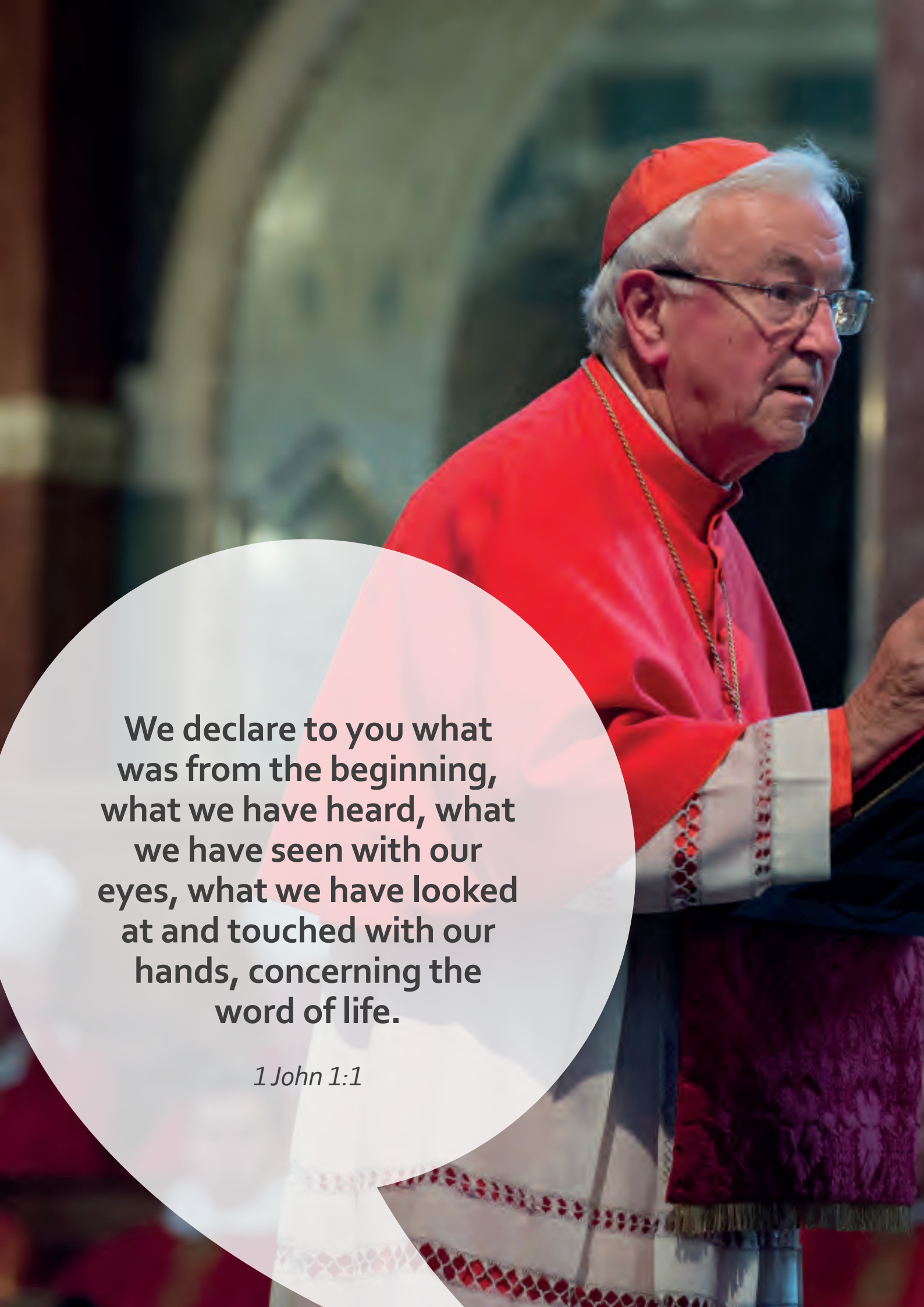
Bible Society

THE GOD WHO SPEAKS

THE YEAR OF THE WORD

in the Catholic Church in England and Wales

2020



We declare to you what was from the beginning, what we have heard, what we have seen with our eyes, what we have looked at and touched with our hands, concerning the word of life.

1 John 1:1

Introduction

It gives me great pleasure to launch our initiative – *The God Who Speaks: The Year of the Word*.

In partnership with Bible Society, this initiative focuses on celebrating, living and sharing God's word throughout the Catholic Church in England and Wales from 30th September until the end of December 2020.

The year 2020 sees the 10th anniversary of Verbum Domini, the Apostolic Exhortation of Pope Benedict XVI on The Word of the Lord. The year 2020 is also the 1,600th anniversary of St Jerome's death. These are strong reasons for us to embark at this time on a creative and deeper engagement with the Holy Scriptures across the life of each diocese.

30th September is the Feast of St Jerome and it was he who said to us: 'Ignorance of the Scriptures is ignorance of Christ.' (Jerome's Commentary on Isaiah [Nn.1.2: CCL 73, 1-3])

I invite you to take a look inside this brochure. Here you will find the three themes and vision for the year, together with information about our key events, resources and activities. Here too you will find out about our Journey with Matthew and his Gospel with our poster trail.

Please go to godwhospeaks.uk. There you will see how you can get involved in your local area.

Please pray that, during this special year, we may all be enriched and renewed by the living Word of God. Then we shall be moved afresh to share the love of Christ to the ends of the earth.

May God bless us all during this time of "The God Who Speaks: The Year of the Word"!

Cardinal Vincent Nichols,
Archbishop of Westminster

Go to godwhospeaks.uk for more information.

