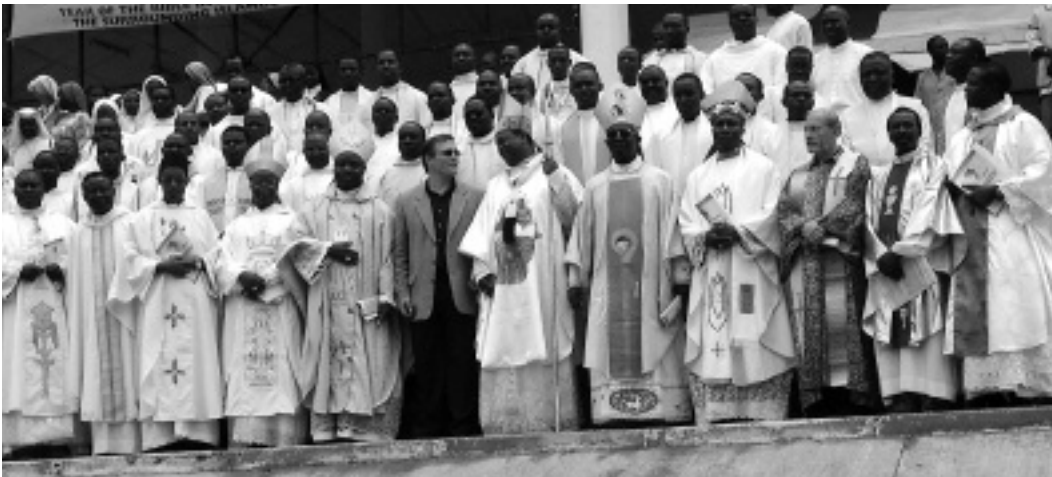


Life of the Federation

AFRICA

Nigeria: Continental Celebration for the Year of the Bible in the African Region

SECAM, the Symposium of the Bishops' Conferences of Africa and Madagascar, proclaimed the year 2005 a Year of the Bible in Africa and the surrounding islands. According to the President of SECAM, Archbishop John Onaiyekan, the two jubilees that served as the occasion – the 40th anniversary of *Dei Verbum* and the 10th of *Ecclesia in Africa* – and ultimately also the Year of the Eucharist offered “a unique opportunity to reflect, firstly, on the impact of Sacred Scripture on our lives as Christians in Africa and the surrounding Islands, and secondly on ways to make the Word of God accessible to Christians on the continent and the Islands in languages they can understand.” (You will find excerpts from the pastoral letter of Archbishop Onaiyekan on the opening of the Bible Year in *BDV* 74/75).



An estimated three thousand persons did not hesitate to undertake long and tedious journeys during the rainy season in order to attend the three-day celebration that took place from July 15 to 17, 2005 in Abuja, Nigeria. Eucharistic celebrations, Bible circles, thematic discussion, Bible-quiz events and numerous personal encounters were the thematic and practical steps they took to respond more deeply to the biblical pastoral concern of *Dei Verbum* that the Word of God should be the guiding principle of our faith and the soul of theology. Alongside the largest participant groups from the various provinces of Nigeria came numerous participants from the surrounding countries of West Africa and from the entire black continent as well. The organizers remarked how gratifying it was that a significant number of priests also responded to the invitation, thus revealing their interest in the concerns of the Bible Year.

In the perimeter of the celebrations the biblical pastoral coordinators of the countries of Africa and Madagascar met to exchange experiences and to discuss topics such as collaboration in the network of the region, the contribution of Africa to the congress in Rome and questions relative to the next Plenary Assembly of the CBF which is scheduled to take place in Africa. ■