



# St Dyfrig's & All Hallows Catholic Churches

[pontypriddRCdeanery.org.uk](http://pontypriddRCdeanery.org.uk)

Parishes of the Archdiocese of Cardiff

Registered Charity no. 242380



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Telephone: 01443 402439 Mobile: 07796 950423

Sunday 17<sup>th</sup> January 2021

Second Sunday in Ordinary Time

Cycle B Psalter Week 2

## News for all

### The Current Lockdown

Please remember in prayer all those who have died because of Covid 19 either directly or indirectly, all those who are suffering because they have received a positive diagnosis, those who are suffering with their mental health and those who are suffering economic hardship. Please remember those who have died tragically. We pray especially now for Virgil Rondganger.

These are strange times. We long for the Blessed Sacrament. Even though we may not be able to come to mass physically we can still keep Christ at the centre of our lives even if we have to worship and pray at home. An Act of Spiritual Communion can help us. As I celebrate mass online I would encourage parishioners to ask for the Lord's guidance. The following prayer is an Act of Spiritual Communion written by St Alphonsus Liguori in the 18th Century. It is an indication that there have been times in the past when we have not been able to come together to worship. It seems particularly appropriate now. "My Jesus, I believe that You are present in the Most Holy Sacrament. I love You above all things and I desire to receive You into my soul. Since I cannot at this moment receive You sacramentally, come spiritually into my heart. I embrace You as if You were already there and unite myself wholly to You. Never permit me to be separated from You. Amen.

### THANK YOU!

I would like to thank all those who have sent Christmas greetings, cards, presents, offerings to me over the Christmas season. This year especially, they

are very much appreciated. I know that you will have your own worries and anxieties during this time of pandemic. It has been so touching to receive all your good wishes and concern for me personally. Please be assured that I remember you in my prayers and masses. I look forward to the time when we will all be able to gather and worship together. With many many thanks to you all. Fr Allan

### Today is Peace Day - A Culture of Care as a Path to Peace

Peace, justice and care of creation are three inherently connected questions, which cannot be separated in such a way as to be treated individually

We need to stop and ask ourselves what has led our world to see conflict as something normal, and how our hearts can be converted and our ways of thinking changed, in order to work for true peace in solidarity and fraternity.

How many resources are spent on weaponry, especially nuclear weapons, that could be used for more significant priorities such as ensuring the safety of individuals, the promotion of peace and integral human development, the fight against poverty, and the provision of health care.

What a courageous decision it would be to establish a Global Fund with the money spent on weapons and other military expenditures, in order to permanently eliminate hunger and contribute to the development of the poorest countries.

**First Reading 1 Samuel 3:3-10,19; Corinthians 6:13-15, 17-20;**

**Gospel John 1:35-42**

**Psalm: Here I am Lord I come to do your will.**

**Gospel Acclamation: Alleluia, alleluia! Speak Lord, your servant is listening:  
you have the message of eternal life. Alleluia!**

There is... a need for peacemakers, men and women prepared to work boldly and creatively to initiate processes of healing and renewed encounter.

may we strive daily, in concrete and practical ways, to form a community composed of brothers and sisters who accept and care for one another.

everything is interconnected and genuine care for our own lives and our relationship with nature is inseparable from fraternity, justice and faithfulness to others.

the need for relationships between nations to be inspired by fraternity, mutual respect, solidarity and the observance of international law.

At a time like this, when the barque of humanity, tossed by the storm of the current crisis, struggles to advance towards a calmer and more serene horizon, the "rudder" of human dignity and the "compass" of fundamental social principles can enable us together to steer a sure course.

More resources here:

<https://paxchristi.org.uk/peace-sunday-2021/>

Full message here:

[http://www.vatican.va/content/francesco/en/messages/peace/documents/papa-francesco\\_20201208\\_messaggio-54giornatamondiale-pace2021.html](http://www.vatican.va/content/francesco/en/messages/peace/documents/papa-francesco_20201208_messaggio-54giornatamondiale-pace2021.html)



**'Speak Lord, your servant is listening: you have the message of eternal life.'** (1Samuel 3:9; Jn 6:68)



ONLINE SCRIPTURE DAY OF REFLECTION – Menevia Diocese given by Fr Tim McGrath – theme The Book of Revelation Signs and Symbols for Understanding the Bible.



