



BISHOP RICHARD'S

Weekly Reflection

Dear brothers and sisters in Christ,

This Sunday, designated as the 'Sunday of the Word of God' provides us with a very helpful reminder of the importance of the Scriptures in our lives. The first reading is taken from the Book of Nehemiah. This book, together with that of Ezra, describe the return of the Chosen People from exile and the rebuilding of the Temple in Jerusalem. These are joyous books, celebrating release from captivity, the return home and the re-building of all that the people of Israel held dear to them – especially the focus of their religious practice.

The extract from Nehemiah focuses on the Scriptures and the proclamation of the Word of God, together with its explanation. It is so striking to read of the emotion felt by the people as they heard the texts being read in the temple, after the many years of exile. This must prompt us to reflect on our own response to God's Word.

We hear it proclaimed, week by week, day by day in the celebration of Mass. We read the Scriptures ourselves, with many of us using these sacred texts in *lectio divina*, as God speaks to us in His Word each day. Do we become so accustomed to hearing and reading the Word of God that the text washes over us? Or do we rejoice at the wonder of the God Who Speaks to us, open to the Spirit's prompting in the Word that is always new?

In Sunday's Gospel, Jesus reads from the Scriptures in the Synagogue at Nazareth. The people, Luke tells us, were fixed on Him. They waited on His every word, that followed the text he had read from the Prophet Isaiah – words that were fulfilled in Jesus Himself.

May our minds and hearts rejoice in God's Word to us. May we be truly open

to the promptings of the Holy Spirit as we seek to put the Word into practice, as disciples of the Word Who is Life.

With every Blessing,

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