The God who Speaks
Our Vision and Themes

Your word is a lamp for my steps and a light for my path.

Psalm 119:105

Our Vision

Scripture is foundational to the life of the Catholic Church and so we want to celebrate, share and live out our faith through deeper Scriptural engagement.

We want to create new and renewed encounters with Christ through the Scriptures.
We want to help achieve transformation in the faith and life of our Church and in the public arena through evangelisation, education, creative arts and social action.

Our Key Themes

Celebrating God's Word
enriching our worshipping and spiritual community.

In discovering and renewing a genuine love for the word of God, we nurture our relationship with Christ. Through the Bible, we meet Christ who is alive in his word. We can listen to him speaking to us and guiding us in our daily lives.

Living God's Word
enriching our social action and outreach.

Scripture teaches us how to live in society, to respect the wonder of creation, especially each human being and to work towards the common good. The Scriptures inspire us to put faith into action, living God's word and doing God's word.

Sharing God's Word
enriching our formation, proclamation and evangelisation.

The Bible has inspired, and continues to inspire, learning, culture, art, music and literature. It enables science and faith to build up mutual understanding through dialogue. It challenges technology and social media to open up new ways to encounter and share Christ in the world.

Through our vision and themes, we have a unique opportunity to nurture and inspire our faith through attentiveness to the Bible and the great riches of our spiritual history and traditions.

Official Prayer for the Year

Longer Prayer to the God who Speaks

Creator and Source of all, you spoke to Moses calling your people into life.

He asked for your name and you revealed your mystery.

"I am who I am, who I will be, where I will be". Your divine life, beyond our inadequate images, beyond our fragile attempts to know and control. And gradually, through your prophets, you opened our minds and hearts to the immensity of the mystery of your creative mercy.

Word made Flesh, you came among us to open up a way and a life true to your mystery and true to our desire; a Word that both speaks in our hearts and through the vastness of your cosmos.

Holy Spirit, from the first Pentecost you enabled us to hear the Word in our own reality and respond to it among companions from every race and tongue. Provoke us now to return to that divine word in Creation, that Word enfleshed in Jesus, that Word spoken and recorded in the Holy Scriptures.

Touch our minds and hearts today as we read alone, as we proclaim in the liturgy, as we study together and, inspired anew, help us to become that Word for all who seek the way, the truth, and the life.

Amen

David McLoughlin

Our Bible and You Survey

Thanks to you, we have received more than 1,600 responses to our ongoing 'Bible and You' survey. This is some of what you've said so far...

84%
most hear the Bible in Church.

53%
read the Bible daily outside of Church.

41%
aren't sure where to begin with the Bible.

34%
say the Bible is extremely important to the Catholic faith.

45%
feel we don't have enough time to read the Bible.

84%
say it's important to our faith to tell others about Jesus.

Our *The God Who Speaks* initiative is seeking to celebrate, live and share God's word creatively, to break down barriers to the Bible, and to enable Catholics around the country to get the most out of the Scriptures. By offering different ways to engage with the Bible, whether for five minutes a week or an hour a day, and in a variety of formats, there's something for everybody.

Go to godwhospeaks.uk for more information about our survey.

Come to me, all you who are weary and burdened, and I will give you rest.

Matthew 11:28

Our Cardinal in the National Gallery

He has filled them with skill to do every kind of work done by an artisan or by a designer or by an embroiderer…

Exodus 35:35

We are most grateful to Cardinal Vincent Nichols for launching *The God Who Speaks* in the National Gallery, London.

The Cardinal will reflect on three devotional and dynamic paintings by different artists to bring to life their meaning for our times. The videos will go live at godwhospeaks.uk on 30th September 2019, 1st December 2019 and on 26th February 2020 to help us deepen our faith and our love of Scripture.

Why not enrich your spiritual journey further by visiting the National Gallery in person or online and discover just how many paintings focus on the Bible and Bible stories?

Our Bible Scholar's 1,600th Anniversary

Source: Wikimedia Commons

St Jerome and the Lion

In 2020, we mark the 1,600 anniversary of St Jerome's death. So who was St Jerome and why is he so important to the Bible? Why are there so many paintings of him with a lion?

St Jerome was above all a Scripture scholar, translating the Old and New Testaments from the Hebrew and Greek into Latin. He wrote many commentaries which are a great source of Scriptural inspiration for us today; and was a prodigious letter-writer with a bad temper. Saint Augustine said of him, "What Jerome is ignorant of, no mortal has ever known". Find out more about this extraordinary saint at godwhospeaks.uk.

Pete Codling

Our Artist for the Year

We are delighted to have commissioned Pete Codling as our artist for the year.

Pete will be creating an artwork based on our *The God Who Speaks* theme and we're really looking forward to seeing how he interprets this idea.

Pete will take his artwork around the dioceses for you to see and he will be talking about his artistic journey from early ideas to completion.

Scripture Seekers

How do we make sense of something as big as the Bible? With 73 books it's no small read, without even trying to remember even a fraction of all the characters.

To help you with this challenge, each month we'll explore a different part of the Bible with our Scripture Seekers' series. We'll give a short summary of each book, its purpose and content, and help you see how it fits into the overall picture of God's plan for the world.

The whole point of reading and understanding the Bible is to encounter God, understand how he reveals himself to us and to grow in faith.