Fr. Tim McGrath is a priest of the Diocese of Cardiff for nearly 25 years. He is the parish priest of Bridgend, Pyle and Porthcawl



parishes. Born and raised in Cardiff and classed as a late vocation, he enjoys Biblical study and particularly Temple theology.

Fr. Tim words are, 'The talk I will give may not help/please everyone. I may not answer your question or cover your point of view. Please forgive me. I do

have some note which I am happy to pass on. If you wish to email me at [bridgend@rcadc.org](mailto:bridgend@rcadc.org).'



Sunday the 24<sup>th</sup> January has been dedicated to The Word of God. 'Devoting a specific Sunday in 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.' Pope Francis 'Aperuit illis'

All the Faithful are encouraged to bring their Bibles to Mass or to have them with them at their live-streamed Mass to be blessed during the Sunday of the Word of God.



Echoes of God: Journeying with the Word of God - **David** McLaughlin invites you to join him on a journey through the whole Bible in this wonderful 7 week course. The aim of this series is to help us get a sense of the Scriptures as a whole. To see the unfolding of God's liberating and creative love in the history of Israel and in the Church.



We will set out with the freed Hebrew slaves and their leader Moses, responding to God's call; so close and yet always a little strange to us. We will become familiar with their pattern and be guided by the echo of the divine words from the beginning. Words which continue to liberate us in our time.

Our journey will lead us to encounter God. The same God across all the ages in the one unifying Spirit. Our choice of readings will reveal the growing sense of the mystery of God, and the mystery of God's Creation. Of men and women called to be a reconciled community, capable of selfless responses that can heal and fulfil each other and the world. This seven week course can be done individually or in a group. To download this free course go to <https://god-who-speaks.uk/echoes-of-god-journeying-with-the-word-of-god/>

**Belmont Abbey** are also offering an on-line retreat on St. Mark's Gospel on Saturday 16<sup>th</sup> January. This can be accessed by Zoom or through the website at a time to suit yourself, see [retreats@belmontabbey.org.uk](mailto:retreats@belmontabbey.org.uk).

### **Cycle of Prayer for the Parishes of the Archdiocese**

This week our prayers are requested for Rev Kevin Payne and the parishioners of The Sacred Heart, Pontllanfraith.

## All HALLOWS NEWS

New to our Parish: We welcome you; please let us know who you are. We invite you to complete one of our Parish Census Forms and tell us about yourselves. These forms are available on request.

**SUNDAY MASS AT ALL HALLOWS** with a congregation has been suspended until further notice.

**NEWSLETTER** - If you are sending information for the newsletter, please send it to [llantrisant@rcadc.org](mailto:llantrisant@rcadc.org). The deadline remains 11am on Wednesday mornings.

**Columbarium Co-ordinator Barbara Hillier**  
01443 204973

**E-Mail Addresses** - As we communicate much more by email at the moment please email Suzy at [llantrisant@rcadc.org](mailto:llantrisant@rcadc.org) and we can keep in touch via the Newsletter and other news.

### DONATIONS TO ALL HALLOWS FUNDS

As our church is open in a limited in capacity, those who give regular donations during mass can donate at:

<http://uk.virginmoneygiving.com/AllHallowsChurch>

**Donations for the last month:**

**£ 82.25 in November**

**COLLECTIONS** - Many parishioners are making regular monthly and weekly donations via the virgin money portal. These welcomed donations can be made anonymously but please record what the donation is for: Mass Stipends, Weekly or Monthly Collections or any other specific donation e.g. SVP donations, Easter Offerings etc. This will ensure we can allocate the donations correctly.

### COLLECTIONS

	Gift Aid	Non-Gift Aid	Loose
<b>27<sup>th</sup> December</b>	<b>£ 813.60</b>	<b>£12.00</b>	<b>£6.00</b>

**The total collection for Sea Sunday was £ 138.60**

### 200 CLUB

As 2020 has been so disruptive with very little Church attendance, the 200 Club draws only took place in January and February 2020. The monthly draws did not take place once Covid Lockdown restrictions were imposed.

