

Catechumenate Session

APPRENTICES IN FAITH: A Resource for the OCIA
Sixteenth Sunday in Ordinary Time • Year C • July 20, 2025

*Almighty God,
your Word is
living and effective,
sharper than
any two-edged sword.
By your Word, you create.
By your Word, you sustain.
By your Word, you challenge.
May we be faithful
to your Word—
listening, hearing,
and obeying it.*



Sunday Word

Genesis 18:1-10a
Psalm 15:2-5
Colossians 1:24-28
Luke 10:38-42

Visited by God

Abraham hastened to offer hospitality to God, who visited him. Despite his advanced age, he ran forward with a greeting, bowed to the ground, procured food, and waited on the divine visitation. This encounter became a revelation of good news, as Abraham and Sarah heard that they would be blessed by God with progeny.

Chosen by God

Saint Paul says that what was once mysterious and hidden is now clarified and brought to light in Christ. The Word of God is manifested in the Lord Jesus, whose grace is extended from Israel to the Gentiles and thus to all people everywhere.

Listening to God

Two women welcome Jesus to their home. One of them, Martha, bears the burden of serving. The other, Mary, sits at the feet of Jesus listening. In that listening posture, Mary exemplifies the best sort of welcome and hospitality that we can afford to the living, eternal Word of God, Jesus Christ.

Church Teaching: Hearers of the Word

Hearing and Understanding

God communicates divine love to us in words and deeds. His words proclaim his message of truth, and his deeds profess and give proof to that message. It follows, then, that the interpreter of Sacred Scripture should work to ascertain what God has wished to communicate to us, carefully searching out the meaning that the sacred writers really had in mind—the meaning that God had thought well to manifest through the medium of their words.

Jesus, the Word

Christian faith is not so much a “religion of the book” as it is a religion of the Word, an eternal, living Word made incarnate in the Son of God, Jesus Christ. Sacred Scripture, therefore, is identified with a living person—Christ, the eternal Word, who

through the Holy Spirit opens the minds and hearts of believers to God's saving message.

God's Word, as attested to in Sacred Scripture, is not limited to the printed page or to the spoken proclamation. It is a living Word, whose intimate truth is revealed in Jesus Christ through his life, ministry, suffering, Death, and Resurrection.

Reverence for the Word

The Church venerates Sacred Scripture as it venerates the Lord's Body. Why does she do this? In the scriptural readings at Mass, explained by the homily, God speaks to his people, opening to them the mystery of Redemption and Salvation. In this way, God nourishes the minds and hearts of those gathered for worship.

The Liturgy inculcates great reverence toward the proclamation of the Gospel, setting it off from the other readings by special marks of honor. And the people, who by their acclamations acknowledge and confess Christ present in its proclamation, stand as they listen to it. Marks of reverence are given to the Book of the Gospels as it lies upon the altar before the Gospel Acclamation and is carried in procession to the ambo. It is incensed and kissed.

Formation in the Word

The People of God are nourished at the table of God's Word prior to gathering around the table of the Eucharist. All the faithful are encouraged to study Sacred Scripture apart from Mass. Relying on reputable biblical research, Catholics are encouraged to explore the meaning of the Word of God contained in Sacred Scripture.

In the process of Christian initiation, the Word provides formation for inquirers, catechumens, elect, and the newly initiated. In fact, in the early Church, catechumens were called "hearers of the Word" because of the centrality of Sacred Scripture to their time of formation for entering the sacramental life of the Church.

Distinctiveness of Church Teaching

Baptism and Confirmation make of all the faithful potential messengers of God's loving Word through the grace they receive in those sacraments. They must be the bearers of that same loving Word—in the Church and in the world—through their lively and courageous witness.

Key Terms

WORD OF GOD

Complete content of Divine Revelation contained in the Bible and proclaimed by the Church. In Saint John's Gospel, God's eternal Word is Jesus Christ himself, the Son of God, who became incarnate for our Salvation (see *Catechism of the Catholic Church* 65).

SACRED SCRIPTURE

Sacred writings of the forty-six books of the Old Testament and the twenty-seven books of the New Testament. Written by human authors inspired by God, Sacred Scripture conveys God's message (see *Catechism of the Catholic Church* 120).

BOOK OF THE GOSPELS

Liturgical book, usually ornately decorated, that contains the Gospel readings for Sunday Mass. It is carried in procession, laid on the altar, processed to the ambo (pulpit), incensed, and kissed (see *Catechism of the Catholic Church* 127).

Voices of Faith

At present alleluia is for us a traveler's song, but this tiresome journey brings us closer to home and rest where, all our busy activities over and done with, the only thing that will remain will be alleluia. That is the delightful part that Mary chose for herself, as she sat doing nothing but learning and praising, while her sister, Martha, was busy with all sorts of things.

—Saint Augustine

While we are on this earth, our relationship with God takes place more by listening than by seeing; and the same contemplation comes about, so to speak, with closed eyes, thanks to the interior light that is kindled in us by the Word of God.

—Pope Benedict XVI

Further Reading

Catechism of the Catholic Church: 53 (a gradual Divine Revelation), 126 (composition of the four Gospel accounts), 131 (Scripture as food for the soul), 132 (Bible study)

United States Catholic Catechism for Adults: Chapter 7 (The Good News: God Has Sent His Son), especially the section "Gospel Portraits of Jesus," pages 79–80

Compendium—Catechism of the Catholic Church: 18 (living Incarnate Word), 19 (how to read Scripture), 24 (Scripture in the life of the Church)