



The Catholic Church's "Sunday of the Word of God", an annual day for celebrating, studying, and spreading the Word of God, will be celebrated on **January 25<sup>th</sup>**, falling on the Third Sunday in Ordinary Time. It was established by Pope Francis in his 2019 Apostolic Letter, *Aperuit illis*. The theme for the day is "The word of Christ dwells among you" (Colossians 3:16).

In Romans 8:26, St. Paul tells us, "We do not know how to pray as we ought." The news, while part of God's gracious revelation, is hardly earth shattering. Our prayer life isn't as it should be. We are easily distracted, selfish in our desires, impure in our intentions. Even the Apostles recognized these problems in themselves. Hence their petition in Luke 11:1, "Lord, teach us to pray."

The deep and abiding human desire for conversation and communion with God is ultimately answered by Jesus Christ. And it is within the Church that we find the full means of growing with and toward God, which includes Sacred Scripture. St. Jerome famously asserted, "Ignorance of Scripture is ignorance of Christ." How well do we really know Jesus Christ? How well do we know Scripture?

*"The Church 'forcefully and specially exhorts all the Christian faithful . . . to learn' 'the surpassing knowledge of Jesus Christ' {Phil 3:8} by frequent reading of the Divine Scriptures . . . Let them remember, however that prayer should accompany the reading of Sacred Scripture, so that a dialogue takes place between God and man. For 'we speak to him when we pray; we listen to him when we read the divine oracles'" The spiritual writers, paraphrasing Matthew 7:7... 'Seek in reading and you will find in meditating; knock in mental prayer and it will be opened to you by contemplation'" (CCC, nos. 2653-2654)*

We find the same kind of intimate familiarity with Scripture flowing from the Blessed Mother. In Luke's Gospel, Mary responds to the overwhelming and singular grace communicated to her by St. Gabriel the Archangel with a song of praise: the *Magnificat*. This spontaneous song is a variation on the song of praise sung by Hannah that appears in 1 Samuel 2:2-10, singing her praise when, after years of infertility, she conceived Samuel. Having begged God for the gift of a child, the song was her joyful act of thanks.

The similar experience of Mary — receiving a miraculous child as a gift from the Lord — expands in her heart and mind, until, inspired by the Holy Spirit, she calls to mind the song of Hannah, making her own in a new, stunning prayer. Luke records this in 1:47-55. The *Magnificat* is an extraordinary manifestation of the interaction of God's grace and Scripture, giving us a practical example of what happens when we meditate on Scripture and how it can bear fruit in our lives and the lives of others.

Scripture is meant to illuminate and guide our praying. God expects us to question him, search him out, and invest ourselves in his Word. In return, he promises us that we will find wisdom. It really is ours for the asking. In Isaiah, the Lord reveals, "As high as the heavens are above the earth, so high are my ways above yours"

An encounter with God through Scripture should not be a one-time event or a happy accident for those special privileged souls whom God selects. It is bound up with discipleship: a loving demand from God to all those who seek to follow Christ. To answer that demand, commit to regular reading and praying of the Bible. The First Psalm reveals that the happy person "delights in the law of the Lord and meditates on his law day and night" (Ps 1:2).

A few practical suggestions: Pray the Divine Office; search out an on-line option.

- Search out a Bible study that provides an introduction to Salvation History.
- The Rosary is a profoundly scriptural prayer. Many online and print options link scriptural passages to each mystery to intensify the scriptural content.
- Commit to reading the Gospels, one chapter per day, or read through the whole Bible in a year with an on-line aid.



# Knights of Columbus®

Bishop Bernard Schmitt Council 15610

Annunciation of our Lord & Saint Anthony Parish

## St. Patrick's Day Dinner

Featuring:

# *The Shanty Irish Band*

Saturday, March 7<sup>th</sup> 6:30 to 9:30

Location: Annunciation of our Lord Social Hall  
8871 Frankfort Hwy, Fort Ashby WV

### Menu:

Irish Stew  
Shepherd's Pie  
Dessert  
Beverage  
BYOB Allowed

Tickets: \$20.00

Tickets Available from any Knight or at Parish Office

Call (304) 298 - 3392

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