For 2021 I am therefore proposing that no subscriptions will be taken up for members in 2021 and the monthly draws will commence again from

March 2021 onwards.

Some members have standing orders for their £24 annual membership and so it will be necessary for those parishioners to cancel the standing order due in January 2021 for £24. If you are unsure whether you have a standing order I will be able to confirm if you would like to telephone me on: 07786227398.

I am hoping that this arrangement proposal will meet with the approval of members.

Best wishes for a better Year in 2021. Take care all and thank you for your continued support to the 200 Club. **Kath Thomas 200 Club Treasurer**

### UCM MEMBERS ARE ABLE TO PRAY TOGETHER AND MEET VIA ZOOM

If you would like to join us for our prayers via Zoom at 14:30 each Thursday please contact Kath Attfield or Suzy Stacey. Anyone can join us.

### (MV) ROSARY GROUP

Please join with us when we come together to pray from the comfort of our homes at 9.00 p.m. every Tuesday night. We come together to prayer the Rosary for all people affected by the pandemic. The Rosary Group have been praying together throughout the pandemic and not only consist of parishioners of All Hallows but with members from other parishes across the country. You are more than welcome to join with us in the holy rosary and unite in love and prayers. Please contact Marita on 07960206916.

### RED BOXES

During these restricting times, it has been extremely difficult in the collection and emptying of the APF Red Mission boxes, from parishioners who regularly contributed to this charity by this means. Without the contributions of the Red Box, missionaries would not be able to reach out to the most vulnerable in society, In many countries of the world where there are no social services, if things get desperate, the Church is the only place they can turn to and know that they will be helped both practically and spiritually. There are other ways to give to the Red Box to help with the continuation of the Brothers and Sisters work overseas if you can help, e.g. Send a cheque, payable to Missio-Mill Hill and post it to Red Box, 23 Eccleston Square, London, SW1V 1NU, Give online, Bank Transfer, or set up a Direct Debit. For further information on your donation to APF, please contact Teresa (01443 204830) who will advise you accordingly.

## ALL HALLOWS PRAYER WALL

Our Prayer wall is now available on our website at <http://www.pontypriddrdeanery.org.uk/churches/llantrisant> There is a contact form where you can request an addition to our prayer wall or ask for a mass intention. Or contact Suzy llantrisant@rcadc.org

**LECTIO DIVINA** - please contact Anna Mayer at [Anna@mayer.co.uk](mailto:Anna@mayer.co.uk) if you wish to join the group. The next Lectio Divina Group will be Monday 18<sup>th</sup> January 2020 at 6.30pm. The Group will be meeting every week via Zoom unless otherwise stated.

## ALL HALLOWS PARISH 25<sup>TH</sup> ANNIVERSARY

2021 is the 25<sup>th</sup> Anniversary of the opening of our Parish Church here at Miskin. We have had a few names of interested people who have offered their help to plan for this occasion within our parish. Due to the COVID situation, this has held up any chance to take things forward. However, not to say this will not happen, we will, as soon as things become more normal arrange to meet and discuss ideas and plans to make 2021 a special year for our Parish. Your help and participation in this will be gratefully received.

Our Parish Prayer Wall is in the LADY CHAPEL. Please write the name of the person you wish to pray for on a post-it note and add it to the wall or email Suzy

*Please join us in prayer, as we ask for your prayers for*  
**Margaret and Silvano Sidoli**                      **Bacchetta Family**  
**Helen Howell**    **Bassam Fathola**  
**Ceri Philip**    **Heather Duff (Trigg)**  
**Canon Patrick Daly**                                      **Maureen Fuller**  
**Cardoza & Alexander Families**

*Please help us to manage our Prayer Wall by letting us know when names need to be updated*

## St. Dyfrig's News

**Missio Red Boxes** – all the money received for the year 2020 have been banked. It is not yet clear when we will be able to collect donations in a safe and sustainable way. If you are wishing to continue to donate, you can send a cheque payable to Missio – Mill Hill Red Box, 23 Eccleston Square, London. SW1V 1NU. You can also make a donation over the phone – 02078219755. The Missio website has other suggestions to support their work, go to [missio.org.uk](http://missio.org.uk) There is even an App available from Google Play and the Apple App Store. The key thing is to stay safe; hopefully our generous Red Box giving will soon be able to start again in the not too distant future. Any queries please ring Allan Reeves 01443 2067767.

