

**Yearly theme: Sent with Joy to Heal**

**July theme: I have sent them into the world**

**Focus: Sent to the world to heal**

**Event: Bible Sunday**

**Social Media Trend: pmptbible4all**

## **Introduction**

On 26 January 2020, Pope Francis inaugurated the first Sunday of the Word of God, with Mass in St. Peter's Basilica. The pope established the Sunday of the Word of God, to take place annually throughout the world on the third Sunday of Ordinary Time. Pope Francis preached about the life-changing power of God's word in Scripture, encouraging everyone to keep a Bible close for daily inspiration. He said, "Let us make room in our lives for the word of God. Each day, let us read a verse or two of the Bible. Let us begin with the Gospel: let us keep it open on our table, carry it in our pocket, read it on our cell phones, and allow it to inspire us daily. The Lord gives you his word, so that you can receive it like a love letter he has written to you, to help you realize that he is at your side. His word consoles and encourages us. At the same time, it challenges us, frees us from the bondage of our selfishness and summons us to conversion."

## **Opening Prayer**

Lord, you promise us that we only have to ask for wisdom to receive it. Lord, please give us your wisdom now as we prepare ourselves to dialogue, discern and to act on what we discuss today. Help us not rely on our own understanding, but in your wisdom. Amen.

## **Opening Hymn**

Chorus: O the Word of my Lord,  
Deep within my being.  
Oh the Word of my Lord,  
You have filled my mind.

Before I formed you in the womb, I knew you through and through  
I chose you to be mine before you left your mother's side  
I called to you my child to be my sign.  
I know that you are very young, but I will make you strong  
I will fill you with my word, and you will travel through the land  
Fulfilling my command, which you have learned.

And everywhere you are to go,  
My hand will follow you  
You will not be alone,

In all the danger that you fear  
You'll find me very near, Your words my own.

### **Dialogue:**

#### **The Book that Changed St. Augustine's Life**

St. Augustine of Hippo is now known as one of the greatest saints of all time. Not only was he a very holy bishop with a gift for preaching, but he also wrote many books, such as *Confessions* and *The City of God*, which are widely considered to be classics of Western literary history. However, if you have done any research into St. Augustine, you know that he lived very sinfully in his youth. He subscribed to pagan philosophies and despite his mother's fervent pleas for repentance, he continued to live with a woman out of wedlock, eventually fathering a child with her. So, what led to Augustine's conversion and made him return to God?

The answer: The Holy Bible.

In his book, *Confessions*, St. Augustine explains that his conversion was not instant. Though he had a strong desire to become a Catholic after befriending St. Ambrose, he struggled to practice some of the Church's teachings, especially that of chastity. He wrote that he asked God "to make him chaste, but not yet." One day, Augustine pleaded with God to fully convert his heart. He wanted to become a Catholic and fully embrace the Church's teachings, but he felt it impossible to detach himself from sins of the flesh.

Augustine then retreated to a garden to spend time in deep contemplation. There, he heard a child's voice imploring him to "pick up and read" the copy of Sacred Scripture he had brought into the garden with him. Immediately, Augustine opened the book to St. Paul's Letter to the Romans, 13:13-14, which states that one must "make no provision for the desires of the flesh." It was after reading those words that Augustine knew it was time to change his life.

We are all called to conversion of heart, and for most of us it is not easy. However, what we can learn from St. Augustine's story is that through the Holy Scriptures, God speaks to our restless hearts and offers us a road map to bring us home to Him.

#### **Buzz this month :**

- Do you have a favorite scripture verse? If so, what is it, and how has this verse impacted your life?
- Share a personal story or an incident where the Holy Scriptures touched your life deeply or helped you or others overcome a difficult situation.

#### **Discernment:**

Colossians 3:16; "Let the word of Christ dwell in you richly in all wisdom, teaching and admonishing one another in psalms and hymns and spiritual songs, singing with grace in your hearts to the Lord. And whatever you do in word or deed, do all in the name of the Lord Jesus, giving thanks to God the Father through Him.

### **Reflection:**

- We read the text for the first time.
- We read the text again in silence, and we listen intently to the word that the Lord wants to speak to us in our hearts.
- Each of us share aloud the word/phrase that touched us.
- We share why the word/phrase has touched us.
- Together, we choose a “word of life” which the group may reflect on for the coming month.

### **Deeds:**

- Commit yourself to reading at least one of the Gospels from start to finish in the coming month. Share with others which Gospel you would be interested to read and the reasons why it interests you. As you read through the gospel of your choice, take note of any scenes, phrases or teachings that inspire you or strike you in any way. You are encouraged to journal about how these verses are significant to you, and to allow God to speak through this process.
- In what way could we dedicate ourselves to spending more time in reading, reflecting and discussing the Holy Scriptures as a BEC? What online tools can we use for this purpose? Think of at least 2 different methods of the above, and share your ideas with one another.

### **Closing Prayer**

“Lord, thank you that you don’t leave us in the dark about who you are and what you are doing in the world, but that you have revealed yourself and your will through the Bible, your sacred words to us. Thank you for the clarity, encouragement and hope your Word brings. In Jesus’ Name I pray, Amen.”

Pray a decade of the Rosary for the needs of the families in the BEC.