



DICASTERY FOR EVANGELIZATION
SECTION FOR FUNDAMENTAL QUESTIONS
REGARDING EVANGELIZATION IN THE WORLD

SEVENTH SUNDAY OF THE WORD OF GOD

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LITURGICAL AND PASTORAL HANDBOOK

THE WORD OF CHRIST

DWELLS AMONG YOU

(Col 3:16)



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INTRODUCTION

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The biblical expression chosen for the celebration of the seventh edition of the *Sunday of the Word of God* is taken from the Letter of Saint Paul to the Colossians: “**The word of Christ dwells among you**” (3:16). What we have received from the Apostle is not a simple moral exhortation, but the indication of a new way of living. Paul does not ask that the Word be merely listened to or studied; he wants it to dwell, that is, to take up stable residence, to shape our thoughts, guide our desires, and make credible the witness of the disciples. The Word of Christ remains a sure criterion that unifies and renders fruitful the life of the Christian community.

After the Holy Year, this motto remains for us a precious inheritance: an invitation addressed to the whole Church to place the Gospel once more at the centre, since every true renewal is born from docile listening to the Word. To welcome it means allowing ourselves to be accompanied by the One who does not deceive, because He gives life and hope. To be inhabited by the Word ultimately means permitting Christ to speak even today through our lives, so that every person may recognize His presence, which continues to illuminate the journey of history.

Every Christian and every community must rediscover the *primacy of the Word of God*. Its sincere and profound listening is an essential path through which human beings encounter God. When space is given to the Word, each person discovers that the Word of God dwells in the heart like a seed that, in due time, sprouts and bears fruit. Indeed, all of us are invited to nourish ourselves with the daily bread of the Word and, afterwards, to proclaim it to our brothers and sisters, for proclamation flows from the abundance of the heart, according to the Gospel saying: “from the fullness of the heart the mouth speaks” (Mt 12:34; Lk 6:45).

It is particularly significant that this year the celebration of the *Sunday of the Word of God* coincides with the celebration of the Conversion of Saint Paul, the day that concludes the Week of Prayer for Christian Unity. The Word that Christ addressed to Paul on the road to Damascus struck his heart so deeply that it made him the great evangelizer we know. Today it is up to us to ensure that the same Word reaches the ends of the earth, so as to transform the life of all peoples by *dwelling* among us.

THE WORD OF GOD: A SOURCE OF HOPE

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Perhaps the man who best understood the relationship between God's Word and hope was a pagan, the Roman centurion who, after pleading with Jesus to heal his sick servant, in the face of the Lord's immediate willingness declared himself unworthy for him to go to his house and said to him, "only say the word and my servant will be healed" (Mt. 8:8). One word from Christ was enough for him to have a sure hope in the salvation He had wrought.

Faith enabled the centurion to understand that what arouses hope in God's word is that it is, indeed, a word of God, that is, the word that He who makes all things personally addresses our need for salvation and eternal life. Peter

also understood this at a time that could have been one of despair because everyone had abandoned the Lord and only a few awkward and insecure disciples remained with Him, "Lord, to whom can we go? You have the words of eternal life" (Jn. 6:68). The words of Jesus remained for Peter and his companions as the last thread of hope in a fullness of life they could only hope for from God.

But why and how could Peter's hope, like that of the centurion, cling to the word of Christ? What gives the word of the Lord this power, this solidity whereby we can surrender to it with the full weight of our lives in danger of sliding into despair, death, nothingness? What enables

those who hear this word to recognize that we can surrender to the One who speaks it with total confidence?

This is possible if the word of the Lord reaches the heart not as a promise of something but as a promise of someone, and of someone who loves our lives with an all-powerful love, who can do everything for those who love and trust in Him.

Many abandoned Jesus after the bread of life message in the synagogue at Capernaum, saying, "This teaching is difficult; who can accept it?" (Jn. 6:60). How come Jesus' word was a reason for them to leave when for Peter and the other disciples it was the only reason to stay with Him?

The fact is that the former had heard his word by separating it from its source, Christ himself. Peter and the disciples, on the other hand, could not abstract any word of Jesus from his presence, that is, from their relationship with him, from his friendship.