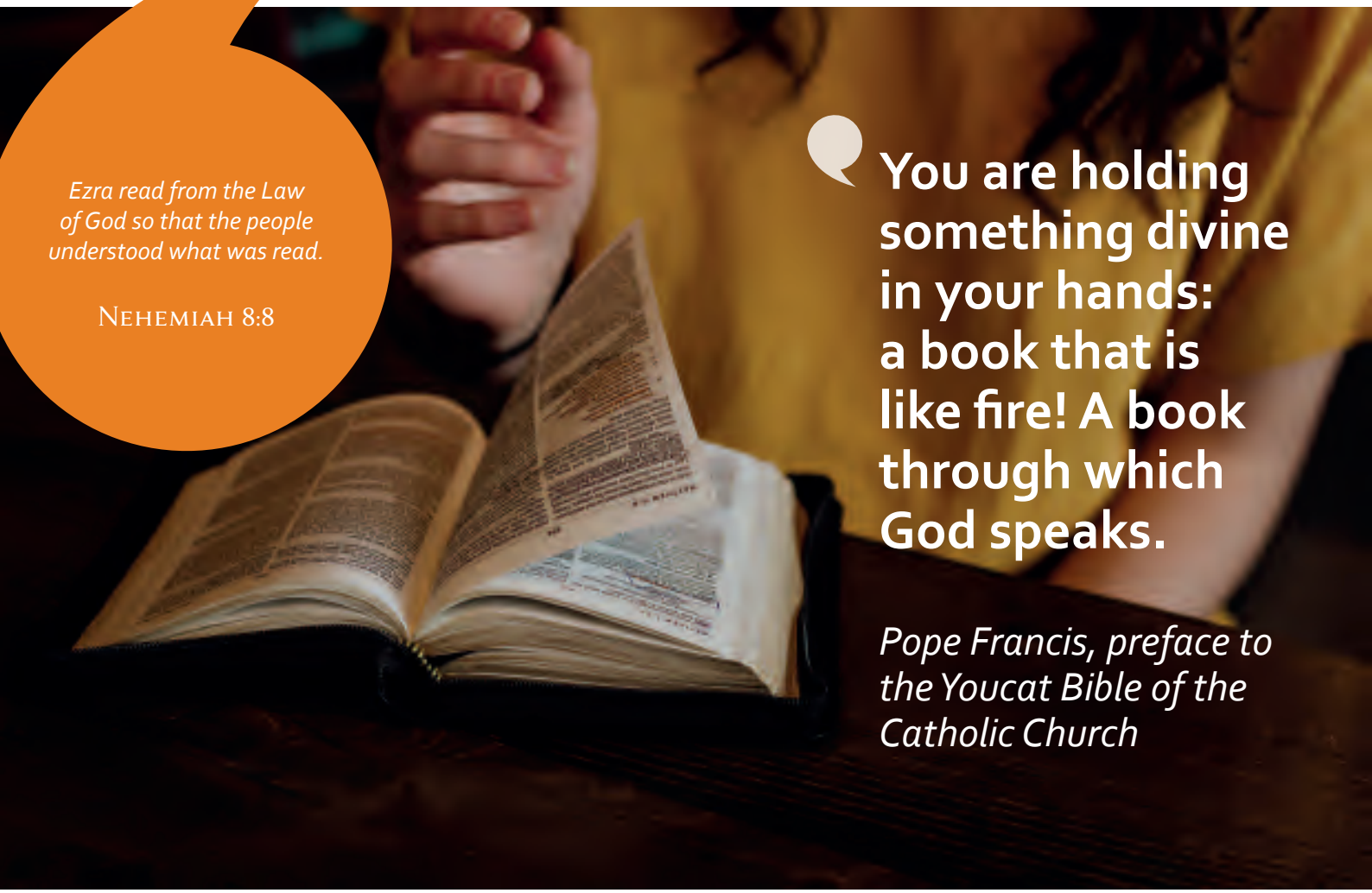
But we do not read alone. We read the Bible within the tradition of the Church in order to benefit from the holiness and wisdom of all the faithful who have gone before us.

And don't forget, it's okay to start small – just a sentence, a verse, or a paragraph is enough to begin with.

After all, the shortest verse in the Bible is made up of just four words - 'Jesus began to weep' (John 11:35). Yet these words speak volumes about Jesus as a person – how he was not afraid to cry in public, the depth of his feelings for his dear friend Lazarus and how his reactions were human, just like ours.

