

## **Ancient Papyrus Donated to the Vatican**

Contains Parts of the Gospels of Luke and John

VATICAN CITY, JAN. 24, 2007 ([Zenit.org](http://www.zenit.org)).- Benedict XVI received as a gift to the Holy See one of the most ancient manuscripts of the Gospels, an artifact that demonstrates Scripture's historical actuality.

The Pope was given the 14-15 Bodmer Papyrus (P75), dated between A.D. 175 and 225, on Monday by Frank Hanna and his family, of the United States.

"The papyrus contains about half of each of the Gospels of Luke and John. It was written in Egypt and perhaps used as a liturgical book," explained Cardinal Jean-Louis Tauran, archivist and librarian of the Holy Roman Church, during the audience.

The manuscript previously belonged to the library of the Bodmer Foundation in Cologne, Switzerland, and is now in the Vatican Apostolic Library.

"The Pope's library possesses the most ancient testimony of the Gospel of Luke and among the most ancient of the Gospel of John," added the cardinal.

The Bodmer Papyrus contains 144 pages and is the oldest manuscript that contains the text of the two Gospels in one papyrus.

The Lord's Prayer

L'Osservatore Romano commented that "almost certainly it was destined for a small community, a Greek-speaking Egyptian 'parish' that, as is habitual in all Christian liturgies, read the Gospel during the Eucharistic celebration."

The oldest transcription of the Our Father, as recounted by Luke, is found in this papyrus.

Participants in the meeting explained that experts see the joining of Luke and John in one papyrus as a demonstration that for the first Christians communities, the Gospels formed a unity.

The document agrees with the Codex Vaticanus, a fourth-century edition of the Bible. The Bodmer Papyrus demonstrates, therefore, that the oldest versions of the New Testament that are preserved in their totality correspond with the Gospels that already circulated among the Christian communities centuries earlier.

Cardinal Tarcisio Bertone, Vatican secretary of state, Bishop Raffaele Farina, prefect of the Vatican Library, and Gary Krupp, founder of the Pave the Way Foundation, which worked to bring about this gift, were present when the papyrus was donated to the Vatican.

ZE07012429