God's word can be a source of hope if for us God remains the source of the word itself. Only if we hear the word from the voice of the present Word, who looks upon us with love, can it nourish in us an unshakable hope, because it is founded on a presence that never fails. God's word is a promise in which not only the one who promises is faithful, but remains included in the promise itself, because Christ promises us himself. "And behold, I am with you always, until the end of the age." (Mt. 28:20). Jesus' last word, the last promise before he ascends into heaven, is the

promise of himself to our lives, not only at the end of time but every day, every moment of our lives.

This indelible link of God's word with his presence, so radical from the time "the Word became flesh and made his dwelling among us" (Jn. 1:14) until he died on the cross for us, is the sense and promise of the entire Old Testament. As when Psalm 27 cries out to the Lord, "if you are silent to me, I shall be like those who go down to the Pit" (Ps. 27:1). Man has within him the deep, ontological awareness that if God does not speak to him, if God does not create him at every moment with his word, death, the dissolution of life, is inevitable for him, because God creates by saying everything in the Word through whom all things exist (cf. Jn. 1:3).

One can live without listening to the Word who creates him with love, but in this way he or she experiences, as so many do today, an inconsistent life, a dissipated life, escaping from our hands, unable to hold it. Instead, we are given the grace to live by listening, to live ready to listen to the Lord who is constantly at the door of our freedom, knocking and asking to enter. We are granted to live in an infinite friendship by listening to his voice, which calls us to communion with him (cf. Rev. 3:20), thus allowing the Spirit to generate in us and among us a new life, overflowing with hope, not in something, but in God who fulfills the promise of his presence at the very instant his word expresses it.

PASTORAL PROPOSALS

1 PREPARING THE SUNDAY OF THE WORD OF GOD

To actively experience the *Sunday of the Word of God* it is important that preparations extend from the spiritual level (personal and community prayer) to the material level (adequate planning). Indeed, fostering an encounter with God in His Word requires adequate spiritual preparation, calling for openness of heart for those to whom the Word will be proclaimed. Accordingly, preparations for planning the initiative call for starting with individual and communal prayer. Suggestions:

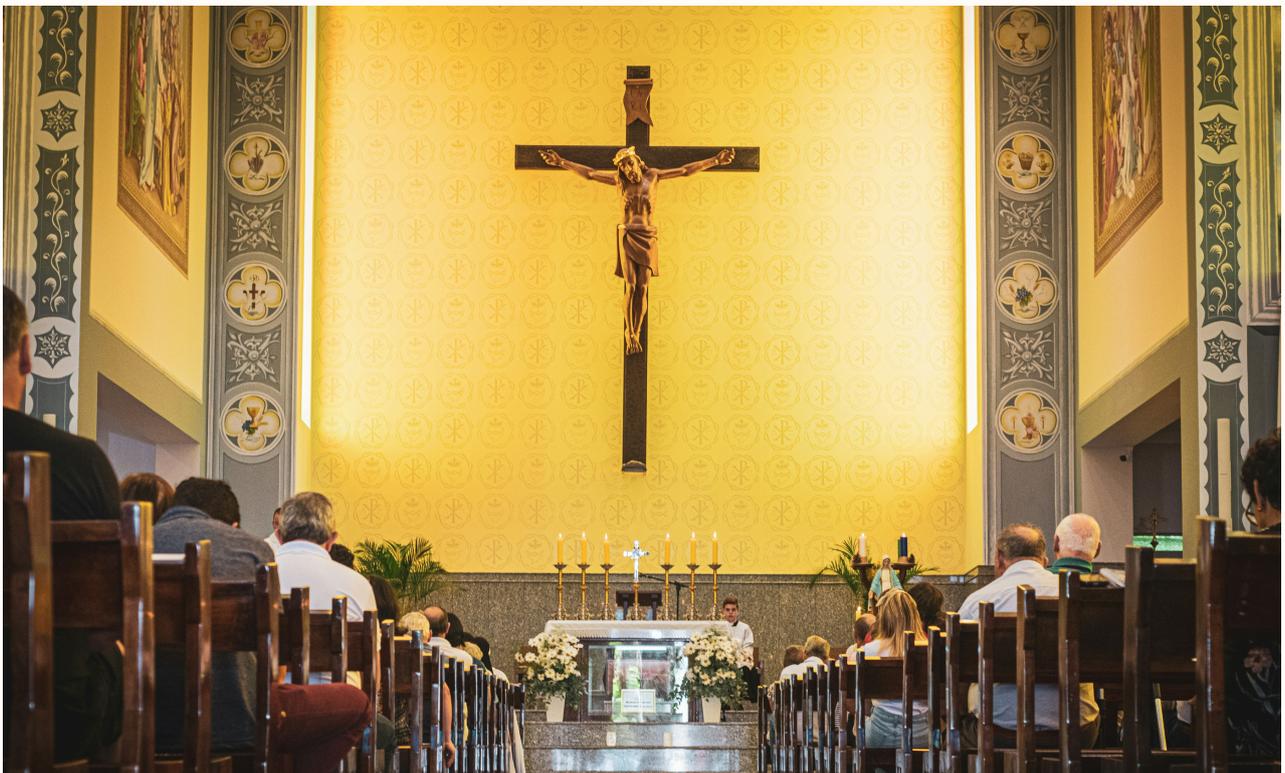
- A week before the *Sunday of the Word of God*, include an intention dedicated to this goal in the prayer of the faithful.
- Provide a time of Adoration of the Blessed Sacrament in the community, offered for the celebration of the *Sunday of the Word of God*.
- Have moments of Biblical Catechesis.



