



Catholic Diocese of Victoria

Office of the Bishop

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January 20, 2021

Dear Sisters and Brothers,

The “**Sunday of the Word of God**” held yearly every third Sunday of Ordinary Time, in accordance with Pope Francis’ Apostolic Letter *Motu Proprio, Aperuit Illis* will be celebrated on January 24, 2021. This presents an opportunity to recognize the important role of the Word of God in our lives and in the life of the Church.

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 anew. The Constitution clearly expounds the nature of sacred Scripture, its transmission from generation to generation, its divine inspiration embracing the Old and New Testaments, and the importance of Scripture for the life of the Church. 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. Pope Francis reminds us that it is 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”. (*Aperuit Illis, 2019*)

Though our liturgical gatherings are diminished at this time, there is much grace to be found in the quiet prayerful encounter with the living Word of God in Sacred Scripture. It is a good time to become more deeply People of the Word of God as we live in our small social bubbles. As we stay close to home, mindful of the needs of the vulnerable and their caregivers, we have an opportunity to open our bibles in prayerful reflection, fanning into flame the charity and gratitude that is the heart of the Christian life.

I pray that we may open our lives and hearts to the grace filled real presence of our Triune God alive in God’s Word, Sacred Scripture. It is a time to enthroned God’s Word in our homes and hearts to encourage prayerful reflection, which will bring us great solace and comfort. The Holy Spirit is at work during these challenging times, and will enliven and equip us to be ardent missionary-disciples engaged with a weary world in a dialogue of mercy, filled with hope, peace, justice, and charity, born of our faith in the Word made flesh, Jesus Christ.

With Mary, our Mother, may we ponder and treasure all that is spoken about her Son in Scripture, and be assured of her maternal closeness to us as a pilgrim people. “Along our path of welcoming God’s Word into our hearts, the Mother of the Lord accompanies us. She is the one who is called blessed because she believed in the fulfilment of what the Lord had spoken to her.” (*Aperuit Illis*) May we renew our commitment to make God’s living Word the center of our lives, even at the center of our dining table, thereby making the Word of God part of our daily bread and nourishment.

In Communion,

Most Reverend Gary Gordon
Bishop of Victoria