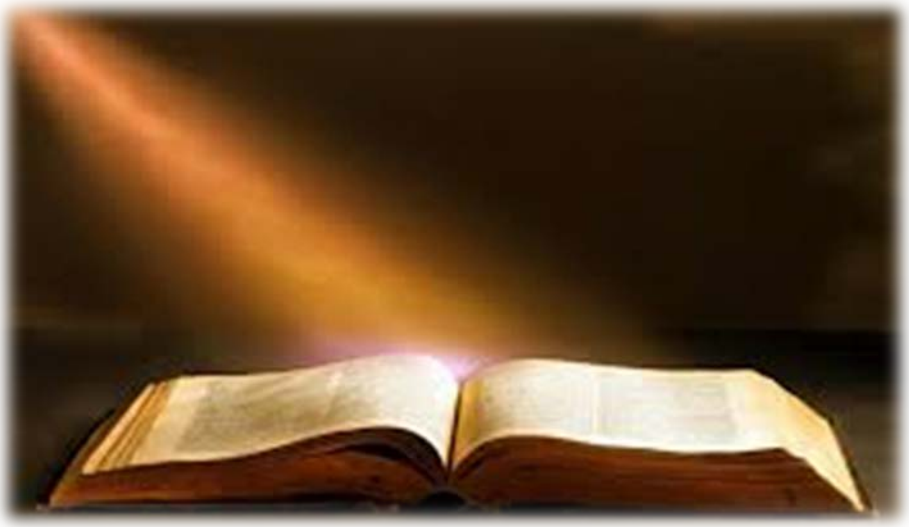
RESOURCES
FOR THE
SUNDAY OF THE WORD OF GOD



Third Sunday in Ordinary Time (Year A)

January 26, 2020

Courtesy of the
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Washington, DC

CONTENTS

Introduction	3
Apostolic Letter *Aperuit Illis*:	4
Readings for the Third Sunday in Ordinary Time	11
Pastoral Suggestions	15
Universal Prayer – Sample Intercessions	16
Music Suggestions	17
Related Documents and Texts / Articles	18
Outline: The Lectionary for Mass	19

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INTRODUCTION

On September 30, 2019, on the liturgical memorial of St. Jerome, Pope Francis announced that the Third Sunday in Ordinary Time would be celebrated as the Sunday of the Word of God. The inspiring full text of his Apostolic Letter, "*Aperuit illis:* Instituting the Sunday of the Word of God" is contained herein. In its inaugural year, this Sunday will fall on January 26, 2020.

In the *Introduction to the Lectionary for Mass*, we are reminded of the role of the Word of God in the life of the Church:

> In the hearing of God's word the Church is built up and grows, and in the signs of the liturgical celebration God's wonderful, past works in the history of salvation are presented anew as mysterious realities. God in turn makes use of the congregation of the faithful that celebrates the Liturgy in order that his word may speed on and be glorified and that his name be exalted among the nations.
>
> Whenever, therefore, the Church, gathered by the Holy Spirit for liturgical celebration, announces and proclaims the word of God, she is aware of being a new people in whom the covenant made in the past is perfected and fulfilled. Baptism and confirmation in the Spirit have made all Christ's faithful into messengers of God's word because of the grace of hearing they have received. They must therefore be the bearers of the same word in the Church and in the world, at least by the witness of their lives.
>
> The word of God proclaimed in the celebration of God's mysteries does not only address present conditions but looks back to past events and forward to what is yet to come. Thus God's word shows us what we should hope for with such a longing that in this changing world our hearts will be set on the place where our true joys lie (Preamble, 7).

We are fully aware that in the Dioceses of the United States, many parishes will also focus on the beginning of Catholic Schools Week. This commemoration certainly can be congruous with the Sunday of the Word of God, since all catechesis must "echo down the Word."

The attached pages provide a wide variety of resources to help you, your diocese, and your parishes to celebrate this day more fully.

"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" (Colossians 3:16) ■ RT

APOSTOLIC LETTER
ISSUED "MOTU PROPRIO"

BY THE SUPREME PONTIFF

FRANCIS

"APERUIT ILLIS"

INSTITUTING THE
SUNDAY OF THE WORD OF GOD

1. "He opened their minds to understand the Scriptures" (*Lk* 24:45). This was one of the final acts of the risen Lord before his Ascension. Jesus appeared to the assembled disciples, broke bread with them and opened their minds to the understanding of the sacred Scriptures. To them, amid their fear and bewilderment, he unveiled the meaning of the paschal mystery: that in accordance with the Father's eternal plan he had to suffer and rise from the dead, in order to bring repentance and the forgiveness of sins (cf. *Lk* 24:26.46-47). He then promised to send the Holy Spirit, who would give them strength to be witnesses of this saving mystery (cf. *Lk* 24:49).

The relationship between the Risen Lord, the community of believers and sacred Scripture is essential to our identity as Christians. Without the Lord who opens our minds to them, it is impossible to understand the Scriptures in depth. Yet the contrary is equally true: without the Scriptures, the events of the mission of Jesus and of his Church in this world would remain incomprehensible. Hence, Saint Jerome could rightly claim: "Ignorance of the Scriptures is ignorance of Christ" (*Commentary on the Book of Isaiah*, Prologue: PL 24,17B).

