

“The Turn to Culture and the Worlds in front of the Text: Rethinking *Eisegesis* in Biblical Studies”

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Abstract

It was once assumed that the task of the exegete was a matter of establishing what the biblical text *meant* using the tools of historical criticism, while it was then the responsibility of the theologian to articulate what the text *means*. Latino/a biblical interpretation sets aside this arbitrary academic division of labor in an effort to focus on what flesh and blood readers bring to their encounter with the Scriptures. Exegetes, once trained to be acutely conscious of their own *Sitz im Leben* so as to assiduously avoid the sin of *eisegesis*, now recognize the complex interweavings of texts and contexts both past and present, so that meaning is no longer assumed to abide *in* the text itself. Latino/a biblical interpretation embraces a turn to culture that includes tradition as a dynamic process, so that the Scriptures heard and read are understood to be a living word.

Bio

Jean-Pierre Ruiz is Associate Professor of Biblical Studies in the Department of Theology & Religious Studies at St. John's University, New York, where he is also a Senior Research Fellow of the university's Vincentian Center for Church and Society. Ruiz earned his doctoral degree at the Pontifical Gregorian University in Rome. His recent publications include the award-winning book, *Readings from the Edges: The Bible and People on the Move* (Maryknoll, NY: Orbis Books), and *The Word of God and Latino Catholic: The Teachings of the Road to Emmaus* (New York: American Bible Society). He also authored the introduction and commentary on the Apocalypse of John in the *New Oxford Annotated Bible* and the introduction to the Apocalypse in the Anselm Academic Study Bible. His current projects include a volume on the theology of revelation, to be published by Fortress Press, and a commentary on the books of Joel and Obadiah under contract with Eerdmans. A Past-President of the Academy of Catholic Hispanic Theologians of the United States (ACHTUS), Ruiz serves on the editorial boards of the *Journal of Biblical Literature* and the *Journal of the American Academy of Religion*. He is a member of the Catholic Biblical Association of America and is also a member of the Christian Scholars Group on Christian-Jewish Relations. Ruiz was the recipient of the Virgilio Elizondo Award for Distinguished Achievement in Theology, conferred by the Academy of Catholic Hispanic Theologians of the United States, and the St. John's University Outstanding Faculty Achievement Award. His Sunday Scriptures column was the recipient of a Catholic Press Association Award.