2 LIVING OUT THE SUNDAY OF THE WORD OF GOD

Celebrate this Sunday's Mass in a solemn way. In fact, the most favourable place of encounter between the Christian community and the Word of God is the Eucharistic celebration. The Apostolic Letter *Aperuit illis*, No. 3, outlines some suggestions:

- It will be important that the sacred text can be enthroned in the Eucharistic celebration so that the normative value that the Word of God possesses is made evident to the assembly.
- On this Sunday, especially, it will be helpful to highlight its proclamation and adapt the homily to emphasize the service that is rendered to the Word of the Lord.
- On this Sunday, the Bishops could celebrate the rite of institution of the Ministry of Catechists and also Lector, to recall the importance of the proclamation of the Word of God in the liturgy.
- The parish priests could find ways of distributing the Bible, or one of its books, to the whole assembly so as to bring out the importance of continuing the daily reading, deepening and prayer with Sacred Scripture, with a special emphasis on *lectio divina*.
- Make special reference in the Prayer of the Faithful to Christian unity, since celebrating the *Sunday of the Word of God* expresses ecumenical significance.



3 THROUGHOUT THE WHOLE YEAR

It is important to remember that the carrying out of the program is not the ultimate purpose of this *Sunday*. Rather, we need to foster an ongoing personal and community encounter with the Word of God. We know well that listening, sharing, living and proclaiming the Word of God is not a one-day task, but a task to undertake for our whole life. It might help to promote various Bible initiatives throughout the year and provide an opportunity for ongoing formation of the faithful.

Formation for Lectors

It is essential that church communities engage in training the faithful who carry out the task of lectors in Liturgical Celebrations, so that they may be true proclaimers of the Word with adequate preparation, as is now customary for acolytes or extraordinary ministers of Communion.

Carrying the Word "in your pocket"

Cultivate the habit of always carrying a small Gospel in your pocket or bag, so that you can read it during the day. There are different editions of the New Testament or the Gospels—handy, pocket-sized books that easily fit in our bags or backpacks and that we can always keep with us.

Carrying the Word in your cellphone

One can easily have the Bible in their cell phone to consult it at any time. There are different apps and web sites in different languages, not only with the Bible but also with the Holy Mass readings for each day, pages where to read or listen to the Word of God, pages with commentaries and reflections of the same. One can also use notifications as a reminder to have a moment a day to encounter God's Word so that it accompanies us wherever we go.

Bible Group

A group could be organized in the church community, on a weekly or monthly basis, that organizes formative or cultural moments of in-depth study of Sacred Scripture, and community *Lectio divina* moments. The meetings should be adapted according to the characteristics of the group (age group, spiritual maturity, etc.).