2. At the conclusion of the Extraordinary Jubilee of Mercy, I proposed setting aside "a Sunday given over entirely to the word of God, so as to appreciate the inexhaustible riches contained in that constant dialogue between the Lord and his people" (*Misericordia et Misera*, 7). Devoting a specific Sunday of the liturgical year to the word of God can enable the Church to experience anew how the risen Lord opens up for us the treasury of his word and enables us to proclaim its unfathomable riches before the world. Here, we are reminded of the teaching of Saint Ephrem: "Who is able to understand, Lord, all the richness of even one of your words? There is more that eludes us than what we can understand. We are like the thirsty drinking from a fountain. Your word has as many aspects as the perspectives of those who study it. The Lord has coloured his word with diverse beauties, so that those who study it can contemplate what stirs them. He has hidden in his word all treasures, so that each of us may find a richness in what he or she contemplates" (*Commentary on the Diatessaron*, 1, 18).

With this Letter, I wish to respond to the many requests I have received from the people of God that the entire Church celebrate, in unity of purpose, a Sunday of the Word of God. It is now common for the Christian community to set aside moments to reflect on the great importance of the word of God for everyday living. The various local Churches have undertaken a wealth of initiatives to make the sacred Scripture more accessible to believers, to increase their gratitude for so great a gift, and to help them to strive daily to embody and bear witness to its teachings.

The Second Vatican Council gave great impulse to the rediscovery of the word of God, thanks to its Dogmatic Constitution *Dei Verbum*, a document that deserves to be read and appropriated ever anew. The Constitution clearly expounds the nature of sacred Scripture, its transmission from generation to generation (Chapter II), its divine inspiration (Chapter III) embracing the Old and New Testaments (Chapters IV and V), and the importance of Scripture for the life of the Church (Chapter VI). To advance this teaching, Pope Benedict XVI convoked an Assembly of the Synod of Bishops in 2008 on "The Word of God in the Life and Mission of the Church", and then issued the Apostolic Exhortation *Verbum Domini*, whose teaching remains fundamental for our communities.[1] That document emphasizes in particular the performative character of the Word of God, especially in the context of the liturgy, in which its distinctively sacramental character comes to the fore.[2]

It is fitting, then that the life of our people be constantly marked by this decisive relationship with the living word that the Lord never tires of speaking to his Bride, that she may grow in love and faithful witness.

3. Consequently, I hereby declare that the Third Sunday in Ordinary Time is to be devoted to the celebration, study and dissemination of the word of God. This *Sunday of the Word of God* will thus be a fitting part of that time of the year when we are encouraged to strengthen our bonds with the Jewish people and to pray for Christian unity. This is more than a temporal coincidence: the celebration of the *Sunday of the Word of God* has ecumenical value, since the Scriptures point out, for those who listen, the path to authentic and firm unity.

The various communities will find their own ways to mark this *Sunday* with a certain solemnity. It is important, however, that in the Eucharistic celebration the sacred text be enthroned, in order to focus the attention of the assembly on the normative value of God's word. On this Sunday, it would be particularly appropriate to highlight the proclamation of the word of the Lord and to emphasize in the homily the honour that it is due. Bishops could celebrate the Rite of Installation of Lectors or a similar commissioning of readers, in order to bring out the importance of the proclamation of God's word in the liturgy. In this regard, renewed efforts should be made to provide members of the faithful with the training needed to be genuine proclaimers of the word, as is already the practice in the case of acolytes or extraordinary ministers of Holy Communion. Pastors can also find ways of giving a Bible, or one of its books, to the entire assembly as a way of showing the importance of learning how to read, appreciate and pray daily with sacred Scripture, especially through the practice of *lectio divina*.

4. The return of the people of Israel to their homeland after the Babylonian exile was marked by the public reading of the book of the Law. In the book of Nehemiah, the Bible gives us a moving description of that moment. The people assembled in Jerusalem, in the square before the Water Gate, to listen to the Law. They had been scattered in exile, but now they found themselves gathered "as one" around the sacred Scripture (*Neh* 8:1). The people lent "attentive ears" (*Neh* 8:3) to the reading of the sacred book, realizing that in its words they would discover the meaning of their lived experience. The reaction to the proclamation of was one of great emotion and tears: "[The Levites] read from the book, from the law of God, clearly; and they gave the sense, so that the people understood the reading. And Nehemiah, who was the governor, and Ezra the priest and scribe, and the Levites who taught the people said to all the people, 'This day is holy to the Lord your God; do not mourn or weep'. For all the people wept when they heard the words of the law. Then he said to them, 'Go your way, eat the fat and drink sweet wine and send

portions to him for whom nothing is prepared; for this day is holy to our Lord; and do not be grieved, for the joy of the Lord is your strength'" (*Neh* 8:8-10).

These words contain a great teaching. The Bible cannot be just the heritage of some, much less a collection of books for the benefit of a privileged few. It belongs above all to those called to hear its message and to recognize themselves in its words. At times, there can be a tendency to monopolize the sacred text by restricting it to certain circles or to select groups. It cannot be that way. The Bible is the book of the Lord's people, who, in listening to it, move from dispersion and division towards unity. The word of God unites believers and makes them one people.

5. In this unity born of listening, pastors are primarily responsible for explaining sacred Scripture and helping everyone to understand it. Since it is the people's book, those called to be ministers of the word must feel an urgent need to make it accessible to their community.

The homily, in particular, has a distinctive function, for it possesses "a quasi-sacramental character" (*Evangelii Gaudium*, 142). Helping people to enter more deeply into the word of God through simple and suitable language will allow priests themselves to discover the "beauty of the images used by the Lord to encourage the practice of the good" (ibid.). This is a pastoral opportunity that should not be wasted!

