



JANUARY 25-26, 2025

Sunday of the Word of God Jubilee Year of Hope

Statement from Most Reverend John O. Barres

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On September 30, 2019, the Feast of St. Jerome, Pope Francis announced that the universal Church would celebrate the “Sunday of the Word of God” annually on the Third Sunday of Ordinary Time.¹

The purpose of our “Sunday of the Word of God” celebrations in this Jubilee Year of Hope and every year is to rekindle our desire to be deeply biblical Catholics on fire with the Word of God, the Eucharist and the mission of the Church.

This year’s celebration is also a moment for me as the Diocesan Bishop to thank our priests and deacons for their powerful and beautiful homilies that nourish the People of God and the mission of the Church.

We hear this sequence and exchange as we prepare to receive the proclamation of the Gospel:

- >The Lord be with you.
- +And with your spirit.
- >A reading from the holy Gospel according to Luke
- +Glory to you, O Lord.

An essential part of this sequence and exchange is our communal and reverent use of the Catholic Church’s eloquent and intimate sign language as we say: “Glory to you, O Lord.”

We slowly and reverently trace the sign of the Cross on our foreheads, on our lips and on our heart.

We proclaim the Glory of the Lord as we receive and integrate his inspired words into our minds and consciences, into our lips and daily speech and into our hearts and our relationships.

When we hear this Sunday’s Gospel, St. Luke addresses Theophilus, saying he has “undertaken to compile a narrative of the events that have been fulfilled among us... so that you may realize the certainty of the teachings you have received.” This message is not only for Theophilus but also for us. St. Luke invites us to allow this holy Gospel and the Holy Cross to be imprinted on every dimension of our lives—our minds, tongues, hearts, bodies, and souls.

A similar process occurs when we hear in the

¹ See Pope Francis’ Apostolic Letter *Aperuit Illis* issued “*motu proprio*” on September 30, 2019. It is available on the Vatican Website.



second part of Sunday's Gospel from Luke 4 a marvelous sequence in the Nazareth synagogue on the sabbath day. Jesus takes up the scroll from the prophet Isaiah, proclaims the passage, rolls up the scroll, sits down and says, "Today this Scripture passage is fulfilled in your hearing."

In a certain sense, we make the sign of the Cross on our minds, lips and hearts in assent to the fulfillment of Isaiah in the presence of the proclamation of Jesus Christ, the Alpha and the Omega, the Messiah and Redeemer, the Way, the Truth and the Life of all history.

"Today this Scripture is fulfilled in your hearing."

May the Scripture passages we hear, read, study, meditate, pray and contemplate and live in the course of our short lives on earth be fulfilled and radiantly lived in a spirit of "holiness and mission."

In his Apostolic Exhortation *The Word of the Lord* (2010), Pope Benedict XVI makes three important points about the role of Sacred Scripture in our lives and in the life and mission of the Church.

>"The Word of God makes us change our concept of realism: the realist is the one who recognizes in the word of God as the foundation of all things." (#10)

>"Every saint is like a ray of light streaming forth from the Word of God." (#48)

>"The Eucharist opens us to an understanding of Scripture, just as Scripture for its part illumines and explains the mystery of the Eucharist." (#55)

Together we prepare *biblically* for our Diocesan Eucharistic Pilgrimages with the Blessed Sacrament across Long Island beginning on May 31, 2025, and our Diocesan Eucharistic Congress which will take place on Pentecost Sunday, June 8, 2025.

May the Word of God and the Holy Eucharist be a Light and a Lamp for every step we take on earth on our pilgrimage to Eternal Life and Happiness with God in Heaven.

+ *John O. Barnes*

