



## Sunday Reflection with Fr. Rafal

Dear Friends in Christ,

**Sunday of the Word of God**, which Pope Francis instituted, takes place the third Sunday of Ordinary Time and reminds us that sacred Scripture is essential for the Christian life. "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," the late pope wrote in his 2019 apostolic letter, "Aperuit Illis."

This annual observance is a standing invitation for us to deepen our appreciation of the Word of God, the Scriptures, whether we read the Bible prayerfully in the privacy of our homes, or listen to its proclamation in the Liturgy of the Word, including the homily. For me, this Sunday is an invitation to reflect on the responsibility of preaching, of breaking open the Scriptures, thus enabling the voice of the Risen Lord to resonate in our hearts and shed his light and love on every aspect of our lives. After all, as the II Vatican Council taught, "Christ is present in his Word, and when the Scriptures are proclaimed, it is Christ himself who speaks to us" (SC, 7). Happily, today's Scripture readings offer a beautiful foundation for the Liturgy of the Word as well as for our own private study of the Scriptures.

When we look at the Gospel of today, we see the person of Jesus who came to announce to all men the good news of God's eternal plan for them. He spent his public life convincing the Jews of Palestine of the truth of this message, and he died on the cross because he claimed to be that he was God's divine Son, who had come in human nature to raise all men to the standing and status of adopted sons of God. That very death, cruel and unjust though it was, was part of the divine plan. He conquered death and was raised from the grave to prove that we too, if we accept his divine gospel and live by it, will be raised from the dead and reign with Christ in the kingdom of his Father forever. Christ preached this doctrine in Palestine. It is the doctrine for which he gave his human life and which he gave to his Apostles to hand down to all future generations.

We Catholics should indeed be the happiest people on earth, if we live according to the divine good news revealed to us through Christ. "Repent and believe in the gospel," Christ told the people of Galilee. The same call goes out from our loving Savior to each of us today: repent—change your outlook on life—and see it as God sees it to be for us, a short journey toward heaven. If we really believe in the gospel of Christ, the revelation of God's plan for our eternal happiness, our earthly troubles will look small, our trials and temptations will appear to us as they really are—a means of earning the eternal victory.

Let us repent today and show our belief in the truth of the Christian gospel, by living as true Christians who are on their way to heaven.

Have a Blessed Sunday!

*Fr. Rafal Ligenza,*

Pastor, St. Joseph Catholic Church