical reading or liturgical exegesis (p. 35) of the Bible: «This new sensibility requires a different hermeneutical stance that emerges and is shaped by the celebration» (p. 8. The quotations here have been translated into English by the author). This inclusion is very welcome to the discipline of biblical studies.

What this means is that the liturgy constitutes the context from which the exegete is invited to interpret the various pericopes, which, in this specific case, are those proposed for the Solemnity of Pentecost. The single biblical passage is illuminated by the literary context provided by the other readings, the responsorial psalm, and all the other elements proposed by the liturgy, for example, the biblical verse preceding the Gospel reading, the Gospel itself, the titles given to the individual texts, and the euchology of the celebration.

When commencing from this premise, we can understand why the biblical passage is often retouched, and sometimes presented with even substantial cuts that go so far as to propose an altered text. When this is done, what is presented is no longer that of the biblical book, but should be considered functional to the liturgical reading of the Bible. In addition, this exegesis recovers typology, which is an important procedure of ecclesial tradition that interprets individual pericopes, while taking into account the relationship between the Old and the New Testament.

Following an outline of the general framework of the volume, I turn my attention to the presentation of the individual contributions, and then to some evaluative considerations.

The introduction to the volume contains a brief presentation of the liturgical reading of the Bible, and provides some information about the Pentecost in the Jewish tradition and in the New Testament too. Following this introduction, the volume is divided into two distinct sections: the first, devoted to the Vigil of Pentecost/Pentecost Eve Vespers Mass with vigil celebration (Part One); the second, to the Daytime Mass (Part Two).

In the first part (nine chapters), the four Old Testament texts that are analysed are alternatively proposed as the first reading when there is an evening Mass on the Eve of Pentecost. Instead, when there is a Vigil all four readings are used. In addition, Responsorial Psalms are read too, followed by the second reading and the Gospel, which remain unchanged. The concluding contribution of Part One has been entrusted to Giuseppe Midili, a liturgist, whose task is to link the Word of God with the euchology and the ritual structure, bringing out the liturgical theology of the celebration in question (pp. 109-123).

Each author has followed a specific methodology in commenting on the biblical text, and each one has also endeavoured to combine his or her methodological approach with the liturgical reading mentioned above. To illustrate this, here follows several significant examples, though the others are worthy of consideration too. Vasile Basota («The Tower of Babel, the question of language, and the God of nations in Gen 11:1-9», pp. 15-33) devotes space to examining the socio-political and religious context of the author of Gen 11:1-9, while focusing in particular on Babylon and its tower. The author commences explaining the meaning of Babylon and its tower in the 6th cent., then at the time of Nebuchadnezzar II, and later after Nebuchadnezzar II, thus developing the relationship between Babylon, the tower and the god Marduk. The reconstruction of this context, conducted with a certain erudition, permits the author to present the theology of Gen 11:1-9, developing the themes mentioned in the title of the chapter – the question of tongues and language –, which is also dealt with from an eschatological and universal perspective.

Fabrizio Ficco («The Word and the Fire [Ex 19:3-8a.16-20 b]», pp. 35-44) dedicates his text to the analysis of the passage proposed as the second reading of the lectionary of the Vigil Vespers Mass. This text presents a rather different physiognomy compared to the biblical pericope, from which various verses have been cut, leading to a passage that presents two moments: on the one hand, the dialogue between the Lord and Moses (Ex 19:3-8a), and on the other, the theophany proper (19:16-20b). The author adequately integrates the analysis of the biblical text and the liturgical perspective credibly.

In the «And we shall all be prophets... A different look at Jl 3:1-5» (pp. 55-64), a contribution by Elżbieta M. Obara, the author takes a specific position in the discussion on the type of universalism present in the prophetic passage. This point of view commences from the meaning of the syntagma «the totality of all flesh», which could refer either to every human being, or to every human being within Israel. The author inclines towards the more universalistic interpretation,

and from this assumption, she develops a fascinating proposal, which, however, does not sufficiently take into account the problematic present in the text. It seems that the decidedly universalist perspective is in fact clear in the quotation from J1 3 that we read in Acts 2:17-21, while it is extensively discussed with regard to the prophet Joel, as is evident from the discussion among exegetes on the issue.