**Newsletter items** – please email

[kate.duffin@hotmail.co.uk](mailto:kate.duffin@hotmail.co.uk), no later than 11 am on Wednesdays. Mass Bookings have been suspended until further notice.

**VIRTUAL TEA & COFFEE** - Our Sunday tea and coffee still carries on after every Sunday Mass. If you want to join us, simply pop the kettle on and click the teacup on the front-page of our website. Everyone is welcome and we look forward to catching up with you over a nice steaming cuppa! **Please note the new joining ID and Passcode.**

*(If you need them: Meeting ID: 810 9907 3706  
Passcode: 676978)*

**SVP Support Lines** - St. Dyfrig's SVP - if you or anyone else you know is isolated and lonely and would welcome a chat, we are here on the end of the phone. If we can help in any other way we will, but obviously within the Government guidelines. Our love and prayers to you all.

Angela Hunter:	01443 207935
Allan Cleary:	01443 400605
Ann Cleary:	01443 400605
Anne Parker:	01443 842825
Cath Carroll:	01443 207576: 07482 406215
Julie Gilbertson:	01443 205041
Lesley Hughes:	01443 205077: 07799 613527
Mary Richards:	07855 241289
Richard Boyle:	01443 400189
Sandra Phillips:	01443 203207

We now have pages on Virgin Money Giving for donations to be made to both parishes during this time when normal collections cannot be taken. When donating via Virgin Money there is a box available for comment. Parishioners can specify in this section a specific destination for their donation, e.g. Parish Funds, Easter Offering, Mass Intention etc. The links for donations are as follows:

<https://uk.virginmoneygiving.com/StDyfrigsChurchTreforest>

## Friends of St. Dyfrig's Christmas Draw

1<sup>st</sup> Finlay Humphries £100; 2<sup>nd</sup> Susan David £50; 3<sup>rd</sup> M. McCarthy £20, P. Lane, S. Phillips, T. Loveless £10. A number of cheques are ready from this and earlier draws. If you would like them to be posted, please contact the Parish Office with your address. Many thanks for your continued support and as always new members are welcome and needed. £13 subs are due in January. Cheques payable to St. Dyfrig's Parish may be sent to Sheila Pugh, 26 Marlborough Close, Llantwit Fardre, CF38 2NP or left at the presbytery

marked for my attention. Many thanks Sheila Pugh  
(tel 01443 203492)

**ST. DYFRIG'S PRAYER WALL**

**Prayer for Our Community:**

*O Great Love, thank you for living and loving in us and through us. May all that we do flow from our deep connection with you and all beings. Help us become a community that vulnerably shares each other's burdens and the weight of glory. Listen to our hearts' longings for the healing of our world. [Please add your own intentions.] . . . Knowing you are hearing us better than we are speaking, we offer these prayers in all the holy names of God, amen. (Fr Richard Rohr)*

Our Parish Prayer Wall is in the narthex. Please write your intention on a post-it note and add it to the wall. Please can you write the name clearly.

**PARISH PRAYER LIST: We ask your prayers for:**

Cyril, Maurice, Albert and Robert Davis	
Angela Doyle	Mrs Wilks
Brenda Smith	Joan Quinn
Agnes Hughes	Chris Da Silva Rosa
Peggy Kawulok	Poppy & Kelly Morris
Brin Davidge	Elizabeth Terry
Verna Caines	Ken Biddiscombe
Pete Leueis	Canon William Isaacs
William, John (Jackie) Picton	
Elizabeth Holland	Lauren Gibson
June Thomas	Celia Thomas
Pat Holmes	Chris Shearan
Ruth Pinder	Anne Atkins
Marion Toms	Giovanna Trigg
Joe Howlin	Cathy Spencer
Wendy Collier	Ann Elson
Burnett Family (Covid)	
Those suffering from Covid	

