

Word of God Sunday



Pope Francis has declared that the Third Sunday in Ordinary Time is to be devoted to the celebration, study and dissemination of the word of God “that the life of our people be constantly marked by this decisive relationship with the living word that the Lord never tires of speaking to his Bride” (*Aperuit Illis*, 2). In 2020 the *Sunday of the Word of God* falls on **January 26**.

Here are five liturgical suggestions for making the most of this universal invitation from the Pontiff.

1. Homily

Focus on the centrality of the Bible for Christians. In the Gospel, Jesus quotes what we heard in the first reading from the Prophet Isaiah. The word of the prophet is the foundation for his teaching and the call of the first disciples. In the second reading Paul tells the Corinthians that Jesus did not send him to baptize but to proclaim the Gospel and that “it is the power of God”.

2. Bless Ministers of the Word

Following the Homily, invite ministers of the Word to stand (e.g. lectors, psalmists, leaders in RCIA, liturgy of the word for children, and scripture study). Bless them with hands extended:

Blessed are you, Lord God,
 Source of all light and all goodness,
 you sent your Son, your living Word,
 to reveal to humanity the mystery of your love.
 Look with mercy upon these women and men who proclaim your word
 and lead your people closer to your teaching.
 Bless ✠ them in their ministry
 so that they may be nourished by your Word,
 be transformed by it and faithfully announce it
 to their brothers and sisters in your Church.
 We praise and thank you, Father,
 in the name of Jesus your Son,
 and in the love of your Holy Spirit,
 God of glory for ever and ever.

Amen.

Adapted from the blessing of lectors in *Celebrations of Installation and Recognition*, copyright Concacan Inc., 2005. All rights reserved.

3. Universal Prayer

Introduction to the petitions:

Dear sisters and brothers,
nourished and formed by God's Word
let us bring our needs and petitions before Him.

In addition to the petitions you have prepared for today, include some for the Word of God to come to life in your community, for example:

For bishops, priests, deacons, lectors, psalmists, and all who proclaim God's Word in the world, we pray to the Lord.

For teachers and staff in Catholic schools, for catechists, parents, and all who bring the Word of God to children, we pray to the Lord.

Prayer at the end of the petitions:

Grant, O God, that our lives be marked by your living word.
Hear these, our prayers,
and help us to proclaim the good news of the kingdom.
Through Christ our Lord.
Amen.

4. Eucharistic Prayer

You might use Eucharistic Prayer III for Various Needs and Occasions (Jesus the Way to the Father). Its Preface focuses on Christ as the "Word" of God. Roman Missal p.764ff.

5. Enthroning the Bible (For use in homes, schools, and with RCIA or Bible Study groups)

The faithful have shown reverence to the bible as the inspired word of God since ancient times. The enthronement of an open bible has often served as a symbolic invitation to delve into the sacred text as the source of our spiritual life. You might use this short ritual from the American Bible Society to enthrone the Bible at home, in schools, and with RCIA or Bible Study groups.