

Homily Ideas for **Catholic Bible Sunday, 9th December 2012**

- Each year during Advent, our cycle of prayer invites us to pray for **Openness to God's Word**. It's for this reason that the 2nd Sunday of Advent is marked out in the liturgical calendar for particular reflection on the gift of the Bible. Other denominations also celebrate 'Bible Sunday' though their celebrations may occur at different times in the year.
- Bishop Kieran Conry, Chair of the Bishops' Conference Department for Evangelisation and Catechesis has issued an invitation to us on this day of celebrating Scripture, to **reflect deeply on the part the Bible plays in our lives**:
 - Do we own a Bible?
 - Do we know where it is?
 - Do we make time to read it prayerfully daily?
 - Are we open to God speaking to us through it?
- In this **Year of Faith**, there is an opportunity to truly give thanks to God for His Word. Over the millenia, the Holy Spirit has enabled communities and individuals to encounter God through reading and praying with the Bible texts. One of the aims of this year's Bible Sunday therefore, is to encourage everyone to deepen their knowledge of the Bible and also to use it in the service of the mission of the Church.
- **Statistics from research** commissioned by Bible Society in 2010 showed that 25% of adults in England and Wales said they wouldn't know where to start with reading the Bible; less than 40% of adults under 45 said they own a copy of the Scriptures; and just 12% of adults in the general population read or listen to the Bible at least once a month.
(Bible Engagement Report' research conducted by Christian Research conducting 1,018 street interviews amongst general population)
- In the recent Apostolic Exhortation, Verbum Domini, **Pope Benedict XVI writes**:
I express my heartfelt hope for the flowering of "a new season of greater love for sacred Scripture on the part of every member of the People of God, so that their prayerful and faith-filled reading of the bible will, with time, deepen their personal relationship with Jesus." Verbum Domini §72
- As a **practical response** to today's celebration of the Bible, we are being invited to consider one of the following:
 - Sharing the word, by **including a Bible verse in our Christmas cards**. Such as Isaiah 9:2 *'The people that walked in darkness have seen a great light.'* There are more suggestions of other verses you might use at www.catholicbiblesunday.org
 - **Giving a Bible** at Christmas as a gift.
 - If you are somebody who uses social media, try following the daily **Year of Faith Twitter Feed** (@YoFtweets), to be taken on a journey through the Vatican II documents, Scripture and Church Teaching. This is also something we can encourage others to follow - especially our young people.
- The website **www.catholicbiblesunday.org** has a downloadable document with links to numerous resources that may aid our reading of the Bible. Please do take a look at them in the year ahead.