**Liturgy/Masses at St Dyfrig's Treforest and All Hallows, Miskin**

	<b>Time &amp; Place</b>	<b>Service &amp; Intention</b>
Saturday 16 <sup>th</sup> January Votive Memorial of Our Lady	St Dyfrig's 10 a.m.	Live stream Mass –
Sunday 17 <sup>th</sup> January Second Sunday of Ordinary Time Peace Sunday	St. Dyfrig's 9.15 St Dyfrig's 11 a.m.	Live stream Mass – The People of the Parish Live stream Mass – John Paul Davies
Monday 18 <sup>th</sup> January	St Dyfrig's 10 a.m.	Live stream Mass – Fr Ambrose Walsh (RiP)
Tuesday 19 <sup>th</sup> January	St. Dyfrig's 10 a.m.	Live stream Mass - Renee Marengi RiP
Wednesday 20 <sup>th</sup> January St. Fabian, Pope and Martyr St. Sebastian, Martyr	St Dyfrig's 10 a.m.	Live stream Mass - John Paul Davies
Thursday 21 <sup>st</sup> January St. Agnes, Virgin and Martyr	St Dyfrig's 10 a.m.	Live stream Mass – (Special Intention)
Friday 22 <sup>nd</sup> January St. Vincent, Deacon and Martyr	St Dyfrig's 10 a.m.	Live stream Mass –
Saturday 23 <sup>rd</sup> January Votive Memorial of Our Lady	St Dyfrig's 10 a.m.	Live stream Mass –
Sunday 24 <sup>th</sup> January Third Sunday of Ordinary Time Sunday of the Word of God	St. Dyfrig's 9.15 St Dyfrig's 11 a.m.	Live stream Mass - Live stream Mass –

**All Hallows Roman Catholic Church**

School Road, Miskin, CF72 8PG  
 Email: [llantrisant@rcadc.org](mailto:llantrisant@rcadc.org)  
 Safeguarding Rep: Suzy Stacey 07734701449  
 Website: [llantrisant.pontypriddrcdeanery.org.uk](http://llantrisant.pontypriddrcdeanery.org.uk)  
 Parish Admin: Suzy Stacey 07734 701449  
 Hall Bookings: Pamela Harding 01443 556796  
 Maintenance Manager: Shamus Harding 01443 556796 or 07928524176

**St Dyfrig's Roman Catholic Church**

Broadway, Treforest, CF37 1DB  
 Email: [treforest@rcadc.org](mailto:treforest@rcadc.org)  
 W website: [treforest.pontypriddrcdeanery.org.uk](http://treforest.pontypriddrcdeanery.org.uk)  
 Parish Administrator: Leigh Jenkins - 07385 840029  
 Hall Bookings: Dave Rossiter 01443 491397  
[drossiter2011@btinternet.com](mailto:drossiter2011@btinternet.com)  
 Safeguarding Rep: Maggie White 01443 410593

Schools: St Michael's RC Primary School, John Place, Treforest. (Head: Mrs J. Taylor) 01443 570090  
 Cardinal Newman Catholic Comprehensive, Dynea Road, Rhydyfelin. (Head: Mr J O'Sullivan) 01443 494110

Hospital Catholic Chaplains. The Heath, Cardiff: Rev. David Prichard

Two Churches Newsletter. All items for inclusion no later than 11am Wednesday please

To receive an electronic copy of the Newsletter, please email [treforest@rcadc.org](mailto:treforest@rcadc.org)

## The Church and the Bible – the journey so far

*The Rt. Revd. Peter M. Brignall, Bishop of Wrexham and Chair of the God who Speaks initiative reflects on the origins of this campaign and celebrates its impact and future.*



*The Bible cannot be just the heritage of some, much less a collection of books for the benefit of a privileged few. It belongs above all to those called to hear its message and to recognize themselves in its words. At times, there can be a tendency to monopolize the sacred text by restricting it to certain circles or to select groups. It cannot be that way. The Bible is the book of the Lord's people, who, in listening to it, move from dispersion and division towards unity. The word of God unites believers and makes them one people. [1]*

Pope Francis

It is the skill of any musician to move their hands and fingers simultaneously and consecutively to bring to life the beauty of the composer's work, allowing it to be heard and fully appreciated. The musician translates the notes on the paper to sounds in the air for the music to tell its story. This two hands partnership could be used to illustrate that partnership between Bible Society and the Catholic Bishops' Conference of England and Wales (CBCEW). For the last twelve months we have collaborated to make the Bible sound fresh in our communities through the *God Who Speaks* campaign.