Meditated Rosary

Another source for praying with Scripture is the variety of traditional Catholic prayers, such as the Rosary. It is an evangelical prayer with a distinct Christological orientation, defined by St. John Paul II as a "compendium of the Gospel." In fact, it has an essentially contemplative character, since it leads us into the meditation of the mysteries of the Lord's life, accompanied by the one who was closest to the Lord. To give biblical foundation and greater depth to the meditation, it is helpful if the announcement of the mystery is followed by the proclamation of a corresponding biblical passage. It is appropriate that after the announcing of the mystery and the proclamation of the Word, one should pause for a suitable period of time to fix one's gaze on the meditated mystery, before beginning the vocal prayer.



BIBLICAL ADORATION

Exposition of the Blessed Sacrament

This text is a proposal that should be later concretized and adapted to cultural contexts according to local traditions.

Having gathered the faithful and begun a song, the minister goes to the Tabernacle, takes the Blessed Sacrament and places it in the monstrance. Then, kneeling, he incenses the Blessed Sacrament.

C./ Lord, we contemplate Your real presence in this Blessed Sacrament and thank You for calling us to be before You. We gather together trusting in You and in Your Word. Prepare our minds and hearts to receive the graces You have prepared for us at this time. Make us aware at all times that we are before You and Your infinite love. Open our minds and wills to receive Your Word and proclaim it with our lives.

C./ O Sacrament most Holy, O Sacrament Divine.

R./ All praise and all thanksgiving, be every moment Thine.

"And the Word became flesh and lived among us, and we have seen his glory, the glory as of a father's only son, full of grace and truth." (Jn 1:14)

Our Father, Hail Mary, Glory be ...

C./ O Sacrament most Holy, O Sacrament Divine.

R./ All praise and all thanksgiving, be every moment Thine.

"They said to each other, 'Were not our hearts burning within us while he was talking to us on the road, while he was opening the scriptures to us?'" (Lk. 24:32)

Our Father, Hail Mary, Glory be ...

C./ O Sacrament most Holy, O Sacrament Divine.

R./ All praise and all thanksgiving, be every moment Thine.

"Let the word of Christ dwell in you richly, as in all wisdom you teach and admonish one another, singing psalms, hymns, and spiritual songs with gratitude in your hearts to God. And whatever you do, in word or in deed, do everything in the name of the Lord Jesus, giving thanks to God the Father through him." (Col 3:16-17)

Our Father, Hail Mary, Glory be ...

L./ Let us listen and embrace the Word of God, always alive and effective. Let it resonate within us and enlighten our lives.

Gospel Acclamation

Alleluia, alleluia.

Lord Jesus, help us understand the Scriptures;
set our hearts on fire as you speak to us. (cf. Lk. 24:32)

Alleluia.

From the Holy Gospel according to John (15:1-5, 9-11)

"I am the true vine, and my Father is the vine grower. He takes away every branch in me that does not bear fruit, and every one that does he prunes so that it bears more fruit. You are already pruned because of the word that I spoke to you. Remain in me, as I remain in you. Just as a branch cannot bear fruit on its own unless it remains on the vine, so neither can you unless you remain in me. I am the vine, you are the branches. Whoever remains in me and I in him will bear much fruit, because without me you can do nothing. As the Father loves me, so I also love you. Remain in my love. If you keep my commandments, you will remain in my love, just as I have kept my Father's commandments and remain in his love. "I have told you this so that my joy may be in you and your joy may be complete."

The Gospel of the Lord.

Guided Reflection:

L./ As part of the *Sunday of the Word of God*, we celebrate this moment of adoration, inspired this year by the text: "*The word of Christ dwells among you*" (Col 3:16). Before Jesus in the Eucharist, we reflect:

1. In Jesus, the invisible God has made Himself seen and heard. How many words and actions of Jesus the apostles were able to hear and witness! Many of these have been recorded in the Gospels, in which we can contemplate Jesus through His Word. Jesus continues to speak to us and continues to move in our lives.

(A moment of silence after each point)

2. Jesus touched the hearts of many who encountered Him in the Gospel. They understood that having a relationship of friendship with Jesus involves trusting His word, recognizing that only He has the words of eternal life (cf. Jn 6:68). "Christ is the 'eternal Gospel' (Rev 14:6); he 'is the same yesterday and today and forever' (Heb 13:8), yet his riches and beauty are inexhaustible. He is for ever young and a constant source of newness. The Church never fails to be amazed at 'the depth of the riches and wisdom and knowledge of God' (Rom 11:33)" (*Evangelii Gaudium*, 11).