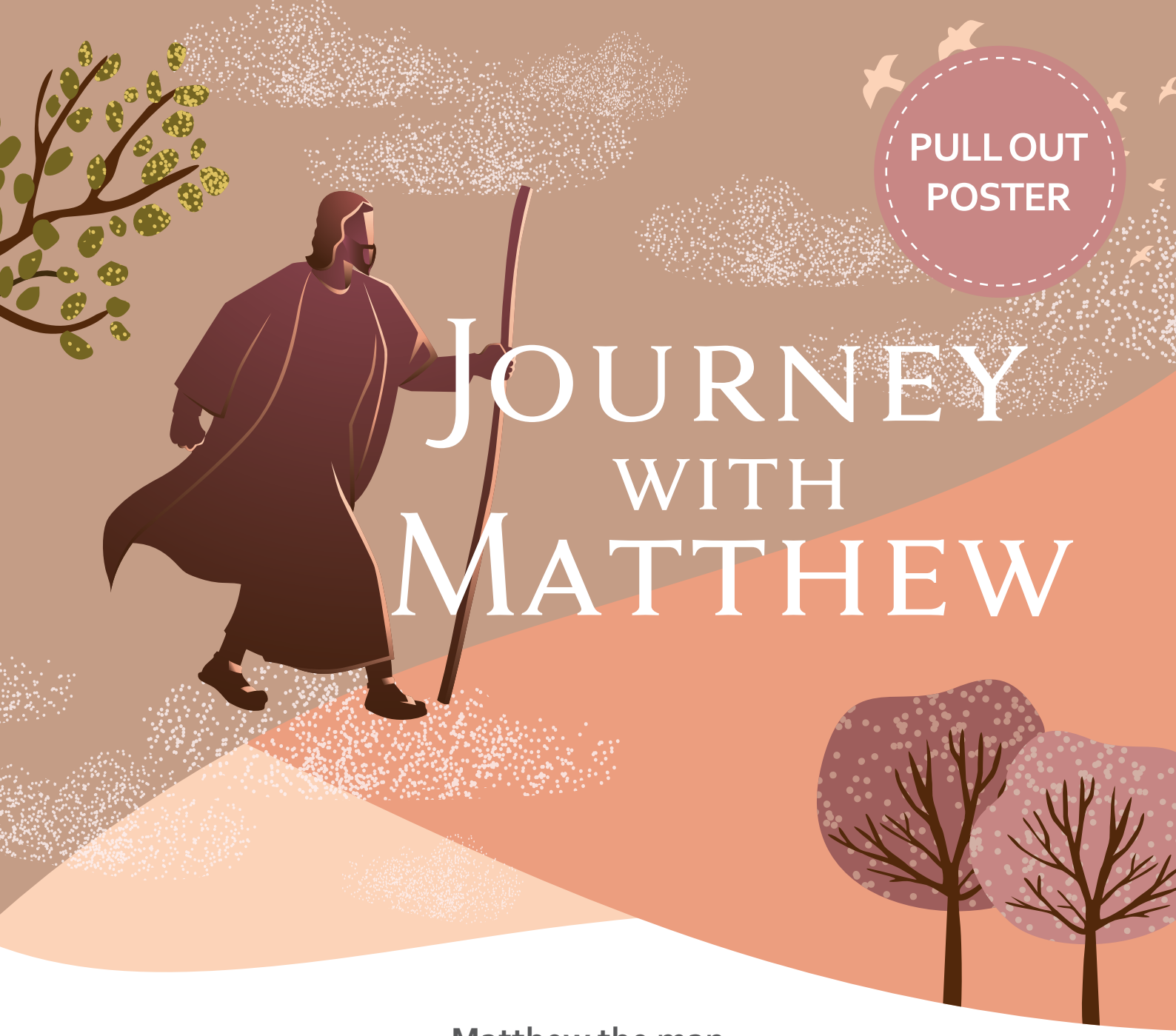
Ezra read from the Law of God so that the people understood what was read.

Nehemiah 8:8



You are holding something divine in your hands: a book that is like fire! A book through which God speaks.

Pope Francis, preface to the Youcat Bible of the Catholic Church



Matthew the man

Very little is known about St Matthew, except that he was the son of Alpheus, and he was probably born in Galilee.

He was a tax collector (a hated profession during the time of Christ), when Christ came to him and asked him to follow him. Matthew got up and followed him and, with that, he became a disciple of Christ.

Matthew presents the teaching of Jesus with a sense of order, completeness and balance. His central focus is on making Jesus' words and action stand out clearly. His concern was that Jewish and Gentile Christians live together as a Church where all share in bringing the Gospel of the Kingdom to all people.

The Gospel account of Matthew is the first of the three synoptic Gospels; it tells a similar story to the other two synoptic Gospels – and that convinces scholars of its authenticity. It is believed that many years following the death of Christ, around 41 and 50 AD, Matthew wrote his Gospel. According to early tradition he wrote the book in Aramaic in the hope that his account would convince his readers that Jesus was the Messiah and that his Kingdom had been fulfilled in a spiritual way. This was significant at a time when almost everyone was expecting the return of a more militant and violent messiah brandishing a sword.

The Prologue and Jesus' Birth and Significance

CHAPTER 1:18-25
The Nativity

The virgin will conceive and give birth to a son, and they will call him Immanuel.

Three Wise Men

CHAPTER 2:7-12

Always treat others as you would like them to treat you.

CHAPTER 3:13-17
John Baptises Jesus

Simon Peter, Andrew, James & John

CHAPTER 4:18-22

The Church, the first fruits of the Kingdom of Heaven

CHAPTER 17:1-8
Jesus is Transfigured

Jesus Asks the Disciples

CHAPTER 16:15-20

CHAPTER 15:22-28
The Daughter is Healed

CHAPTER 18:10-14
The Lost Sheep

The Coming of the Kingdom of Heaven

Love God and love your neighbour as yourself.

CHAPTER 19:13-15
Jesus Blesses the Little Children

Mother of the Sons of Zebedee

CHAPTER 20:20-28

CHAPTER 21:1-11
The Entry into Jerusalem

CHAPTER 22:1-14
Parable of the Wedding Feast

Jesus Denounces the Hypocrites

CHAPTER 23:13-36

THE GOD WHO SPEAKS

URNEY WITH TTHEW

The Kingdom of Heaven is Announced

CHAPTER 5:3-12
Sermon on the Mount
The Beatitudes

The Lord's Prayer
CHAPTER 6:9-15

CHAPTER 7:7-12
The Golden Rule

Anyone who welcomes you welcomes me.

Signs of the Kingdom

CHAPTER 8:28-34
Miracle of the Gadarene Pigs

CHAPTER 9:27-31
Jesus Heals the Blind Men

Where two or three gather in my name, there I am with them.

The Mystery of the Kingdom of Heaven

CHAPTER 14:13-21
...ng the Five Thousand

CHAPTER 13:31-33
Parable of the Mustard Seed

I speak to you in parables.