Like any musical piece this initiative has its movements – fast and slow, pianissimo and fortissimo, themes and variations, cadenzas and improvisations, fugues and counterpoint. All to the purpose of making the Bible be that underlying score in the lives of our Christian communities. Like a good musical score or soundtrack, it describes and gives atmosphere to the story being told through interpretation and meaning. These enhance the story line and would be missed if not there. The story line is of course life's meaning and journey of each one of us before God, and in God.

### INSPIRATION

The inspiration for the *God Who Speaks* campaign lies in the 1,600th anniversary of the death of St. Jerome and the 10th anniversary of the Apostoli Exhortation *Verbum Domini* (The Word of the Lord) by Pope Benedict XVI. I would want to add the 14,00th anniversary of the first complete edition/translation of the Bible into Welsh; following the

foundational work of Bishop William Morgan (1545 – 1604). Sadly, he never saw his 1603 completed work published as the publisher's text was lost in the Great Plague in London. Finally published in 1620 his version was used in Welsh churches until 1988.

St. Jerome (340-420) was born in Strido, in Dalmatia. He studied in Rome and was baptised there. Being attracted by the ascetic life, he travelled to the East, where he was reluctantly ordained a priest. Pope Damasus recalled him to Rome to be his secretary. Following the death of Pope Damasus in 384, he returned to the East, to Bethlehem, where with the help of St. Paula, he founded a monastery, a hospice, and a school, and settled down to the most important work of his life. His translation of the Bible into Latin from the Hebrew, Aramaic and Greek is a work that with some revisions, is still in use today. Additionally, he was the author of many works, including letters and commentaries on Holy Scripture. His lifetime was filled with turmoil in the world and in the Church, yet through this all he was a true pastor helping refugees and those in need. He died at Bethlehem.

The Apostolic Exhortation *Verbum Domini* is Pope Benedict XVI's response and teaching document with recommendations arising out of the 12th Ordinary General Assembly of the Synod of Bishops, meeting in the Vatican from 5<sup>th</sup>-26<sup>th</sup> October 2008 whose theme had been *The Word of God in the Life and Mission of the Church*. The Synod was itself in the words of Pope Benedict a 'profound experience of encounter with Christ, the Word of the Father, who is present where two or three are gathered in his name (cf. Matthew 18:20).' [2]

#### THEME AND VARIATIONS

Since the late 1870s and the pontificate of Leo XIII there had been a growing awareness of the importance of the word of God and the study of the Bible in the life of the Catholic Church. This reached a new pitch at the Second Vatican Council (1962-65) with the promulgation of the Dogmatic Constitution on Divine Revelation *Dei Verbum* (Word of God) generating revived interest in the word of God in the life of the Church, the theological reflection on the divine revelation, and to the study of Sacred Scripture. Pope Benedict, picking up on the experience of encounter referred to above, speaks of his desire for the work of the Synod 'to have a real effect on the life of the Church: on our personal relationship with the Sacred Scriptures, on their interpretation in the liturgy and catechesis, and in scientific research, so that the Bible may not simply be a word from the past, but a living and timely word.' [3]

*Verbum Domini* continues that process of assimilation and lays out the principle themes of the place of the Bible in the Church's life and mission. First, the very fact of biblical revelation; the God who speaks and invites our response, and the nature of the relationship that engenders and the faith it inspires. With that faith which is the key, the Church is able to interpret the Bible authentically – the faith and the interpretation are in harmony and provide the correct understanding.

Second, *Verbum Domini* sets out the word of God and the life of the Church in her liturgy and formal worship, sacramental celebrations and preaching, the inspiring of pastoral activity, formation and private prayer in all of the faithful: ordained, religious, and lay, especially in family life.