3. "Let the word of Christ dwell among you in all its richness"—this is the invitation we receive today from the Apostle Paul. At the beginning of his pontificate, Pope Leo XIV invited us all: "Look to Christ! Come closer to him! Welcome his word that enlightens and consoles!" (Homily of 18 May 2025). Let us allow Him to address His Word to us today. His words are always loving and transforming: "Only say the word," as the Roman centurion said. Just one word! He had a word for Levi at that table; one for Zacchaeus on that sycamore tree; one for Peter, James, and John by the sea; one for Mary outside the tomb... He has one for us as well. Let us allow Him to speak to our hearts and let us remain and dwell in His Word.

4. Let us listen again to the words of our Pope Leo XIV: "Today, very often, we lose the ability to listen—truly to listen. We forget to listen to our hearts, and it is in our hearts that God speaks to us, that God calls us and invites us to know Him better and to live in His love. May the Blessed Virgin Mary, Mother of God and the womb in which the Word of God became flesh, teach us the art of listening, strengthen us in obedience to His Word, and guide us to magnify the Lord (cf. Lk 1:46)." (Pope Leo XIV, Speeches from 5 July 2025 and 17 November 2025)

Personal Prayer

At this moment, the faithful may be given the biblical quotation from Col 3:16 ("The word of Christ dwells among you") printed on cards to assist in personal prayer. The silence may be accompanied by suitable music.

Prayerful silence

Hymn

Community Prayer

L./ You who were contemplated by the shepherds and magi in Bethlehem...

R./ Let me discover you in my life, Lord. (cf. Mt. 2:11)

L./ You who showed Your glory on Tabor...

R./ Let me enjoy the joys of each day, Lord. (cf. Mt. 17:1ff)

L./ You who called Your disciples to the lake shore...

R./ Let me also hear your call, Lord. (cf. Mt. 4:18-22)

L./ You who saw the resourcefulness of Zacchaeus...

R./ Let me offer you my efforts, Lord. (cf. Lk. 19:1ff)

L./ You who by touching the deaf showed them your closeness...

R./ Let me receive your Word. (cf. Mk. 7:33)

L./ You who changed the whole perspective of Matthew's life...

R./ Fill my life with meaning, Lord. (cf. Mt. 9:9-13)

L./ You who, turning toward Lazarus, brought him back to life...

R./ Encourage my fervour and desire for holiness, Lord. (cf. Jn. 11:1ff)

L./ You who, explaining the scriptures to your disciples along the way, turned their sadness into joy...

R./ Enkindle in us a love for your Word and the certainty of your presence. (cf. Lk. 24:13-35)

Hymn

Our Father

C./ We thank you Lord because you are always near us, especially in the Eucharist and in your Word. At all times we want to turn to You, Word of Eternal Life, to welcome You with faith and simplicity, to share You with others with enthusiasm, to live Your Word in daily life and to proclaim You with courage. With the confidence of sons and daughters and in your own words we dare to say: *Our Father...*

Benediction

At the end of adoration, the priest or deacon goes to the altar; Tantum ergo or another appropriate hymn is sung. Meanwhile, kneeling, the minister incenses the Blessed Sacrament. Then he rises and says:

Let us pray.

Lord Jesus Christ,
who in the wondrous sacrament of the Eucharist
you have left us the memorial of your Passover,
help us adore with living faith
the holy mystery of your body and blood,
that we may always feel in ourselves the benefits of redemption.
You who live and reign forever and ever.

R./ Amen.

Having said the prayer, the priest or deacon puts on the white humeral veil, takes the monstrance or pyx and makes the sign of the cross over the people with the Blessed Sacrament, without saying anything.