A stimulating approach, and generally quite new for exegetes, is offered by Pino Di Luccio in his commentary on the Gospel passage «Jesus gives the water of the Spirit (Jn 7:37-39)» (pp. 95-107). In the contribution, the author interprets the text by making ample reference to Jewish sources, which would, in his opinion, also allow some textual problems present in the Gospel passage to be resolved.

These are a few examples of the type of material that the reader can find in the first part of this book, and of the variety of approaches used. From this selection of representative contributions to the volume the reader can ascertain both the type of approach, and the possible problems that may raise.

A not so dissimilar structure is followed in Part Two. This next section of the volume opens with a contribution dedicated to the text of Acts 2:1-11, an unchanged first reading of the Mass scheduled for the Day of Pentecost. This is followed by the commentaries on the second reading and the Gospel, which vary according to the year (A, B or C).

As was the case at the end of Part One, a liturgical chapter is added, once again entrusted to Giuseppe Midili, which summarises the thematic development that emerges from the readings proposed for the various cycles (pp. 211-218). Concluding Part Two, the volume closes with a contribution of a dogmatic nature by Alberta Maria Putti (pp. 219-228). This contribution consists of three aspects of Christian pneumatology that are revealed at Pentecost, which the author explores in depth. The titles of the three aspects are: the Spirit makes participants in the life of Christ; the Spirit giver of gifts; and, Pentecost is the presence of eschatology here in history.

The second part of the volume furthers issues that emerged earlier. For example, J.-P. Sonnet dedicates a brief and evocative commentary to the story of Acts 2:1-11, by linking it to the Jewish practice of stringing a necklace of pearls that are formed by individual biblical texts («The Word in the fire: from Mount Sinai [Deut 4] to the cenacle [Acts 2]», pp. 127-133). Scott N. Brodeur («The indwelling of the Spirit and the adopted sons of God, co-heirs with Christ [Rom 8:8-17]», pp. 159-168) presents a rhetorical and theological analysis of the passage in Rom 8:1-17 (even though the passage in the text for the Mass begins in 8:8), which, in his opinion, in turn is part of the broader rhetorical-literary composition consisting of Rom 8:1-39.

Francesco Graziano, commenting on the Gospel passage proposed for year C («In-manifestation to him I myself». The Paraclete in the Gospel of Pentecost of year C [Jn 14:15-16.23b-26]», pp. 191-209), uses a rhetorical method, but of a different type from the previous one, i.e. biblical-semitic rhetoric, and analyses Jn 14:15-24, after presenting the composition of this literary sub-sequence. The author, therefore, does not remain strictly within the textual limits proposed

by the liturgy, but analyses a passage that most closely corresponds to the criteria of delimitation of the pericope that derive from the exegetical method he uses.

As can be seen from the examples mentioned here, which are taken from the Parts One and Two of the volume, each author has attempted to combine the exegetical approach with the liturgical perspective that characterises the volume. The results, however, should be evaluated on a case-by-case basis as at times the integration appears more successful, while in other cases it is less evident. Nonetheless, this does not undermine the positive and welcome contribution the project makes, or the interdisciplinary nature that characterises it any less valid. Certainly, the individual contributions are interesting and rich in information and exegetical-theological reflections, therefore it is an essential reading for students of theology above all, but also to all those who have cultivated an interest in the liturgy.

In closing, I suggest one last consideration of a more general nature to bring to the reader's attention. The new and sometimes innovative context that the liturgy imposes on the biblical texts, which are selected and often cut where some verses do not seem suitable for the celebration, is explained in the book. Let us quote, for example, what Midili states about Ex 19:3-8a.16-20b; «The verses left out (from 8b to 15) describe the preparation of the people for the divine manifestation, but they introduce themes that are beyond the scope of the liturgical editor [...]. By expunging these verses, the role of the mediator is reduced, highlighting instead the Church, the new Israel, the subject of the new alliance» (p. 116). Even if *Lumen Gentium* 9 is cited, it should still be remembered that the expression «the Church is the new Israel» is not biblical and that the question is much discussed on a theological level, without giving the impression that this is an established fact.