Death & Resurrection
CHAPTER 12:40-42

Come To Me All Who Are Weary
CHAPTER 11:28-30

Jesus Sends His Disciples
CHAPTER 10:5-15

The Passion and Resurrection

And know that I am with you always to the end of time.

CHAPTER 24:29-31
The Coming of the Son of Man

Parable of the Bridesmaids
CHAPTER 25:1-13

CHAPTER 26:26-29
Jesus and the Eucharist

Jesus is Crucified and Buried
CHAPTER 27:32-44

CHAPTER 28:1-10
Women Find the Empty Tomb

Matthew the Gospel writer

The Gospel of Matthew presents Jesus as a teacher from God, who is the expected Messiah and who personifies wisdom and embodies goodness.

The Kingdom of God is a central theme, which Matthew prefers to call the Kingdom of Heaven – and he refers to it as such more than 60 times. This distinction would have mattered hugely to the Jewish communities, because Jews do not pronounce the name of God.

Matthew's Gospel is written like a handbook, or catechism for the early Church, providing models for teaching, preaching, mission, community worship and dealing with disputes with outsiders. These are carefully woven into the story of Jesus and his mission. He presents a coherent perspective on Jesus, giving a rich account of Jesus' miracles and teachings while also placing them in their historical and religious context.

As Matthew is writing for a Jewish readership, his structuring of Jesus' teachings into five discourses is modelled on the five books of Moses, the Torah. The whole narrative of Jesus' life unfolds over 27 chapters. He presents Jesus as a New Moses giving a New Law. For example, he ascends the mountain in the Sermon on the Mount (Chapters 5-7) to deliver the New Law. His discourses go on to include mission (Chapter 10), the parables (Chapter 13), teachings on the Church (Chapter 18) and teachings on the future (Chapters 24-25). Matthew tells us early on, through the angel Gabriel, the Messiah to be born will be called "Immanuel, which means 'God with us'" (1:23). And, right at the end of his Gospel, Matthew completes his Gospel with Jesus' statement of his divinity. Jesus tells his disciples, "I am with you always" (28:20).

Matthew talks about upheavals six times. Jerusalem is in turmoil when Jesus enters it, with the whole city asking, 'Who is this?' (21:10). At the upheaval of the cross, the curtain of the temple was torn in two, from top to bottom. The earth shook and the rocks split (27:51) as Jesus breathed his last breath, tombs were opened and many bodies of the saints who had fallen asleep were raised (27:52). When the centurions and those who were with them guarding Jesus saw the earthquake and what took place, they were terrified and said, "Truly this man was God's Son!" (27:54). On Easter morning, Matthew speaks again of an earthquake (28:2) and how the angel of the Lord came and rolled back the stone of the tomb. The guards were so frightened, they shook and became like dead men (28:4).

There are other events which are only recorded in Matthew's Gospel, for example, Jesus' giving of "the keys" to Peter in 16:18 and the description of the Magi in Chapter 2. Matthew doesn't specify how many there are, but because he says that they brought gold, frankincense and myrrh, the popular belief is that there were three Magi or three kings as they are often called.

In the second century, St Irenaeus famously began to associate specific symbols from Ezekiel 1:1-21 and Revelation 4:6-8 with each of the four Gospels. He suggested that the winged man represented Matthew, saying:

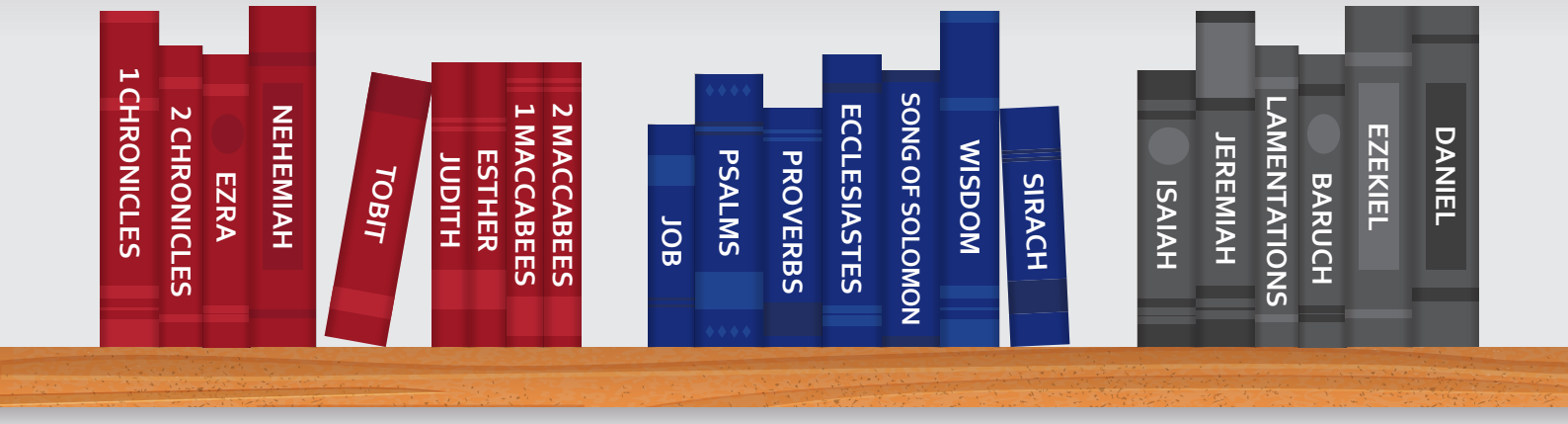
"This, then, is the Gospel of his humanity; for which reason it is, too, that the character of a humble and meek man is kept up through the whole Gospel."

