

in 2003.

Pope John Paul II and other Vatican officials were not happy with this version, mainly because of the inclusive language, which was mandated by liturgical guidelines issued by a committee of the U.S. Catholic Conference in 1990 but *specifically disallowed* by the provisional norms for translation of biblical texts sent by Vatican officials to American Bishops in June of 1997, and also disallowed by the translation guidelines formally promulgated in an Instruction published by the Vatican Congregation for Divine Worship and the Discipline of the Sacraments in March 2001. And so, although the NAB is the "official" translation of the U.S. Conference of Bishops, it became necessary for the Scripture portions included in the liturgy of the English Mass to be revised. A complete overhaul so as to remove the inclusive language from the version, in accordance with the liturgical guidelines of the Vatican, would seem to be the next logical step; but this is unlikely to happen because opposition to the Vatican guidelines is very strong in the American hierarchy.

### **Revised Standard Version Catholic Edition**

The Revised Standard Version Catholic Edition (also known as the RSV-CE) is an adaptation of the Revised Standard Version (RSV) of the Bible for use by Catholics. It is widely used by conservative Catholic scholars and theologians, and is accepted as one of the most accurate and literary Bible translations suitable for Catholic use.

The RSV-CE, sometimes called the Ignatius Bible, was published in the following stages:

- New Testament (1946, originally copyrighted to the International Council of Religious Education)
- Old Testament (1952)
- Deuterocanonical Books (1957)

- Catholic Edition of the New Testament (1965)
- Catholic Edition of the Old Testament incorporating the Apocrypha (1966)
- Second Catholic Edition (Ignatius Edition) (2006)

### **Protestant Versions**

1. The King James or Authorized Version was published in 1611 in the reign of King James I. The Authorized Version is not a new translation but a revision of the Bishop's Bible published in 1568. In revising the Bishop's Bible the editors consulted also the Hebrew and Greek texts. The translation is frequently colored by an anti-Catholic bias, which in certain cases leads to deliberate falsifications of the text in the interest of Protestant teaching. The purity of its language, however, has made it the Bible of English Protestantism.

2. The "Revised Version" (1818-1885) is a more modern critical revision of the King James Bible undertaken, at the instance of the British Parliament, by a group of English and American Protestant scholars. The committee departed in at least thirty-six thousand instances from the text of 1611.

3. In 1901 the American group of the same committee brought out its own text of the Revised Version and this is known as the American Standard Version.

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## ***Versions of the Bible***

### **Samaritan Pentateuch**

(1) The Samaritan Pentateuch is not a version or a translation but the old Hebrew text written in a modified form of the old Semitic alphabet. It is commonly held that the Samaritans received the Pentateuch in 433 B.C. through the apostate priest Manasses. It is an independent witness for the Hebrew text of the Pentateuch and very helpful at times in determining the exact reading of the original. It contains some additions and some intentional alterations in the interest of the Samaritan temple in Mount Gerizim (Deut. 27:4, where it substitutes Gerizim for Hebal).

(1) The text is extant in a number of manuscripts. The oldest of these manuscripts dates from the tenth century of our era and is kept at Naplouse (Sichem) at the foot of Mount Gerizim: it is falsely represented by the Samaritans as having been written by Abisha, the grandson of Moses, in the thirteenth year of the conquest of Canaan.

### **Septuagint**

The oldest Greek manuscript of the Hebrew Old Testament is known as the Septuagint, and was made between 300 and 130 B.C. It derives its name from the seventy or seventy-two translators to whom it is attributed. According to a legend, Ptolemy II (284-247) wished to have a copy of the Law of Moses in his famous library in Alexandria. At his request the high priest sent seventy-two scholars (six from each of the twelve tribes) from Jerusalem to Alexandria to translate the Law into Greek. Later on the story was further developed to the effect that the seventy-two translated the entire Old Testament, that they were inspired in their work, that each worked independently in his cell and that the

translations were perfectly identical. The legend was widely prevalent in the early Church and is still accepted by the Greek Church; in the West it was discredited through Saint Jerome's criticism. The substance of the legend is very likely historical, namely, the Ptolemy had a copy of the Law made for his library. The other books were translated later.