To cite one other example, the same author writes about the Gospel passage chosen for the Mass on the Day of Pentecost, year C: «In light of the narrative purpose, revealed by the collection, the choices of the lectionary made on the pericope are better understood, which is the result of careful cutting» (p. 212). Without detracting anything from the value of this liturgical interpretation, which is based on typology, I nevertheless remained perplexed when faced with operations of this type, which seem to adapt the biblical text to themes and concepts already decided elsewhere that Scripture should only endorse.

Furthermore, the fact that many believers listen to the Bible mainly during liturgical celebrations or meditate almost exclusively on texts taken from the Mass, usually from the Gospels, makes an intervention of this nature even more problematic, because it does not favor an approach to the biblical text itself, but only in this mediated form. The responsibility, in this case, does not lie with the liturgist, but this fact should invite to prepare differentiated paths of approach to Scripture at a pastoral level, the liturgical one included, but not predominantly or even exclusively from the one proposed.

These last considerations and the risks highlighted here are not discussed in the volume under review. On the contrary, we note that the various biblical scholars have made a commendable effort of integration between their respective

methodologies and liturgical exegesis, and have proposed a model of interdisciplinarity that could be usefully applied to similar projects.

Donatella Scaiola
Pontificia Università Urbaniana
scaiola.donatella@gmail.com

GIUSEPPE DE VIRGILIO, *Bibbia e catechesi. Profili e percorsi* (Biblioteca de Scienze Religiose Apollinare), EDUSC, Roma 2023, pp. 396, € 35, ISBN 979-12-5482-145-9.

Entre las múltiples formas y modalidades con las que la Biblia ha sido utilizada en la misión evangelizadora de la Iglesia, el presente volumen se propone reflexionar críticamente sobre la relación entre el texto sagrado y la catequesis. Y entre los diversos modos posibles de tratar este tema, la obra en reseña se centra en la catequesis bíblica, entendida como una acción de mediación pedagógica de los contenidos de la Escritura, respetuosa tanto del contexto histórico y literario de los textos como del contexto vital del individuo y de la comunidad creyente.

Para desarrollar los contenidos, el autor articula su obra en tres partes con tres capítulos cada una. La primera, titulada «Perfiles», examina las peculiaridades de la relación entre la Biblia y la catequesis en general, mientras que en las otras dos (los «Recorridos») se analizan algunos pasajes escogidos del Antiguo y del Nuevo Testamento según el esquema presentación – interpretación – mensaje. Estos tres momentos, íntimamente relacionados, tienen la función, respectivamente, de «introducir el contexto y la articulación de cada perícopa», relevar «los aspectos esenciales del texto y su riqueza histórico-literaria» y «resumir el valor teológico-espiritual del contenido del pasaje, releyéndolo y actualizándolo en perspectiva catequística» (p. 105).

Es probable que la primera parte, de carácter compilatorio, sea la más sustanciosa para un lector que busque información dentro de un cuadro conceptual de referencia. Esta sección intenta definir la identidad de la Biblia y de la catequesis para luego, según las exigencias de la reflexión contemporánea, profundizar otros temas y mostrar su mutua interconexión; concretamente: el dinamismo de la evangelización y de la educación a la fe; la dimensión bíblica de la pastoral; y los modelos, las orientaciones, las tareas, las formas, los enfoques, las metodologías y los contenidos tanto de la animación bíblica como, especialmente, de la catequesis. En estas páginas, el autor recupera e integra el pensamiento de otros académicos que ya han estudiado estos temas. Las notas a pie de página y la abundante bibliografía aportada sostienen el discurso. La rica literatura, sin embargo, no es del todo homogénea, pues alterna obras de reciente publicación con estudios hoy clásicos. Hay que señalar, además, la densidad de contenido de los tres primeros capítulos, que cubren un amplio espectro de materias; tal vez sería conveniente reducir los temas o seleccionarlos diversamente en función