

Sunday of the Word of God

This Third Sunday in ordinary time is celebrated as the Word of God Sunday. Pope Francis established this special day in his Apostolic Letter, 'Motu proprio, Aperuit Illis' which was issued on September 30, 2019. Our Holy Father instituted this annual celebration to bring us to deepen our love and devotion to God's Word and allow it to guide and transform our lives

In the first reading, the book of Nehemiah tells us how the people of Israel treasured the Word of God in their lives. After returning from exile in Babylon to their home city of Jerusalem, the chosen people began to rebuild their lives and renew their covenant relationship with God. Ezra the priest, and Nehemiah the governor, were key players in this spiritual and physical rebuilding and restoration.

Ezra gathered a solemn assembly consisting of women, men, and children able to understand sacred scriptures. He read from the book of the law of Moses, (Torah) to the people from morning to midday. The whole assembly listened attentively as God's Word was proclaimed and interpreted to them. The people were moved to tears. They raised their hands in the air and responded, "Amen, Amen", They bowed down and prostrated themselves in reverence to God's Word. Ezra dismissed the people with the encouraging words: "Rejoicing in the Lord must be your strength". The responsorial psalm highlights the beauty, and the transformative power God's word revealed in the law. It reminds us that God's law revives us, gives us wisdom, and brings joy to our hearts. In the gospel, Jesus read from the scroll of the prophet Isaiah in the synagogue of Nazareth. Jesus declared that the text is fulfilled in the hearing of His listeners. He referred the passage to Himself. He announced His mission to bring good news to the poor, to proclaim liberty to captives, and proclaim the Lord's year of favor.

Each of us share in the mission of Christ. We are called to bring love, compassion, freedom and comfort to those burdened by the cares of life. We are called to the hand and feet of Christ, to be kind and helpful to all those in need.

In the second reading, Saint Paul uses the human body with its different parts to emphasize the beauty and importance of unity and diversity within the Christian community. Saint Paul urges us to be united in the same mind and purpose and use our different gifts to serve the good and benefit of one another and the wider community.

As we gather around the table of the Lord to celebrate the Eucharist, let us remember our shared identity in Christ. Let us thank the Lord for guiding our lives with His transforming Word and ask Him to nourish our faith and strengthen us in the bond of love and service to His church and one another.

God bless,

Fr. Dr. Ben