Third, Pope Benedict addresses the issue of the mission of the Church to bring the word of God to the world not just by proclaiming it in itself, but through its proclamation in the social issues and cultural settings of today's world, as well as in the ecumenical and interreligious dialogue in which the Church engages.

His closing words are a prayer that –

*'every day of our lives ... be shaped by a renewed encounter with Christ, the Word of the Father made flesh: he stands at the beginning and the end, and "in him all things hold together" (Colossians 1:17) Let us be silent in order to hear the Lord's word and to meditate upon it, so that by the working of the Holy Spirit it may remain in our hearts and speak to us all the days of our lives. In this way the Church will always be renewed and rejuvenated, thanks to the*

*word of the Lord which remains for ever (cf. 1 Peter 1:25; Isaiah 40:8).*'[4]

Pope Benedict has spoken of the joy that comes when by the power of the Holy Spirit the divine word enters into us and bears fruit for eternal life. Joy that is to be shared, for 'By proclaiming God's word in the power of the Holy Spirit, we also wish to share the source of true joy, not a superficial and fleeting joy, but the joy born of the awareness that the Lord Jesus alone has words of everlasting life. (cf. John 6:68)'[5]

#### FUGUE AND COUNTERPOINT

Within three years of the promulgation of *Verbum Domini*, Pope Francis had been elected Pope. It was apparent from the very beginning of his pontificate that he saw the need to make the words of that Apostolic Exhortation a living reality in the Church and World, proclaiming the place and importance of the Gospels and the Bible as a whole in the life of the individual and the community. He used his weekly General Audiences on Wednesdays in St Peter's Square as well as the Sunday *Angelus Message* to promote the reading of the Sacred Scriptures by saying: "Everyone should carry a small bible or pocket edition of the gospels and should find at least a few minutes every day to read the word of God." (June 2014) and a month later, repeating the importance of reading a passage from the Gospel every day; of keeping it in our pockets, our bags, always at hand, as "everything makes sense when you find this treasure that Jesus called 'the Kingdom of God': that is, God who reigns in your life, in our lives. God is love, peace and joy in every man and in all men. ... Reading the Gospel means finding Jesus and receiving this Christian joy, which is a gift from the Holy Spirit."[6]

The message of *Verbum Domini* was not one for the individual alone, but for the Church community in all its aspects. "...the Synod called for a particular pastoral commitment to emphasising the centrality of the word of God in the Church's life, and recommended a greater "biblical apostolate", not alongside other forms of pastoral work, but as a *means of letting the Bible inspire all pastoral work.*"[7] This was first formulated by the Fathers of the Second Vatican Council in the Dogmatic Constitution on Divine Revelation *Dei Verbum* (N.24) with the purpose of not adding another layer of meetings to pastoral activity, but rather to make 'the Bible the inspiration of every ordinary and extraordinary pastoral outreach [which] will lead to a greater awareness of the person of Christ, who reveals the Father and is the fullness of divine revelation.'[8]

In October 2012 some six months before Pope Francis' election in March 2013, bishops from all the countries of the world gathered in Rome for the 13th General Assembly of the Synod of Bishops to take place in the Catholic Church. This time on the subject of *New Evangelisation* – to reflect upon a rediscovery of personal encounter with Jesus and engage with renewed vigour in the mission of spreading the joy of the Gospel and becoming spirit-filled evangelisers. Now Pope Francis, responded to the Synod proceedings with his Apostolic Exhortation *Evangelii Gaudium* (The Joy of the Gospel) in November 2013. In it he sought to encourage the Christian faithful to embark upon a new chapter of evangelisation marked by the joy of those whose hearts and lives have been filled with their encounter with Jesus and that as the basis of 'the renewal of structures demanded by pastoral conversion.'[9] That Synod and this Exhortation are but one application of the biblical apostolate called for in 1965 and from which came the *Homiletic Directory*[10]. The first part of the *Directory* is concerned principally with i. the place of the word of God in liturgical celebration and, ii. the principles of Catholic biblical interpretation.