The Catholic Bible

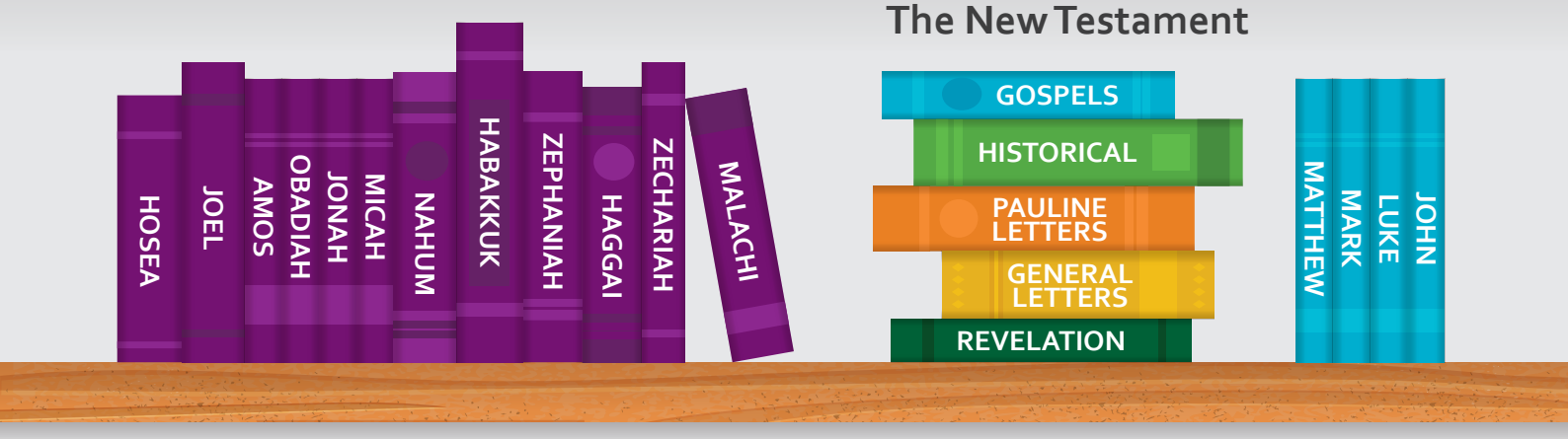
Then he said to them, "These are my words that I spoke to you while I was still with you—that everything written about me in the law of Moses, the prophets, and the psalms must be fulfilled." Then he opened their minds to understand the scriptures...

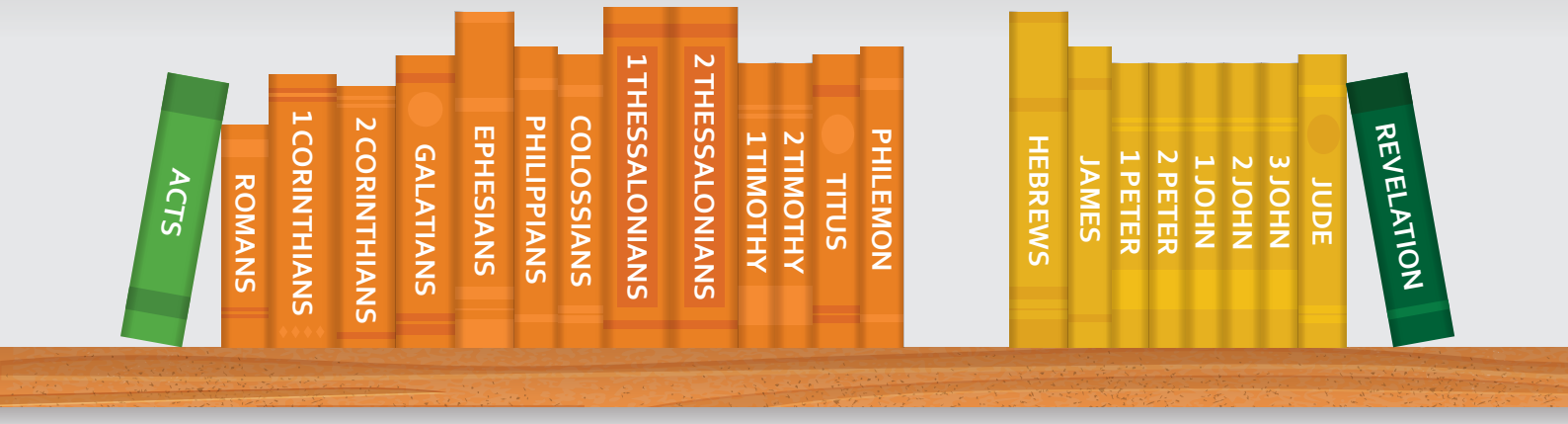
Luke 24: 44-45

The Old Testament



The New Testament





Get Involved

There are so many ways you can get involved in this exciting Initiative. Whether as individuals, groups, parishes, deaneries or dioceses, the Bible is for everyone, of all ages and all interests.

Throughout 2020, our dioceses and communities are invited to explore:

- In what good ways do we celebrate, live and share God's word?
- Where might there be gaps? Is anyone excluded?
- What new ways and opportunities might be open to us?
- What actions can we take to encourage our communities to become more familiar with the Bible?

Go therefore and make disciples of all nations, baptising them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit.