The Divine Praises

If deemed appropriate, according to local custom, the Divine Praises may be said after the Eucharistic blessing:

Blessed be God.
Blessed be His Holy Name.
Blessed be Jesus Christ, true God and true man.
Blessed be the name of Jesus.
Blessed be His Most Sacred Heart.
Blessed be His Most Precious Blood.
Blessed be Jesus in the Most Holy Sacrament of the Altar.
Blessed be the Holy Spirit, the Paraclete.
Blessed be the great Mother of God, Mary most holy.
Blessed be her holy and Immaculate Conception.
Blessed be her glorious Assumption.
Blessed be the name of Mary, Virgin and Mother.
Blessed be Saint Joseph, her most chaste spouse.
Blessed be God in His angels and in His Saints.

Reposition

When the blessing is over, the priest or deacon who gave the blessing, or another priest or deacon, places the Blessed Sacrament back in the tabernacle and genuflects.

10 And do not increase their burden upon them.
11 Once God has spoken, twice I have heard that Thou art God.
12 That lovingkindness is Thine, O Lord, and Thou dost recompense a man according to his work.

PSALM 63

Thirst for God

A Psalm of David, when he was in the wilderness of Judah.

1 O GOD, ¹Thou art my God; I shall seek Thee ²earnestly; ³My soul ⁴thirsts for Thee, my flesh ⁵yearns for Thee, my heart ⁶is parched like dry ground, my eyes are weary from seeking Thee, O my God, in the sanctuary.
2 Thus I have beheld Thee in the sanctuary, because Thy power and Thy glory have filled Thy temple.
3 Because Thy lovingkindness is better than life, my lips will praise Thee, O Lord.
4 My lips will bless Thee as long as I live, and my tongue will praise Thee, O Lord, all day long.
5 My soul is satisfied as with marrow and fatness, and my mouth will praise Thee, O Lord, all day long.

10 And do not increase their burden upon them.
11 Once God has spoken, twice I have heard that Thou art God.
12 That lovingkindness is Thine, O Lord, and Thou dost recompense a man according to his work.
13 O God, my God, I shall seek Thee earnestly.
14 My soul thirsts for Thee, my heart is parched like dry ground.
15 My eyes are weary from seeking Thee, O my God, in the sanctuary.
16 Thus I have beheld Thee in the sanctuary, because Thy power and Thy glory have filled Thy temple.
17 Because Thy lovingkindness is better than life, my lips will praise Thee, O Lord.
18 My lips will bless Thee as long as I live, and my tongue will praise Thee, O Lord, all day long.
19 My soul is satisfied as with marrow and fatness, and my mouth will praise Thee, O Lord, all day long.

4 To shoot from concealment at the blameless, suddenly they shoot at him, and he is not afraid.
5 They hold fast to themselves in secret purpose; they talk of laying snares secretly, they say, "Who can see them?"
6 They devise injustices, saying, "We are ready with a well-conceived plot"; for the inward thought and the heart of a man are deep.
7 But God will shoot at them with an arrow; suddenly they will be wounded, so they will make him stumble; their own tongue is against them; all who see them will shake the head.
8 Then all men will fear, and will declare the work of God, who has made them feared.

OUTLINE FOR THE EUCHARISTIC CELEBRATION

Some liturgical suggestions for the Celebration of the Mass are proposed, however, and at the discretion of the local bishop and the pastor, other gestures may be introduced that emphasize the importance of the Word of God in the celebrating community - in accordance with the current liturgical directions regarding the celebration of the Eucharist.

The ambo may be adorned and the lit Easter candle placed beside it. Next to the altar, or the ambo, or in another specially prepared place (e.g. a chapel), prepare a place visible to the whole assembly, elevated and adorned, where the sacred text can be placed. On another table, arrange the Bibles that will be given to the different representatives of the parish community.

It should be understood that, in the Mass, the table of the Word of God and the Body of Christ is prepared. The ambo is connected to the altar in that the Word announced from the ambo becomes "flesh" on the altar. One can, rightly, speak of "two tables": that of the Word and that of the Eucharist.

Mass begins as usual - if possible, with the solemn procession with the censer, the incense boat, the cross and the candles, and carrying the Book of the Gospels according to the liturgical customs of the Roman Church. The deacon (in his absence, the presbyter may perform the same sign) processionaly carries the Book of the Gospels, holding it somewhat elevated, if possible also accompanied by two lit candles. Upon reaching the chancel, the Book of the Gospels is placed on the altar in the centre.

