

ENTHRONEMENT OF THE BIBLE IN THE FAMILY

During lockdown

Sunday, 24 January 2021

"The Church has always venerated the divine Scriptures as she venerated the Body of the Lord: both nourish and govern the whole Christian life." (Catechism of the Catholic Church 141).

Bible Enthronement is an old liturgical celebration of the Word of God. It started in the early Church but was lost along the way. During Vatican II, the Bible was solemnly enthroned every morning at the opening of the sessions. Since then, it has become common that most Church gatherings such as retreats, congresses, and chapters begin with Bible Enthronement.



This old tradition can also be done in our homes. This is more appropriate this year since in Zimbabwe due to the Covid-19 pandemic we will be in lockdown and cannot celebrate the Sunday of the Word of God as a community in our parishes. To mark this special day, Sunday of the Word of God, we suggest to have the Bible Enthronement ceremony as a family.

1. Aim of the Enthronement of the Bible

The aim of enthroning the Bible, the Word of God, in the family is to show that God is at the centre of our life. By placing the Bible in a visible and prominent decorated place at home and gathering at the Bible corner daily for prayer, the family shows that God is present and active through His Word in their life.

2. To celebrate the service of Bible enthronement in the family, prepare the following.

- i. A Bible
- ii. A shelf or table where the Bible will be placed
- iii. A cloth
- iv. A candle
- v. And / or Flowers in a vase, crucifix
- vi. Ndebele Hymns: 231, 248, 249, 255. Shona Hymns: 74, 171, 842, 892, 895

Depending on the size of the family, assign the following duties

- i. Leader of the ceremony – preferably head of the family
- ii. A Reader – Mk 1:14-20. (The reader should practice reading the text before the ceremony starts).

- iii. A person to carry the Bible
- iv. Those to carry a flower vase, a candle.

If the space in your home is big, you may begin with a procession from outside the house each one carrying symbols to be put in the Bible corner. The first person carries a lit candle, the other a cloth, and the other flowers. The opened Bible is the last in the procession.

If the place in the house is small, everything except the Bible is placed in the Bible corner and all the family members sit preferably in a circle.

3. The Ritual

When possible, with the family gathered outside the room or house.

1. Introduction by leader

We gather here in our home as a family on this special Sunday of the Word of God in order to honour the Word of God since it is the centre of our life as a family. We will enthrone the Bible, that is, we will give the Bible a central and place of honour in our home so that it may be for us a constant reminder to seek God's Word, to learn from its saving truth, and to apply it to our lives.

Opening Prayer:

Let us pray: Ever living God, we long for your presence and we thirst for your word. Send your Holy Spirit so that the Bible can be for us a source of spiritual growth and strength. Give us a deep love for the Sacred Scriptures so that we may know your truth, grow in love for you, and follow your way more faithfully. Amen.

Opening litany

Leader: Our Lord Jesus Christ, you are the Word of the Father.

Response: Come, Lord Jesus, come.

Leader: You became one with us to tell of the Father's love.

Response: Come, Lord Jesus, come.

Leader: You are the light that shines in the darkness.

Response: Come, Lord Jesus, come.

Leader: You save us from fear and break the bonds of sin and death.

Response: Come, Lord Jesus, come.

Leader: You come to guide our steps and lead us to God.

Response: Come, Lord Jesus, come.

Leader: You are the Word of eternal life.

Response: Come, Lord Jesus, come.

Leader: You fill us with the Holy Spirit.

Response: Come, Lord Jesus, come.

2. Procession

The family then enters singing a Bible related song. Bible corner symbols are placed in their place – the cloth, a lit candle, flowers. The Bible is placed open facing the people in the room. All bow as the Bible is being enthroned.

3. Reading

The reader then goes forward, bows and take the bible and reads the Gospel reading of the Day, Mk 1:14-20. (step number 3 can be replaced with *Lectio Divina*).

After reading, he or she places the Bible back in its place and all bow before the enthroned Bible.

A brief moment of silence follows as the family members reflect on the Word of God they have listened to.

4. Bible sharing

Family members may share what touched them from the reading. This is not meant to be a homily but what the word says to each person.

5. Prayers of the Faithful as a family

Leader: Having been enlightened by God's Word, let us bring our needs before the Author of all Truth:

- For the Church, that we may continue to respond to the word of God which is proclaimed in our midst, we pray to the Lord.
- For all who listen as the Scriptures are proclaimed, that God's word may find in them a fruitful field, we pray to the Lord.
- For those who have not heard the message of Christ, that we may be willing to bring them the good news of salvation, we pray to the Lord.
- For our family that we may be united in Christ and in love, we pray to the Lord.
- For those who suffer from Covid-19 and for those who care for them, we pray to the Lord.

Each of the family members approaches the Bible and places his / her hand/s on the open pages of the Bible, and prays a silent personal prayer.

- **Leader:** God of eternal love and light, You have given us Jesus as your incarnate Word. Hear our humble prayers and grant us the grace and courage to proclaim your Gospel. Through Christ our Lord. Amen.

Our Father...

Hail Mary...

Glory be...

6. Commitment to the Word of God

Together, repeating after the Leader

We promise to respect the Word of God in our midst.

We shall read and reflect on it as a family of God.

May we draw from it inspiration for our decisions, strength for our work, and comfort in suffering.

Jesus, help us to be faithful to our promise, you who live forever and ever.

7. Closing Prayer

Let us pray: Lord Jesus Christ, Word of the Father, we praise and worship for this special time you have given us as a family to listen to you. May you feel our family with your love, unite us and make us to rely on your Word, you who live and reign with the Father and the Holy Spirit for ever and ever. Amen.



Thanksgiving Song.

Compiled from different resources provided by the Catholic Biblical Federation for the Sunday of the Word of God by:

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