For many of our faithful, in fact, this is the only opportunity they have to grasp the beauty of God's word and to see it applied to their daily lives. Consequently, sufficient time must be devoted to the preparation of the homily. A commentary on the sacred readings cannot be improvised. Those of us who are preachers should not give long, pedantic homilies or wander off into unrelated topics. When we take time to pray and meditate on the sacred text, we can speak from the heart and thus reach the hearts of those who hear us, conveying what is essential and capable of bearing fruit. May we never tire of devoting time and prayer to Scripture, so that it may be received "not as a human word but as what it really is, the word of God" (*1 Thess* 2:13).

Catechists, too, in their ministry of helping people to grow in their faith, ought to feel an urgent need for personal renewal through familiarity with, and study of, the sacred Scriptures. This will help them foster in their hearers a true dialogue with the word of God.

6. Before encountering his disciples, gathered behind closed doors, and opening their minds to the understanding of the Scriptures (cf. *Lk* 24:44-45), the risen Lord appeared to two of them on the road to Emmaus from Jerusalem (cf. *Lk* 24:13-35). Saint Luke's account notes that this happened on the very day of his resurrection, a Sunday. The two disciples were discussing the recent events concerning Jesus' passion and death. Their journey was marked by sorrow and disappointment at his tragic death. They had hoped that he would be the Messiah who would set them free, but they found themselves instead confronted with the scandal of the cross. The risen Lord himself gently draws near and walks with them, yet they do not recognize him (cf. v. 16). Along the way, he questions them, and, seeing that they have not grasped the meaning of his passion and death, he exclaims: "O foolish men, and slow of heart" (v. 25). Then, "beginning with Moses and all the prophets, he interpreted to them the things about himself in all the Scriptures" (v.27). Christ is the first exegete! Not only did the Old Testament foretell what he would accomplish, but he himself wished to be faithful to its words, in order to make manifest the one history of salvation whose fulfilment is found in Christ.

7. The Bible, as sacred Scripture, thus speaks of Christ and proclaims him as the one who had to endure suffering and then enter into his glory (cf. v. 26). Not simply a part, but the whole of Scripture speaks of Christ. Apart from the Scriptures, his death and resurrection cannot be rightly understood. That is why one of the most ancient confessions of faith stressed that "Christ died for our sins in accordance with the Scriptures, that he was buried, that he was raised on the third day in accordance with the Scriptures, and that he appeared to Cephas" (*1Cor*15:3-5). Since the Scriptures everywhere speak of Christ, they enable us to believe that his death and resurrection are not myth but history, and are central to the faith of his disciples.

A profound bond links sacred Scripture and the faith of believers. Since faith comes from hearing, and what is heard is based on the word of Christ (cf. *Rom* 10:17), believers are bound to listen attentively to the word of the Lord, both in the celebration of the liturgy and in their personal prayer and reflection.

8. The journey that the Risen Lord makes with the disciples of Emmaus ended with a meal. The mysterious wayfarer accepts their insistent request: "Stay with us, for it is almost evening and the day is now far spent" (*Lk* 24:29). They sit down at table, and Jesus takes the bread, blesses it, breaks it and offers it to them. At that moment, their eyes are opened, and they recognize him (cf. v. 31).

This scene clearly demonstrates the unbreakable bond between sacred Scripture and the Eucharist. As the Second Vatican Council teaches, "the Church has always venerated the divine Scriptures as she has venerated the Lord's body, in that she never ceases, above all in the sacred liturgy, to partake of the bread of life and to offer it to the faithful from the one table of the word of God and the body of Christ" (*Dei Verbum,* 21).

Regular reading of sacred Scripture and the celebration of the Eucharist make it possible for us to see ourselves as part of one another. As Christians, we are a single people, making our pilgrim way through history, sustained by the Lord, present in our midst, who speaks to us and nourishes us. A day devoted to the Bible should not be seen as a yearly event but rather a year-long event, for we urgently need to grow in our knowledge and love of the Scriptures and of the risen Lord, who continues to speak his word and to break bread in the community of believers. For this reason, we need to develop a closer relationship with sacred Scripture; otherwise, our hearts will remain cold and our eyes shut, struck as we are by so many forms of blindness.

Sacred Scripture and the sacraments are thus inseparable. When the sacraments are introduced and illumined by God's word, they become ever more clearly the goal of a process whereby Christ opens our minds and hearts to acknowledge his saving work. We should always keep in mind the teaching found in the Book of Revelation: the Lord is standing at the door and knocking. If anyone should hear his voice and open for him, he will come in and eat with them (cf. 3:20). Christ Jesus is knocking at our door in the words of sacred Scripture. If we hear his voice and open the doors of our minds and hearts, then he will enter our lives and remain ever with us.

9. In the Second Letter to Timothy, which is in some ways his spiritual testament, Saint Paul urges his faithful co-worker to have constant recourse to sacred Scripture. The Apostle is convinced that "all Scripture is inspired by God and profitable for teaching, for reproof, for correction, and for training in righteousness" (3:16). Paul's exhortation to Timothy is fundamental to the teaching of the conciliar Constitution *Dei Verbum* on the great theme of

biblical inspiration, which emphasizes the Scriptures' *saving purpose*, *spiritual dimension* and inherent *incarnational principle*.