Being placed on the altar gives the Book of the Gospels an exceptional honor. Since the altar is Christ himself, only the Eucharist and the Book of the Gospels enjoy the privilege of being placed on it. This placement is equivalent to an enthronement and to the exposition of the Blessed Sacrament. This gesture, reserved for the sacred text, is meant to express the inner disposition of the faithful: the Word of God comes and takes the central place in the assembly.

After the initial greeting the penitential act is introduced with these or similar words:

C./ Today the Church is celebrating the Sunday of the Word of God. It is a Sunday "devoted to the celebration, study and dissemination of the word of God" (Aperuit Illis, 3). Let us open our minds and hearts to welcome the Word that is "a lamp for [our] feet, a light for [our] path" (cf. Ps. 118:105). God, through his Word, desires to reveal himself and dwell in our beings. So that we may welcome his presence during this celebration, let us acknowledge that we are sinners and confidently invoke God's mercy.

PENITENTIAL ACT

The penitential act follows, which could be the following:

C./ Lord, you are the Word of God made flesh, *Kyrie eleison*

R./ *Kyrie eleison*

C./ Christ, you restore sight to the blind by the power of your word, *Christe eleison*

R./ *Christe eleison*

C./ Lord, you free our lives from sin, *Kyrie eleison*

R./ *Kyrie eleison*

C./ May Almighty God have mercy on us, forgive us our sins and bring us to everlasting life.

R./ Amen.

The Gloria is sung and then the Liturgy of the Word begins as usual.

LITURGY OF THE WORD

Since proclaiming the Word takes on the value of a salvific event in which salvation history is made present, great care should be taken in proclaiming the Word of God. It is not a mere reading of the text, but rather the proclamation of a presence; it is God who makes known his saving work. Thus, the reader is the primary mediator of God's Word, the one who must help the liturgical assembly to receive its message and to guard it in order to translate it into life.

The Lectionary is the liturgical book that collects all of the Word of God proclaimed in the Eucharistic celebrations. The Lectionary should therefore be dignified, decorated and beautiful, capable of evoking the sense of God speaking to His people. For this reason, substitute pastoral aids, such as "pamphlets," are not suitable for the proclamation of the Word of God; they should be intended for the faithful only for personal preparation and meditation on the readings. The liturgical book itself, should be like the epiphany of God's beauty in the midst of his people.

For the proclamation of the Gospel, the Book of the Gospels is taken from the altar to the ambo in procession, where it is incensed. During the "Gospel Acclamation" the incense-bearer goes to the seat, for the infusion of incense; he will then go, with the deacon or president, to the ambo for incensing and for the proclamation. It would be good to proclaim the initial greeting and proclamation, "A reading from the holy Gospel..." (and the final one, "The Gospel of the Lord") in song to emphasize the importance of what is being read. If the celebration is presided over by the bishop, at the end of the proclamation, the presbyter or deacon will bring the Book of the Gospels for the bishop to kiss. It is good that on this occasion the celebrant also imparts the blessing to the people.

“When the Sacred Scriptures are read in the Church, God himself speaks to his people, and Christ, present in his own word, proclaims the Gospel” (General Instruction of the Roman Missal, No. 29). When the presbyter or deacon takes up the Book of the Gospels from the altar, it is meant to signify that the following words being read are not their own, but those of Jesus, Lord of history and of the Church. The proclamation of the Gospel should be given the utmost attention; for this reason, it is good to precede it with incensation.

ENTHRONEMENT OF THE WORD OF GOD

At the end of the reading of the Gospel the minister kisses the sacred text and then takes it in procession to the throne, where it is placed, opened and incensed. The throne can have candles, flowers or plant pots.

A commentator explains the gesture with these or similar words:

The book containing the Word of God is solemnly carried and placed on the throne. It is a symbolic gesture in which we not only raise the Holy Scripture in the midst of our praying community, but it also expresses our willingness to put it first in our lives. Thus, the Word of God becomes the beacon of our lives that illuminates our decisions and inspires our actions according to God's will.

During the great Ecumenical Councils, the tradition arose of laying the Book of the Gospels on a small throne, to accentuate the primacy of the Word of God. This also happened at the Second Vatican Council.

