



BIBLE SUNDAY 2014: HOMILY NOTES

Second Sunday of Advent - 7th December 2014

Today is Catholic Bible Sunday and it is themed: **Hear, Reflect, Proclaim.** Bible Sunday reminds us each year of the gift of the Word of God, God's Word in human language, recorded for us in the pages of the Holy Scriptures, proclaimed in our Liturgy and available for prayer and reflection day-by-day.

We know and experience being fed by God's Word and Sacrament at Mass. Christ the Word teaches us. Christ our Eucharist nourishes us.

Catholic Bible Sunday reminds us to hear, to be attentive to God's Word through reading and reflecting on the Scriptures in our homes daily. It reminds us too to seek ways of proclaiming that life-giving Word to everyone that we meet.

How appropriate then that we begin reading the Gospel of Mark on this day! Mark's Gospel opens with faith-statements about Jesus. He is the Christ. He is the Son of God.

The evangelist continues by pointing to the fulfilment of words from the Book of Isaiah already proclaimed in our first reading. The people who lived in exile are assured of liberation and return. Those longing for the promised Messiah learn that God is preparing the way for him.

It is John the Baptist who announces the fulfilment of the promise, and the forgiveness of sin. His words are confirmed by the symbolic action of baptising people in the Jordan. A new start is announced for them, and for us.

In this time of Advent, John reminds us of the need for preparation. John has prepared for his ministry by penance and by listening to God's Word. He knows that God's promise is soon-to-be fulfilled. He foresees the coming of one who is stronger than he is, one who will baptise with the Holy Spirit.

John teaches us openness to God's Word, and the need to be fed by the true values of the gospel. The slow process of grace works deeply in our hearts through listening and through prayer. Preparing the way for the Lord requires courage and reliance on God's power. Yearning for his 'new heavens and new earth' will bring a new perspective to our lives this Advent.

Pope Emeritus Benedict wrote in a Church teaching document called *Verbum Domini*: 'We need to make every effort to share the Word of God as an openness to our problems, a response to our questions, a broadening of our values and the fulfilment of our aspirations.' (23)

May the Word of God bring peace to our world and to our hearts today. May we seek every opportunity to **hear, reflect and proclaim** God's Word day-by-day.

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For additional resources in support of Catholic Bible Sunday please see: www.thewordofthelord.co.uk