First, recalling Paul's encouragement to Timothy, *Dei Verbum* stresses that "we must acknowledge that the books of Scripture firmly, faithfully and without error, teach that truth which God, for the sake of our salvation, wished to see confided to the sacred Scriptures" (No. 11). Since the Scriptures teach with a view to salvation through faith in Christ (cf. *2 Tim* 3:15), the truths contained therein are profitable for our salvation. The Bible is not a collection of history books or a chronicle, but is aimed entirely at the integral salvation of the person. The evident historical setting of the books of the Bible should not make us overlook their primary goal, which is our salvation. Everything is directed to this purpose and essential to the very nature of the Bible, which takes shape as a history of salvation in which God speaks and acts in order to encounter all men and women and to save them from evil and death.

To achieve this saving purpose, sacred Scripture, by the working of the Holy Spirit, makes human words written in human fashion become the word of God (cf. *Dei Verbum*, 12). The role of the Holy Spirit in the Scriptures is primordial. Without the work of the Spirit, there would always be a risk of remaining limited to the written text alone. This would open the way to a fundamentalist reading, which needs to be avoided, lest we betray the inspired, dynamic and spiritual character of the sacred text. As the Apostle reminds us: "The letter kills, but the Spirit gives life" (*2 Cor* 3:6). The Holy Spirit, then, makes sacred Scripture the living word of God, experienced and handed down in the faith of his holy people.

10. The work of the Holy Spirit has to do not only with the formation of sacred Scripture; it is also operative in those who hear the word of God. The words of the Council Fathers are instructive: sacred Scripture is to be "read and interpreted in the light of the same Spirit through whom it was written" (*Dei Verbum*, 12). God's revelation attains its completion and fullness in Jesus Christ; nonetheless, the Holy Spirit does not cease to act. It would be reductive indeed to restrict the working of the Spirit to the divine inspiration of sacred Scripture and its various human authors. We need to have confidence in the working of the Holy Spirit as he continues in his own way to provide "inspiration" whenever the Church teaches the sacred Scriptures, whenever the Magisterium authentically interprets them (cf. ibid.,10), and whenever each believer makes them the norm of his or her spiritual life. In this sense, we can understand the words spoken by Jesus to his disciples when they told him that they now understood the meaning of his parables: "Every scribe who has been trained for the kingdom of heaven is like a householder who brings out of his treasure what is new and what is old" (*Mt* 13:52).

11. Finally, *Dei Verbum* makes clear that "the words of God, expressed in human language, are in every way like human speech, just as the Word of the eternal Father, in taking upon himself the weak flesh of human beings, also took on their likeness" (No. 13). We can say that the incarnation of the eternal Word gives shape and meaning to the relationship between God's word and our human language, in all its historical and cultural contingency. This event gives rise to Tradition, which is also God's word (cf. ibid., 9). We frequently risk separating sacred Scripture and sacred Tradition, without understanding that together they are the one source of Revelation. The written character of the former takes nothing away from its being fully a living word; in the same way, the Church's living Tradition, which continually hands that word down over the centuries from one generation to the next, possesses that sacred book as the "supreme rule of her faith" (ibid., 21). Moreover, before becoming a written text, the word of God was handed down orally

and kept alive by the faith of a people who, in the midst of many others, acknowledged it as their own history and the source of their identity. Biblical faith, then, is based on the living word, not on a book.

12. When sacred Scripture is read in the light of the same Spirit by whom it was written, it remains ever new. The Old Testament is never old once it is part of the New, since all has been transformed thanks to the one Spirit who inspired it. The sacred text as a whole serves a prophetic function regarding not the future but the present of whoever is nourished by this word. Jesus himself clearly stated this at the beginning of his ministry: "Today this Scripture has been fulfilled in your hearing" (*Lk* 4:21). Those who draw daily nourishment from God's word become, like Jesus, a contemporary of all those whom they encounter: they are not tempted to fall into sterile nostalgia for the past, or to dream of ethereal utopias yet to come.

Sacred Scripture accomplishes its prophetic work above all in those who listen to it. It proves both sweet and bitter. We are reminded of the words of the prophet Ezekiel when, commanded by the Lord to eat the scroll of the book, he tells us: "It was in my mouth as sweet as honey" (3:3). John the Evangelist too, on the island of Patmos, echoes Ezekiel's experience of eating the scroll, but goes on to add: "It was sweet as honey in my mouth, but when I had eaten it my stomach was made bitter" (*Rev* 10:10).

The sweetness of God's word leads us to share it with all those whom we encounter in this life and to proclaim the sure hope that it contains (cf. *1 Pet* 3:15-16). Its bitterness, in turn, often comes from our realization of how difficult it is to live that word consistently, or our personal experience of seeing it rejected as meaningless for life. We should never take God's word for granted, but instead let ourselves be nourished by it, in order to acknowledge and live fully our relationship with him and with our brothers and sisters.

13. Yet another challenge raised by sacred Scripture has to do with love. God's word constantly reminds us of the merciful love of the Father who calls his children to live in love. The life of Jesus is the full and perfect expression of this divine love, which holds nothing back but offers itself to all without reserve. In the parable of Lazarus, we find a valuable teaching. When both Lazarus and the rich man die, the latter, seeing the poor man Lazarus in Abraham's bosom, asks that Lazarus be sent to his brothers to warn them to love their neighbor, lest they also experience his torment. Abraham's answer is biting: "They have Moses and the prophets; let them hear them" (*Lk* 16:29). To listen to sacred Scripture and then to practice mercy: this is the great challenge before us in life. God's word has the power to open our eyes and to enable us to renounce a stifling and barren individualism and instead to embark on a new path of sharing and solidarity.