HOMILY

HANDING OUT THE BIBLE

At the end of the homily, the Bible (or one of its books such as, for example, one of the Gospels) may be handed out to all those present (or only to some). After a brief moment of meditative silence, the celebrant says the introduction:

C./ Beloved, the evangelist John reminds us, “[T]his is eternal life, that they should know you, the only true God, and the one whom you sent, Jesus Christ.” (Jn. 17:3). We too, want to know God who has revealed himself through his Word. Therefore, we want to receive the Word, feeling the importance of its daily reading, in order to live more and more united with Christ Jesus. For this we now address our prayer to God.

After a brief moment of silent prayer, the celebrant, with arms extended, recites:

C./ Father of light,
We praise you and bless you
For all the signs of your love.
You have made these children of yours to be born again
By water and the Holy Spirit
In the womb of Mother Church
And now you call them to listen and proclaim the Word that saves.

May Jesus Christ who is your Word made man,
Lead them to the knowledge of the mystery
That is concealed from the learned and the intelligent
And revealed to little ones.

Grant that they may open their hearts
To understand the meaning of the Holy Scriptures.
Let them become living witnesses to the Gospel,
Which they will read from these books.
May Mary, Mother of Wisdom, intercede for them,
Who first received into her womb
The Word made flesh.

May your Holy Spirit grant each of us
The grace to collaborate in simplicity and joy
For the proclamation of your Word, to the glory of your name.
Through Christ our Lord.

R./ Amen.

The celebrant goes to the table where the texts to be handed out are arranged, takes them and distributes them to the faithful. As he hands over the text, he says:

C./ Receive the Holy Scriptures, read, proclaim and witness to God's Word with joy.

The response:

R./ Amen.

After the distribution of the texts is finished, the Mass proceeds as usual with the Creed and the Prayer of the Faithful.

Handing out the Bible to the faithful becomes an act of entrustment, in which the Word of God surrenders itself into the hands of man, who henceforth is responsible for receiving and passing it on. To pass it on, one must first receive it. Otherwise, one becomes a "futile preacher outwardly of God's word, who isn't also inwardly a listener." (Saint Augustine, Sermon 179,1).

PRAYER OF THE FAITHFUL

The following prayer of the faithful could be used, modifying it according to the needs of the community:

C./ Dear brothers and sisters, gathered together to celebrate the mysteries of our redemption, we beseech Almighty God, that through his Word, our path to holiness may be renewed. Let us pray together and say: **Make us, O Lord, heralds of your Word!**

1. For the Pope, bishops and priests, that they may love the Word of God more and more each day and, meditating on it deeply, may joyfully share it with the people entrusted to them. We pray to the Lord.
2. For the readers and catechists who will receive their ministry today, that as they deepen their understanding of the Word of God each day, they may be configured with it and convey it by the witness of their lives. We pray to the Lord.
3. For parents, so that enlightened and strengthened by God's Word, they may have the wisdom to guide their children, passing on faith in Christ to them. We pray to the Lord.
4. For the entire Christian community listening to God gathered around his Word, that it may grow in unity and bear authentic witness to God's love. We pray to the Lord.
5. For the Church, called to be united in Christ, that in listening to Sacred Scripture it may discover the path to an authentic and stable unity. We pray to the Lord.
6. For each of us that we may open our hearts to the Word of God and thus work together every day to build peace. We pray to the Lord.

C./ Hear O merciful Father, these prayers which we offer you in faith through your Son, the Word made flesh, who lives and reigns forever and ever. Amen

Holy Mass continues as usual.

SOLEMN BENEDICTION

The priest extends his hands and says:

C./ May God, who has revealed his truth and charity in Christ, make you apostles of the Gospel and witnesses of his love in the world.

R./ Amen.

C./ May the Lord Jesus, who promised his Church to be present until the end of the ages, guide your steps and strengthen your words.

R./ Amen.

C./ May the Spirit of the Lord be upon you, that as you walk the streets of the world you may evangelize the poor and heal the contrite of heart.

R./ Amen.

Bless all present saying:

C./ And upon all you here present, May the blessing of almighty God, the Father, and the Son, + and the Holy Spirit come down on you and remain with you forever.

R./ Amen.



THE WORD OF CHRIST DWELLS AMONG YOU

(Col 3:16)

25 JANUARY 2026



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