Matthew 28:19

Diocesan Scripture Champions

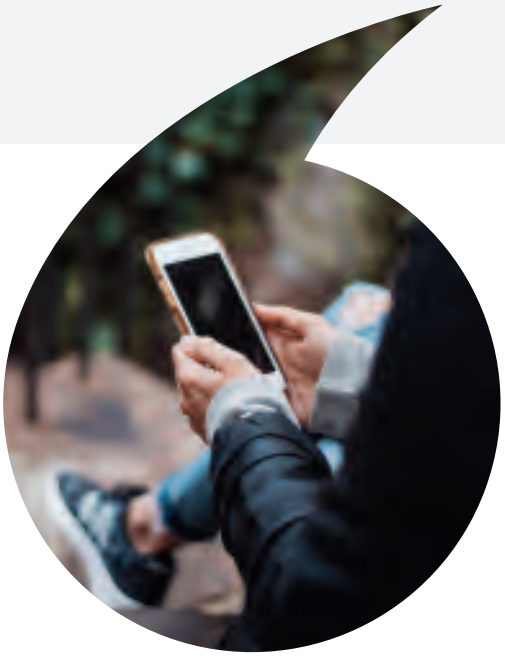
Each diocese has Scripture Champions working within a team to help communicate ideas, events and resources across the diocese, and liaising with the national 2020 Planning Team. Make sure you know the names of your Scripture Champions and find out what they're planning or co-ordinating in your area.

For more information contact **godwhospeaks@cbcew.org.uk**.

Ideas for getting started

To help you get the most out of the campaign, take a look at the following ideas. For more detailed information about these ideas go to **godwhospeaks.uk**.

The Bible in your pocket – Pope Francis says everyone should carry a Bible in their pocket, and read it on the bus or at any time in the day. A short phrase or single sentence can transform our hearts and minds if we reflect on it in a quiet moment. Buy a Bible from **biblesociety.org.uk/products/**.



Our Timeline

30th September 2019
Official launch of *The God Who Speaks* with Cardinal Vincent Nichols in the National Gallery.

13th - 19th October 2019
National Prisons' Week - focus on our prison communities.

1st December 2019
Cardinal Vincent Nichols in the National Gallery - Advent video goes live.

Throughout the campaign we will highlight different themes and opportunities to bring Scripture into our lives.

Feast of St Jerome

National Prisons' Week

All Saints and Souls
Focus on death and dying well.

Advent Begins

Advent

Christmas

SEP 2019 OCT 2019 NOV 2019 DEC 2019

Here are just some activities and events that you might undertake in your parish, school or community:

- **Bible study groups and Bible Book clubs**
- **Bible and art workshops**
- **Bible and saints groups**
- **Bible and prayer groups**
- **Bible and the environment groups**
- **Bible and social justice groups**
- **Bible and music events**
- **Bible foods and fellowship**
- **Bible and local church pilgrimage walks**
- **Bible vigils for those being persecuted for reading the Bible**

For more information about setting up these groups visit **godwhospeaks.uk**.

Matthew's Gospel

As part of its usual cycle of Scripture readings, the Church focuses on St Matthew's Gospel in 2020. So get to know our Lectionary Gospel-writer better by creating a Monthly Matthew group. Read up on who Matthew was, then take a chapter each session to follow his journey throughout the year. Use our Matthew Poster and follow the Gospel trail!

Why not be a reader?

Reading in church is a unique opportunity to develop a regular love and understanding of the Scriptures, and to go deeper into a journey of a lifetime.

We'd love your feedback on what you do and share in 2020. We'd love to hear your stories, projects, events and ideas so that we can share them around the dioceses and inspire others with your creativity. Please email godwhospeaks@cbcew.org.uk.

8th February 2020 Bakhita Day

9th February 2020 Racial Justice Sunday

26th February 2020 Ash Wednesday - Cardinal Vincent Nichols in the National Gallery - Lent video goes live.

5th March 2020 World Book Day

12th April 2020 Easter Sunday

Focus on Matthew the gospel writer.
Focus on education, catechesis and formation.

Focus on human trafficking and migration.

LENT BEGINS

Focus on disability, work and employment.

EASTER

Focus on baptism.

SCRIPTURE TOUR ACROSS THE DIOCESES

JAN 2020 FEB 2020 MAR 2020 APR 2020

THE Wednesday WORD

Make 2020 a special year for your primary school.

A weekly scriptural leaflet bringing families together around the Word of God.

I am pleased to offer a word of encouragement and endorsement for The Wednesday Word.

Each Wednesday the materials supplied can help to:

- *Develop a habit of prayer and reflection on the Word of God within the family*
- *Form hearts and minds to hear and understand the Word of God the following Sunday*
- *Put the Word of God into the home of every child in a Catholic school*

I offer my prayers and encouragement not only to those who provide The Wednesday Word but also to all those who use it.

Cardinal Vincent Nichols

2020: The Wednesday Word connecting Home, School & Parish through Scripture

Find out more at **wednesdayword.org** & **godwhospeaks.uk**

The Wednesday Word Trust is a registered Catholic Charity supplying scriptural resources for parishes and primary schools.

Key Resources

Scripture Resources

Special 2020 editions of:
- Matthew's Gospel
- Matthew: A Message of Mercy for our prison community
- Autism-friendly Easter and Christmas stories

- Official prayer cards
- Online ideas, downloads, articles and further Scripture tools.
- Scripture training for Readers, Parish leaders and Catechists on request.

For information about all these resources visit **godwhospeaks.uk**

Our Timeline

May 2020
National Marriage Week
Migrants' Masses

31st May 2020
Focus on Pentecost

14th June 2020
Corpus Christi

28th June 2020
Sts Peter and Paul

15th August 2020
Feast of the Assumption of our Lady

Ascension

Focus on the Eucharist.

Focus on saints and pilgrimage.
Focus on our Catholic heritage and patrimony.

Focus on Christian unity and inter-faith dialogue.