14. One of the most significant moments in Jesus' relationship with his disciples is found in the account of the Transfiguration. He goes up the mountain with Peter, James and John to pray. The evangelists tell us that as Jesus' face and clothing became dazzlingly white, two men conversed with him: Moses and Elijah, representing respectively the Law and the Prophets; in other words, sacred Scripture. Peter's reaction to this sight is one of amazement and joy: "Master, it is well that we are here; let us make three tents, one for you and one for Moses and one for Elijah" (*Lk* 9:33). At that moment a cloud overshadows them, and the disciples are struck with fear.

The Transfiguration reminds us of the Feast of Tabernacles, when Ezra and Nehemiah read the sacred text to the people after their return from exile. At the same time, it foreshadows Jesus'

glory, as a way of preparing the disciples for the scandal of the Passion: that divine glory is also evoked by the cloud enveloping the disciples as a symbol of God's presence. A similar transfiguration takes place with sacred Scripture, which transcends itself whenever it nourishes the lives of believers. As the Apostolic Exhortation *Verbum Domini* reminds us: "In rediscovering the interplay between the different senses of Scripture it becomes essential to grasp the *passage from letter to spirit*. This is not an automatic, spontaneous passage; rather, the letter needs to be transcended" (No. 38).

15. Along our path of welcoming God's word into our hearts, the Mother of the Lord accompanies us. She is the one who was called blessed because she believed in the fulfilment of what the Lord had spoken to her (cf. *Lk* 1:45). Mary's own beatitude is prior to all the beatitudes proclaimed by Jesus about the poor and those who mourn, the meek, the peacemakers and those who are persecuted, for it is the necessary condition for every other kind of beatitude. The poor are not blessed because they are poor; they become blessed if, like Mary, they believe in the fulfilment of God's word. A great disciple and master of sacred Scripture, Saint Augustine, once wrote: "Someone in the midst of the crowd, seized with enthusiasm, cried out: 'Blessed is the womb that bore you' and Jesus replied, 'Rather, blessed are they who hear the word of God and keep it'. As if to say: My mother, whom you call blessed, is indeed blessed, because she keeps the word of God. Not because in her the Word became flesh and dwelt among us, but because she keeps that same word of God by which she was made and which, in her womb, became flesh" (*Tractates on the Gospel of John*, 10, 3).

May the Sunday of the Word of God help his people to grow in religious and intimate familiarity with the sacred Scriptures. For as the sacred author taught of old: "This word is very near to you: it is in your mouth and in your heart for your observance" (*Dt* 30:14).

Given in Rome, at the Basilica of Saint John Lateran, on 30 September 2019, the liturgical Memorial of Saint Jerome, on the inauguration of the 1600th anniversary of his death.

FRANCISCUS

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[1] Cf. AAS 102 (2010), 692-787.

[2] "The sacramentality of the word can thus be understood by analogy with the real presence of Christ under the appearances of the consecrated bread and wine. By approaching the altar and partaking in the Eucharistic banquet we truly share in the body and blood of Christ. The proclamation of God's word at the celebration entails an acknowledgment that Christ himself is present, that he speaks to us, and that he wishes to be heard"(*Verbum Domini*, 56).

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THE LECTIONARY FOR MASS
THIRD SUNDAY IN ORDINARY TIME – YEAR A
LECTIONARY: 67

FIRST READING Isaiah 8:23—9:3

A reading from the Book of the Prophet Isaiah

First the LORD degraded the land of Zebulun
and the land of Naphtali;
but in the end he has glorified the seaward road,
the land west of the Jordan,
the District of the Gentiles.

Anguish has taken wing, dispelled is darkness:
for there is no gloom where but now there was distress.

The people who walked in darkness
have seen a great light;
upon those who dwelt in the land of gloom
a light has shone.
You have brought them abundant joy
and great rejoicing,
as they rejoice before you as at the harvest,
as people make merry when dividing spoils.
For the yoke that burdened them,
the pole on their shoulder,
and the rod of their taskmaster
you have smashed, as on the day of Midian.

The word of the Lord.

RESPONSORIAL PSALM Psalm 27:1, 4, 13-14

R. (1a) The Lord is my light and my salvation.

The LORD is my light and my salvation;
whom should I fear?
The LORD is my life's refuge;
of whom should I be afraid?

R. The Lord is my light and my salvation.

One thing I ask of the LORD;
this I seek:
To dwell in the house of the LORD
all the days of my life,
That I may gaze on the loveliness of the LORD
and contemplate his temple.

R. The Lord is my light and my salvation.

I believe that I shall see the bounty of the LORD
in the land of the living.
Wait for the LORD with courage;
be stouthearted, and wait for the LORD.

R. The Lord is my light and my salvation.

SECOND READING 1 Cor 1:10-13, 17

A reading from the first Letter of Saint Paul to the Corinthians

I urge you, brothers and sisters, in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ,
that all of you agree in what you say,
and that there be no divisions among you,
but that you be united in the same mind and in the same purpose.
For it has been reported to me about you, my brothers and sisters,
by Chloe's people, that there are rivalries among you.
I mean that each of you is saying,
"I belong to Paul," or "I belong to Apollos,"
or "I belong to Cephas," or "I belong to Christ."
Is Christ divided?
Was Paul crucified for you?
Or were you baptized in the name of Paul?
For Christ did not send me to baptize but to preach the gospel,
and not with the wisdom of human eloquence,
so that the cross of Christ might not be emptied of its meaning.

The word of the Lord.

ALLELUIA Matthew 4:23

R. Alleluia, alleluia.
Jesus proclaimed the Gospel of the kingdom
and cured every disease among the people.
R. Alleluia, alleluia.

