

Dear brothers and sisters,

This Sunday is the Sunday of the Word of God, designated as such by Pope Francis on the Feast of St Jerome, 30 September, in 2019 in his Apostolic Letter *Aperuit illis*. Pope Francis writes: “The Bible belongs above all to those called to hear its message and to recognise themselves in its words.”

Last Sunday, the Gospel spoke of the call of the disciples in the account given by St John. This Sunday, we listen to the account given by St Mark. In Mark’s Gospel, Jesus’ words to his first disciples are straight forward: “Follow me”. The response of Simon, Andrew, James and John is immediate: “At once, they left their nets and followed Him.”

May I invite you to reflect on the call of the disciples in the light of Pope Francis’ words? As followers of Christ, we must recognise ourselves in this Gospel account. Jesus calls me and you. His call is not in the least bit complicated, for we hear the same, straightforward words: “Follow me.” What is my response, your response? Are there excuses for not following Him at once? Are there reasons why one might follow the Lord one day – but not the next? Jesus calls to us at every moment of our lives, for He wants us to be with Him, to be one with Him.

On this Sunday of the Word of God, take time to read the Scriptures. If the habit of daily Scripture reading has drifted a little bit, make this a day for a new beginning. Find a place of honour for the Scriptures in your home – a little prayer corner where it is possible to pause during the day to read, to pray for