Scripture Tour across the Dioceses

Diocesan Scripture Tours

We're offering dioceses the opportunity to collaborate with our National Planning Team through our Scripture Tour package.

This exciting initiative aims to create local Scriptural ownership of events and activities alongside meeting our official artist and his artwork, participating in our interactive tents and promoting great resources. If you'd like to create some Scripture-filled events across your diocese, invite great speakers and celebrate your communities through art, music, worship, food and fun then we'd love to help you make the most of your ideas.

Bible Society Dome Events

In partnership with Bible Society we'll also be promoting Bible Dome events in the following cities: *Brighton, Birmingham, Exeter, Hull, Liverpool, Manchester, Newcastle, Nottingham, Swansea.*

Home 360 provides a unique opportunity for local churches to partner with Bible Society during *The God Who Speaks* campaign. Working together, thousands of people in cities, towns and communities around the UK will get to experience the big story of the Bible in the summer of 2020.

Using innovative film technology inside a large 9-metre diameter dome structure, people will have the opportunity to encounter the story of the Bible through a powerful immersive 360-degree film experience. We hope the short film will provoke an emotional and thoughtful response as people discover their story in God's big story.

Visit godwhospeaks.uk or email godwhospeaks@cbcew.org.uk for more information.

21st September 2020
Feast of St Matthew

30th September 2020
1,600th anniversary of St Jerome's death

December 2020
Celebrating *The God Who Speaks*

Focus on the environment.

Feast of St Jerome

Focus on Mary.
Focus on retreats.

Focus on mental health and healthcare.

Advent Begins

Advent

Christmas

SEP 2020 | OCT 2020 | NOV 2020 | DEC 2020

Grants to Support You

What good is it, my brothers and sisters, if you say you have faith but do not have works? Can faith save you?

James 2:14

We are offering a small number of *Year of the Word* grants to help fund innovative projects that inspire individuals and communities to engage with Scripture across the dioceses.

You can apply for these grants from 1st October 2019 – 6th March 2020.

There are two funding streams, and we invite applications that fit either stream A or stream B below.

Stream A: Engaging Disabled Catholics
This stream of grant funding offers £1,000 for Scripture-based projects that equip and enable disabled Catholics to engage with the Bible.

Stream B: Creative Scriptural Projects
This stream offers funding to dioceses for Scripture-based projects that encourage an exploration of the Scriptures in a creative, innovative and sustainable way.

In particular, projects will be expected to:

- Reflect one of our 3 themes: Celebrating God's Word, Living God's Word or Sharing God's Word
- Respond to the particular need of a definable group or network of Catholics in your diocese
- Explore how this group or network is currently being supported in their Scriptural engagement
- Be rooted in Scripture, with engagement with the Bible at its heart, whilst being fresh and innovative

Visit godwhospeaks.uk for information about our grants application process.

Pilgrim Prayer for the Year

Pilgrim God, you walk alongside us and speak to us throughout the Scriptures:
in the message of the prophets, the songs of David and the vision of Paul.

Your Son, Jesus Christ, listens to our hopes and fears and shows us how to live:
in our love of neighbour, our desire for justice, and in our dying and rising each day.

Send us the Holy Spirit to open our hearts and minds so that we may be your witnesses throughout the world:
in our protection of the vulnerable, our words and actions and in our communion with the earth.

Amen

V. Your word is our path and your truth is our light.
R. This day and every day.

Our Lady of the Annunciation PRAY FOR US.
St Matthew PRAY FOR US.
St Jerome PRAY FOR US.

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National Planning Team:
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Deacon Adrian Cullen – Evangelisation Co-ordinator, Westminster Diocese
Sr Hyacinthe Defos du Rau, OP – Dominican Sister & Head of Formation for Mission, Portsmouth Diocese
Fleur Dorrell – Catholic Scripture Engagement Manager for Catholic Bishops' Conference & Bible Society
Martin Foster – Director, Liturgy Office & Assistant Secretary, Department for Christian Life and Worship, Catholic Bishops' Conference
David McLoughlin – Emeritus Fellow of Christian Theology at Newman University, Birmingham
Frances Murphy – Editor of Thinking Faith, the online journal of the Jesuits in Britain

CBCEW **cbcew.org.uk**
The Catholic Bishops' Conference of England and Wales is the permanent assembly of Catholic Bishops and Personal Ordinaries in the two member countries. The membership of the Conference comprises the Archbishops, Bishops and Auxiliary Bishops of the 22 Catholic Dioceses of England and Wales. The other members are the Bishop of the Forces (Military Ordinariate), the Apostolic Eparch of the Ukrainian Church in Great Britain, the Apostolic Eparch for Syro-Malabar Catholics in Great Britain, the Ordinary of the Personal Ordinariate of Our Lady of Walsingham and the Apostolic Prefect of the Falkland Islands.

BIBLE SOCIETY **biblesociety.org.uk**
Across the world, millions of people are not engaging with the Bible. This is often because the Scriptures aren't available or accessible, or because their significance and value haven't yet been recognised. Working in over 200 countries, Bible Society is a charity and on a mission to offer the Bible to every man, woman and child. This is because we believe that when people engage with the Bible, lives can be changed, for good. Cardinal Vincent Nichols is one of Bible Society's Vice-Presidents.

For further information about
The God Who Speaks campaign:

National Planning Team
Contact godwhospeaks@cbcew.org.uk

godwhospeaks.uk

Follow us on social media

@catholicEW

/cbcew

#godwhospeaks
#2020TGWS

The ancient statue of Our Lady of Walsingham.
www.walsingham.org.uk

Mary treasured all these words and pondered them in her heart.

Luke 2:19

Bible Society