GOSPEL Matthew 4:12-23 or 4:12-17

A reading from the holy Gospel according to Matthew

When Jesus heard that John had been arrested,
he withdrew to Galilee.
He left Nazareth and went to live in Capernaum by the sea,
in the region of Zebulun and Naphtali,
that what had been said through Isaiah the prophet
might be fulfilled:
Land of Zebulun and land of Naphtali,
the way to the sea, beyond the Jordan,
Galilee of the Gentiles,
the people who sit in darkness have seen a great light,
on those dwelling in a land overshadowed by death light has arisen.
From that time on, Jesus began to preach and say,
Repent, for the kingdom of heaven is at hand."

[As he was walking by the Sea of Galilee, he saw two brothers,
Simon who is called Peter, and his brother Andrew,
casting a net into the sea; they were fishermen.
He said to them,
"Come after me, and I will make you fishers of men."
At once they left their nets and followed him.
He walked along from there and saw two other brothers,
James, the son of Zebedee, and his brother John.
They were in a boat, with their father Zebedee, mending their nets.
He called them, and immediately they left their boat and their father
and followed him.
He went around all of Galilee,
teaching in their synagogues, proclaiming the gospel of the kingdom,
and curing every disease and illness among the people.]

The Gospel of the Lord.

PASTORAL SUGGESTIONS

- As Pope Francis has suggested, enthrone the Word in some prominent way. Perhaps the Book of Gospels could be displayed prominently in the sanctuary after the proclamation of the Gospel. Today, this display might include candles, flowers, or plants. Lectionaries or Bibles might also be on display in the narthex or gathering space.

- Preach the Sunday homily on the centrality of the Word of God in the life of the Church. You might refer to the *Introduction to the Lectionary for Mass*, particularly its Preamble (nos. 1-10). The readings for the Third Sunday in Ordinary Time are provided elsewhere in this booklet.

- Reinforce the homily by inserting an article in the bulletin or on the parish website.

- The *Eucharistic Prayers for Various Needs and Occasions* are not used on Sunday (cf. *BCL Newsletter*, December 1994, pp. 1423-1424; January-February 1996, p.1475; and September 1996, page 1508). Consider using EPNVO – III "Jesus, the Way to the Father" with its focus on Christ as Word at some appropriate Masses during the week.

- If you don't already, begin using the *Book of Gospels* on Sundays and on more solemn days.

- Provide catechesis on the *Book of Gospels* (*Evangelium*) and the Church's tradition of richly decorating this liturgical text which contains the words of Christ and the four evangelists.

- This is a very appropriate day to bless the readers [lectors] of the parish.
  See Book of Blessings: Chapter 61
  Order of Blessing of Readers (nos. 1827 – 1845)
  Order of Blessing within Mass
  Order of Blessings within a Celebration of the Word

- Prior to this day, provide an evening/day of reflection for all those who proclaim the Word of God – including priests, deacons, catechists, psalmists, and cantors. Recruit and train more of these liturgical ministers as needed.

- Display icons of the four evangelists somewhere on the parish campus; perhaps display St. Matthew in the church on this day, since St. Matthew's gospel is featured in the Year A cursus of readings.

- Be sure that all lectionaries are dignified and in good repair.

UNIVERSAL PRAYER
SAMPLE INTERCESSIONS

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

Deacon/Cantor/Lector:
Please choose from among these suggestions. The first four suggestions are drawn from the Book of Blessings, Chapter 61.

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 readers [Lectors], that with deep faith and confident voice they may announce God's saving word, we pray to the Lord.

For the Church, called to be united in Christ, we pray to the Lord.

That legislators and judges may be guided by the Scriptures to promote just laws and compassionate policies, we pray to the Lord.

For priests, deacons, lectors, cantors, and catechists and all who bring God's Word to others, we pray to the Lord.

For our Catholic schools, where children are formed and inspired by the Word of God,
we pray to the Lord.

For those who suffer from illness and for those who care for them, we pray to the Lord.

For those who have died, now at peace in the radiance of God's light, we pray to the Lord.

Presider: 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.

MUSIC SUGGESTIONS

TITLE	TEXT/ TUNE	SOURCE
A Mighty Fortess is our God	Luther/ Bach	GIA
A Voice Cries Out	Joncas	GIA
A Year of God's Favor	Dufner/ ST DENIO	GIA
All the Earth	Deiss	WLP
Amazing Grace	Newton	VARIOUS
As the Bread of Life is Broken	Chepponsi/ THAXTED	GIA
As We Gather at Your Table	Daw/ Moore	GIA
Blessed Jesus, at your Word	Winkworth/ Bach	OCP
Come Now, Almighty King	Anon/ Giardini	GIA
Fresh as the Morning	Murray/Alonso	GIA
God has Spoken by His Prophets	Briggs	GIA
God is Still Speaking	Haugen	GIA
God Sends Us Forth	Alonso	GIA
God, Whose Purpose is to Kindle	Luke 12:49/Trueblood	GIA
In This Place Your Word is Planted	Dufner/ STUTTGART	GIA
Is There a Word from the Lord?	Burleigh	GIA
Jesu, Joy of Our Desiring	Jahn/ Hopkins	WLP
Lord, Your Almighty Word	Marriott/ Giardini	WLP
Love is His Word	Connaughton/ Hampton	WLP
Many and Great	Manalo	OCP
Moved by the Gospel, Let us Move	Duck/ Williams	GIA
O God of Every Nation	Reid/ Bach	GIA
On the Journey to Emmaus	Luke 24:13-35/Haugen	GIA
Order My Steps	Burleigh/ Hobbs	GIA
Praise to you, O Christ Our Savior	Farrell	GIA
Praise to You, O Christ our Savior	Farrell	OCP, GIA
Ps 19: Words of Everlasting Life/ Palabras de Vida Eterna	Abbey Psalms/Alonso	OCP
Ps 98: All the Ends of the Earth	ICEL/ Beall or Marchionda	WLP
Psalm 19: Lord You Have the Words	Haas	GIA
Rain Down	Psalm 33/ Cortez	GIA
Salmo 18 [19]: Señor, Tú Tienes Palabras	Reza	OCP
Sent Forth By God's Blessing	Westendorf/ Trad. Welsh	WLP
Take and Eat	Quinn/ Joncas	GIA
Tu Palabra Me Llena	Carranza	OCP
We Sing the Mighty Power of God	Watts/ Mozart	WLP
Word of God	Farrell	OCP
Your Words are Spirit and Life	Farrell	OCP