The language of the Septuagint is the post-classic Greek, the language spoken by the people, and is tinged with Hebraisms. The translation is at times liberal and at times free. But, on the whole, faithful. The Septuagint contains also the deuterocanonical books. It was used by the Apostles and the early Christians. It helped greatly the spread of revealed truths among the heathens. The numerous Jewish proselytes and the first Christians from among the Gentiles obtained their first knowledge of the Bible through it.

### **Old Latin**

Since Latin Christianity needed a Latin Bible both for its liturgy and for private reading, it is probable that as early as the first century the Greek Bible began to be translated into Latin. The Latin Bible which was used in Western Europe prior to the acceptance of Saint Jerome's text is commonly known as the "Old Latin." The language of the "Old Latin" is not classical but the language of the common people such as we find in Plautus (Roman dramatist) and Ennius (Roman Poet).

### **Vulgate**

The Latin "Vulgate (common or accepted text) is the work of Saint Jerome (383-405). The New Testament is Jerome's revision of the Old Latin text made with the aid of ancient Greek manuscripts. The protocanonical books of the Old Testament (except the Psalter) are a direct translation of the original Hebrew. The Vulgate

Psalter is Jerome's revision of the Old Latin text of the Psalms. Tobias and Judith are his translation of the Chaldaic. Baruch, Wisdom, Ecclesiasticus (Sirach), and possibly Machabees are the unrevised Old Latin text.

The Council of Trent made the Vulgate the authentic or official Latin text of the Catholic Church and our present edition was brought out by Clement VIII in 1592.

In 1907 Pope Pius X authorized the Benedictine Order to undertake a new revision of the Vulgate, and appointed Cardinal Gasquet head of the commission. The aim of the commission was not to produce a Latin Bible which would be proposed as an official text for all the approbation of the Church, but to determine with all possible exactness the original Latin text of saint Jerome. The text of Genesis appeared in 1926.

### **Rheims-Douay Bible**

The standard English Catholic Translation of the Bible (from the Latin Vulgate) is the Rheims-Douay or Douay Version. In the reign of Queen Elizabeth many Catholic ecclesiastics and laymen were compelled to seek refuge on the continent. A number of illustrious Oxford scholars opened an English college at Douay, France, in 1568, in order to supply priests for the English missions. In 1578 the college was transferred to Rheims, and later back again to Douay. The New Testament was published at Rheims in 1582, the Old Testament at Douay in 1609-1610. The language of the text was modernized by Bishop Challoner (1749-1752).

### **The New American Bible**

The history of this Roman Catholic version is rather complicated. It was undertaken with the support and oversight of the American hierarchy after Pope Pius XII in 1943 issued an encyclical letter (the *Divino afflante Spiritu*) in which he

encouraged Roman Catholic scholars to make translations of the Bible from the original languages rather than from the Latin Vulgate, which previously had been the basic text used by Catholic translators. At that time a new translation from the Vulgate, called the Confraternity Version, was already underway in America, the New Testament having been published in 1941. The corresponding translation of the Latin Old Testament was abandoned after the Pope's encyclical gave permission to translate from the Hebrew, and work began on a translation of the Hebrew, with Louis F. Hartman as the chief editor. This translation of the Old Testament gradually appeared in four volumes in 1951, 1955, 1961, and 1969. Work on a new translation of the Greek New Testament (based on the Nestle-Aland 25th edition) began in 1956, with Myles M. Bourke as the chief editor. The completed Bible, as published in 1970, contained a substantial revision of the Old Testament portions which had earlier been published. The 1970 version of Genesis was an entirely new translation. Shortly after the publication of the complete Bible, the American bishops decided that the 1970 NAB New Testament was too paraphrastic for general use, and so the New Testament was "revised" (translated anew, really, on different principles, from the 26th edition of Nestle-Aland) and published in 1986. This new translation of the New Testament was for the most part more literal, but it employed "dynamic equivalence" in places for the sake of gender-neutral language. The Book of Psalms was similarly "revised" in 1991. Therefore, the most recent editions of the NAB include the 1970 Old Testament, 1991 Psalter, and 1986 New Testament, though some older editions are still in print. A revision of the entire Old Testament, excluding the Psalter, is currently underway, and this is expected to be published