

If you would like to start a Bible discussion group in your parish, Cork Scripture Group would be delighted to help you. We have devised a series of user-friendly resources entitled "Unfolding the Word" and have over 80 texts with questions and notes available. We have detailed outlines of how to approach this practice and we can also help with training, if needed.

2. The Word of God was central to Christ's preaching and is central in the Church's preaching and in our teaching of the faith Christ has brought us. It is precious, to be respected, treasured and honoured.

As a way of celebrating the very special place that the Word of God occupies in our coming to faith and the living out of our faith, Pope Francis invites us to enthrone the Word of God in our churches and in our homes as a way of marking the Sunday of the Word of God.

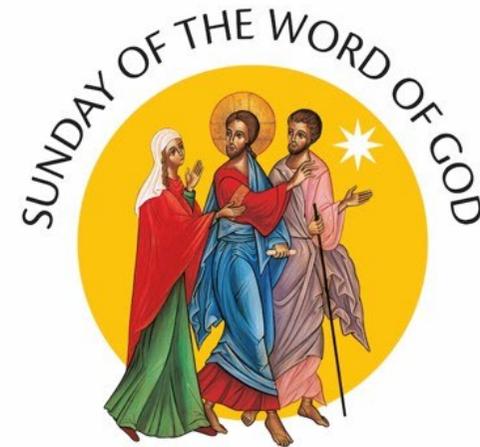
As Ministers of the Word of God in church, we are in position to open/unfold the Word of God for those present, to introduce others to Christ. But, how can we introduce others to Christ if we ourselves don't know Christ?"

There is a saying which has been attributed to St Francis of Assisi: *'Proclaim the Word of God always. And if you have to, then, use words.'*



© The official logo for the Sunday of the Word of God was unveiled at the Vatican January 17 2020 by the Pontifical Council for Promoting New Evangelization. The colourful logo depicts "The Road to Emmaus" and is based on an icon written by the late Benedictine Sister Marie-Paul Farran.

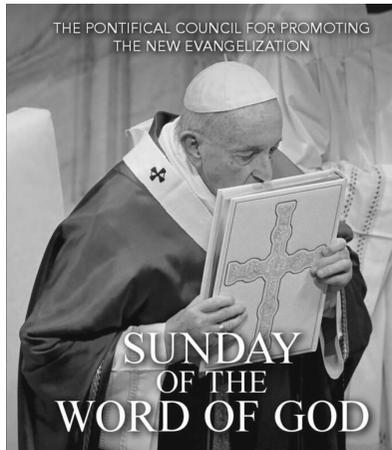
Your Word, O Lord, is a lamp for my steps and a light for my path.
Psalm 119:105



I

An Introduction to the Sunday of the Word of God

Cork Scripture Group
www.corkscripturegroup.com



Pope Francis announced, in September, 2019, that he was setting aside the Third Sunday in Ordinary Time every year as the ‘Sunday of the Word of God.’

Why dedicate a Sunday as ‘Sunday of the Word of God? The Pope says that the Bible is the Word of God to us, his people. So, he is asking us to recognise that the Word of God/Bible occupies a central position in our individual lives and in the lives of the Church.

Where does the idea of a ‘Sunday of the Word of God’ come from? As is evident from the logo, Pope Francis takes his inspiration from Luke’s account of the first Easter Sunday afternoon, when two disciples of Jesus were going from Jerusalem to Emmaus (Lk 24:13-35). They were dejected and disillusioned. They had hoped that Jesus would have been their Messiah/Saviour. Then, Luke tells us, a stranger – whom they did not at first recognise - joined them, walked with them, and asked them what they had been talking about as they walked along. They said that they were talking about the recent happenings in Jerusalem ... about their prophet and leader, Jesus, who had been handed over to Pilate by the chief priests and was crucified. Their hopes and dreams had died with

their leader [Jesus]. In the words of Pope Francis the two disciples were ‘Drifters,’ people who had lost their focus in life.

Then, as they walked and talked, the stranger [Jesus] began to “open their minds to understand the Scriptures” (Lk 24:45). In other words, Jesus explained to them God’s Plan for humanity as set out in The Word of God. The result of Christ’s discussion with the two disciples, as explained by Luke (Lk 24:33-35), was amazing. The despondency the disciples had felt was now replaced by the knowledge and reassurance that God’s Plan was still in place and that it was the disciples’ role in life to make God’s plan a reality.

To use Pope Francis’s words – ‘the aimless ‘drifters’ became ‘re-focused followers with a mission.’ They were now different people, with different understandings, different hopes, and a different vision. They were transformed people.

The two disciples ran back to Jerusalem to tell the other disciples about their meeting with Jesus on the road to Emmaus, about how he had explained The Word of God to them, and how he had given them a new understanding of God’s plan, and had restored their hope and courage. They were sharing their Good News/Gospel with their co-followers. Later, Jesus appeared to them and commissioned them to ‘bring his gospel/good news to the whole world.’

In the view of Pope Francis, this Gospel episode shows us that:

1. The Word of God is just that – the Word of God to us. In the Word of God/Bible, God is speaking to us, letting us know his Plan of Salvation – and our part in its realisation. The Word of God is central in our lives too. It is our way of knowing Christ and of knowing our place in building the Kingdom of God on earth as Christ’s co-workers. Therefore, Pope Francis appeals to us to read, study, meditate on, pray, discuss, and also live as followers of Christ – as set out in the Word of God.