RELATED DOCUMENTS AND TEXTS

Dei Verbum: Dogmatic Constitution on Divine Revelation Second Vatican Council (November 18, 1965)

Sacrosanctum Concilium: Constitution of the Sacred Liturgy Second Vatican Council (December 4, 1963)

Verbum Domini: The Word of God in the Life and Mission of the Church. An Apostolic Exhortation by Pope Benedict XVI which followed the Assembly of the Synod of Bishops 2008.

The *Introduction to the Lectionary for Mass, particularly nos. 1-57.*

The Book of Blessings: Chapter 61 "Order of Blessing of a Reader" (nos. 1827-1845)

Preaching the Mystery of Faith: The Sunday Homily. United States Conference of Catholic Bishops (November 2012).

ARTICLES

Article: USCCB/Prayer and Worship/ The Order of Mass: The Liturgy of the Word
http://www.usccb.org/prayer-and-worship/the-mass/order-of-mass/liturgy-of-the-word/index.cfm

Article: USCCB/Prayer and Worship/ "The Order of Mass: Hearing the Word of God"
http://www.usccb.org/prayer-and-worship/the-mass/order-of-mass/liturgy-of-the-word/hearing-the-word-of-god.cfm

Article: FDLC Publications: "The Order of Mass: The Liturgy of the Word" as found in *Our Sacrifice of Praise/Nuestro Sacrificio de Alabanza* https://www.fdlc.org/publications/44872

Article: "Music and the Proclamation of the Word of God" USCCB for Catechetical Sunday (2019)
http://www.usccb.org/beliefs-and-teachings/how-we-teach/catechesis/catechetical-sunday/word-of-god/upload/music-and-word.pdf

OUTLINE: THE LECTIONARY FOR MASS (FOUR VOLUMES)

Introduction to the Lectionary for Mass

Preamble
Part I: The Word of God in the Celebration of the Mass
Part II: The Structure of the Order of Readings for Mass
Table I: Principle Celebrations of the Liturgical Year
Table II: Order for the First Reading for Weekdays in Ordinary Time

Volume I: Sundays and Solemnities

	Lectionary #
Sunday Readings (A, B, C)	
Advent Season	1-12
Christmas Season	13-21
Lenten Season	22-38
Chrism Mass	260
Easter Triduum	39-42
Easter Season	43-63
Octave of Easter	261-266
Season of the Year (Ordinary Time)	64-162
Alleluia Verses for Sundays in Ordinary Time	163
Solemnities of the Lord in Ordinary Time	
The Most Holy Trinity	164-166
The Most Holy Body and Blood of Christ	167-169
The Most Sacred Heart of Jesus	170-172
Common Texts for Sung Responsorial Psalms	173-174
Solemnities and Feasts	
February 2 Presentation of the Lord	524
March 19 St. Joseph, Husband of the BVM	543
March 25 Annunciation of the Lord	545
June 23 Nativity of St. John the Baptist (Vigil)	586
June 24 Nativity of St. John the Baptist (Day)	587
June 28 Ss. Peter and Paul (Vigil)	590
June 29 Ss. Peter and Paul (Day)	591
August 6 Transfiguration	614
August 14 Assumption of the BVM (Vigil)	621
August 15 Assumption of the BVM (Day)	622
September 14 – The Exaltation of the Holy Cross	638
November 1 All Saints	667
November 2 Commemoration of All the Faithful Departed	668
November 9 Dedication of the Lateran Basilica	671
December 8 The Immaculate Conception of the BVM	689

Appendix I : Sequences
Appendix II: Table of Readings
Appendix III: Tables
Table I: Table of Responsorial Psalms and Canticles
Table II: Weeks in Ordinary Time
Table III: Order of the Second Readings for the Sundays in Ordinary Time
Table IV: Order of Gospel Readings
Table V: Order of Sunday Readings
Table VI: Dates of Sundays and Feasts 1999-2013
Table VII: Common Responsorial Psalms for the Seasons

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Volume II: Cycle I Seasons for Weekdays and the Complete Propers and Commons of Saints

Proper of Seasons: Weekday Readings – Cycle I
- Advent Season 175-200
  - Alleluia Verses Dec 17-24 201
- Christmas Season 202-217
  - Alleluia Verses for Weekdays after Epiphany 218
- Lenten Season 219-256
- Holy Week 257-260
- Easter Season 261-302
  - Alleluia Verses before Ascension 303
  - Alleluia Verses After Ascension 304
- Ordinary Time 305-508
  - Alleluia Verses for Weekdays in Ordinary Time 509
  - Common Texts for Sung Responsorial Psalms 173,174