It is against this whole contemporary background that the celebration of the two anniversaries was placed. During the spring and early summer of 2018 initial plans were drawn up, and by the autumn were presented to Bible Society and the Plenary Meeting of the Catholic Bishops' Conference. Both accepted the proposals and a celebration campaign to inspire, animate and facilitate the dioceses and parishes in England and Wales in a greater and yet more innovative use of the Scriptures in daily life was born, with the title 'The God Who Speaks'. It was to begin on the feast day of St. Jerome (30<sup>th</sup> September) 2019 and run through the liturgical year 2019-20.

#### PIANISSIMO AND FORTISSIMO

Launch events included Cardinal Vincent Nichols speaking from the National Gallery, London, about the painting of St. Jerome and St. John the Baptist by the Italian Renaissance artist Masaccio; the production of 60,000 copies of St Matthew's Gospel for distribution across the Catholic community as well as a special edition for prisoners; the creation of this distinctive website ([www.godwhospeaks.uk](http://www.godwhospeaks.uk)) to carry Bible related articles in culture, music and art, prayer and liturgy resources; resources for schools; formation resources and much more. Since that graduated launch, a huge amount of content has been added to the website. This in part due to the ever-increasing involvement and demand by schools and dioceses. The campaign was never intended to be top down, but an omnidirectional exploration and sharing across England and Wales. The project was given two further fillips by Pope Francis; one, right at the beginning when on 30<sup>th</sup> September 2019 he gave the Church the Apostolic Letter, *Aperuit Illis* (He opened their minds) which draws on Nehemiah 8: 3 and Luke 24: 45. In this Letter the Pope instituted the 'Sunday of the Word of God' to be observed annually on the Third Sunday of Ordinary Time in the Catholic liturgical calendar. Falling as it does in the Octave of Prayer for Christian Unity it deliberately 'has ecumenical value.' [11] This short letter of Pope Francis gave timely endorsement to the God Who Speaks initiative at its outset for what he said was exactly what the campaign was committed to seeking to do, viz. to 'help God's people grow in religious and intimate familiarity with sacred Scriptures. For as the sacred author taught of old: "This word is very near to you: it is in your mouth and in your heart for your observance" (Deuteronomy 30:14).' [12]

The second fillip came this year on the anniversary itself in the Apostolic Letter, ' *Scripturae Sacrae Affectus* (Devotion to Sacred Scripture)[13] in which Pope Francis writes of St Jerome's 'living and tender love' for the written word of God which continues to inspire us in an age when, 'Sadly, the richness of Scripture is neglected or minimized by many because they were not afforded a solid grounding in this area. Together with a greater emphasis on the study of Scripture in ecclesiastical programmes of training for priests and catechists, efforts should also be made to provide all the faithful with the resources needed to be able to open the sacred book and draw from it priceless fruits of wisdom, hope and life.'[\[Dei Verbum N.12\]](#)' [14] It is to provide at all levels of the Church that 'solid grounding' in the Scriptures that the campaign has, and continues to work for. This, like so much else in the last nine months, has been curtailed by the Coronavirus pandemic, or more correctly had to change direction and emphasis. COVID has affected hundreds of national and diocesan initiatives and events; diocesan Scripture Tours that had been planned for venues across the countries have had to be postponed; the wonderful and remarkable mosaic art work commissioned specifically for the campaign entitled 'Little Bits of God' by the artist Pete Codling, has yet to be seen in its full splendour by most of the dioceses, albeit there are two videos of its creation and completion on our website. Like so much else, we have found new ways to continue the work of the initiative which is now to run until the Sunday of the Word of God 2022.

#### CADENZA AND IMPROVISATION

What the lockdowns and Coronavirus restrictions have taught us is that the word of God is not to be silenced, indeed quite the opposite. This is especially true at the diocesan and local level where our network of Scripture Champions have used our resources and opportunities to explore a continued involvement by groups as well as individuals of ways of *celebrating, living and sharing* God's word. Many schools and dioceses have been engaging with the Bible in creative and innovative ways, from Bible study craft days, St Jerome's lion storytelling and Scripture soundbite videos, to Bible art competitions, Scripture detective trails and Window on the word parish photo shoots. The Coronavirus has thrown light on areas of life that may well have been overlooked in a time of health and growing prosperity, and has provided the opportunity to bring the healing, redeeming, and hope-inspiring Word to our world as it is today.

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