Proper of Saints
- January to December 510-700

Commons
- The Common of the Anniversary of the Dedication of a Church 701-706
- The Common of the Blessed Virgin Mary 707-712
- The Common of Martyrs 713-718
- The Common of Pastors 719-724
- The Common of the Doctors of the Church 725-730
- The Common of Virgins 731-736
- The Common of Holy Men and Women 737-742

Volume III: Cycle II of the Seasons for Weekdays and the Complete Propers and Commons of the Saints

Proper of Seasons: Weekday Readings – Cycle II
- Advent Season 175-200
  - Alleluia Verses Dec 17-24 201
- Christmas Season 202-217
  - Alleluia Verses for Weekdays After Epiphany 218
- Lenten Season 219-256
- Holy Week 257-260
- Easter Season 261-302
  - Alleluia Verses before Ascension 303
  - Alleluia Verses After Ascension 304
- Ordinary Time 305-508
  - Alleluia Verses for Weekdays in Ordinary Time 509
  - Common Texts for Sung Responsorial Psalms 173,174

Proper of Saints
- January to December 510-700

Commons
- The Common of the Anniversary of the Dedication of a Church 701-706
- The Common of the Blessed Virgin Mary 707-712
- The Common of Martyrs 713-718
- The Common of Pastors 719-724
- The Common of the Doctors of the Church 725-730
- The Common of Virgins 731-736
- The Common of Holy Men and Women 737-742

Volume IV: Ritual Masses, Masses for Various Needs and Occasions, and Masses for the Dead (2001)

RITUAL MASSES	**Lectionary #**
For The Conferral of Christian Initiation	
Catechumenate and Christian Initiation of Adults	
Entrance into the Order of Catechumens	743
Election or Enrollment of Names	744
First Scrutiny	745
Second Scrutiny	746
Third Scrutiny	747
Presentation of the Creed	748
Presentation of the Lord's Prayer	749-750
Initiation (apart from the Easter Vigil)	751-755
Conferral of Infant Baptism	756-760
Reception of the Baptized into the Full Communion of the Catholic Church	761-763
Confirmation	764-768
First Communion for Children	769
For the Conferral of Holy Orders	770-774
For the Admission to Candidacy for the Diaconate and the Priesthood	775-779
For the Conferral of Ministries	
Institution of Readers	780-784
Institution of Acolytes	785-789
For the Pastoral Care of the Sick and the Dying	
Anointing of the Sick	790-795
Viaticum	796-800
For the Conferral of the Sacrament of Marriage	801-805
For the Blessing of Abbots and Abbesses	806-810
For the Consecration of Virgins and Religious Profession	811-815
For the Dedication or Blessing of a Church or an Altar	
Dedication of a Church	816
Dedication of an Altar	817-822
Blessing of a Chalice and Paten	823-826

MASSES FOR VARIOUS NEEDS AND OCCASIONS	
FOR THE HOLY CHURCH	
For the Church	827-831
For the Pope or Bishop, especially on their anniversaries	832
For the Election of a Pope or a Bishop	833-837
For a Council or Synod or a Spiritual or Pastoral Meeting	838-842
For Priests	843-847
For Ministers of the Church	848-851
For Religious	852-856
For Vocations to Holy Orders or Religious Life	857-861
For the Laity	862-866
For the Unity of Christians	867-871
For the Evangelization of Peoples	872-876
For Persecuted Christians	877-881

FOR PUBLIC NEEDS
For the Country or a City, For Those Who Serve in Public Office, For the Congress, For the President, or For the Progress of Peoples 882-886
For Peace and Justice 887-891
For Reconciliation 892-896
In Time of War or Civil Disturbance 897-901

FOR VARIOUS PUBLIC CIRCUMSTANCES
For the Beginning of the Civil Year 902-906
For the Blessing of Human Labor 907-911
For Productive Land 912-916
After the Harvest 917-921
In Time of Famine of For Those Who Suffer from Famine 922-926
For Refugees and Exiles 927-931
For Those Held Captive 932
For the Sick 933-937
In Time of Earthquake, For Rain, For Good Weather, To Avert Storms, or For Any Need 938-942
In Thanksgiving to God 943-947

FOR VARIOUS NEEDS
For the Remission of Sins 948-952
For the Promotion of Charity, To Foster Harmony, For Family and Friends 953-956
For the Family 957
For Our Oppressors 958-962
For the Grace of a Happy Death 963-967

VOTIVE MASSES
The Most Holy Trinity [cf. 164-166] 968
The Mystery of the Holy Cross 969-975
The Most Holy Eucharist 976-981
Jesus Christ, the Eternal High Priest 982
The Most Holy Name of Jesus 983-988
The Most Precious Blood of Our Lord Jesus Christ 989-994
The Most Sacred Heart of Jesus [cf. 170-172] 995-1000
The Holy Spirit 1001
The Blessed Virgin Mary 1002
The Blessed Virgin Mary, Mother of the Church
The Most Holy Name of Mary
The Holy Angels 1003
Saint Joseph 1004
All the Holy Apostles 1005
Saints Peter and Paul, Apostles 1006
St. Peter, Apostle 1007
St. Paul, Apostle 1008
One Holy Apostle 1009
All the Saints 1010

MASSES FOR THE DEAD
Masses for the Dead 1011-1016
Funerals for Baptized Children 1017-1022
Funerals for Children Who Died Before Baptism 1023-1026

Appendix
Stabat Mater [optional; on the Feast of Our Lady of Sorrows]