Press Release: Sunday of the World of God

January 23, 2022

3rd Sunday of the Word of God

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January 23, 2022, will see the third celebration of the ***Sunday of the Word of God***, which was instituted by Pope Francis on September 30, 2019.

At 9:30 a.m. the Holy Father will preside at Holy Mass in Saint Peter's Basilica. In compliance with the health regulations currently in force, the number of participants at the Holy Mass will be limited to two thousand. During the celebration, there will be some very significant moments. The Holy Father will present those attending with a book, published by Edizioni San Paolo, containing a commentary by the Fathers of the Church on chapters four and five of the Gospel of Saint Luke. Thus Pope Francis intends to underline the responsibility believers have to grow in the knowledge of Sacred Scripture and to keep it alive through a work of permanent transmission and understanding.

Tied to this celebration is the conferral to lay men, and for the first time to lay women, of the Ministries of the Lector and Acolyte. With the publication of his Apostolic Letter, in the form of Motu Proprio, *Spiritus Domini* (January 10, 2021), and his Letter to the Prefect of the Congregation for the Doctrine of the Faith, Pope Francis established that the Ministries of the Lector and Acolyte be open to lay men and women, in a stable and institutionalized form through a special mandate, which in this

celebration is realized and expressed in a liturgical rite. Previously, the ministry of Lector, like that of Acolyte, was reserved only to men because it was considered preparatory to receiving Holy Orders. A well-established practice in the Church, however, has confirmed that lay ministries, founded on the sacrament of Baptism, can be entrusted to all the faithful who are suitable, whether male or female, according to what is already implicitly indicated by canon 230 of the Code of Canon Law, which the Pope has modified for the occasion.

Finally, the Holy Father will confer the Ministry of Catechist on some lay faithful, women and men; a ministry already established through the publication, on May 10, 2021, of the Apostolic Letter, in the form of *Motu Proprio, Antiquum Ministerium*. In the history of the Church, innumerable lay men and lay women have taken part directly in spreading the Gospel through catechetical instruction. These men and women, animated by a great faith and authentic witnesses to holiness, were in some cases even founders of Churches, going so far as to give their lives for their beliefs. Even in our day, many capable and tenacious catechists head communities in the different regions and carry out an irreplaceable mission in the transmission and deepening of the faith.

Each of these two ministries is conferred through a rite, prepared by the Congregation for Divine Worship and the Discipline of the Sacraments, used here for the first time. Prior to the Homily, the candidates will be summoned by name and presented to the Church. After the Homily, those to be instituted as Lectors will be given the Bible, the Word of God, which they are called to proclaim. Catechists, on the other hand - to recall the missionary character of the service they are about to administer - will be entrusted with a cross, a reproduction of the pastoral cross used first by Saint Paul VI, and then by Saint John Paul II.

Lay men and lay women representing the People of God from South Korea, Pakistan, Ghana and various parts of Italy will receive the Ministry of the Lectors. Also present to receive the Ministry of Catechist will be: two lay persons from the Apostolic Vicariate of Yurimaguas (Peru) in the Amazon; two lay faithful from Brazil who are already involved in the formation of Catechists; a woman from Kumasi, Ghana; the current President of the *Centro Oratori Romani* (the COR was founded by Catechist, Arnaldo Canepa, who dedicated more than forty years of his life to the foundation and direction of Oratories for children, the first of which was opened in 1945); a lay man and a lay woman from #ód# (Poland) and Madrid (Spain), respectively. Due to travel difficulties caused by the health restrictions currently in force, the hoped-for presence of two faithful, one from the Democratic Republic of Congo and one from Uganda, was not possible.

The event will be televised live by *Vatican Media Live* and it will be broadcasted via streaming on the Vatican News portal (vaticannews.va) and live on the main television stations around the world. In Italy, among others, by Rai1 and Tv2000.

The Pontifical Council for the Promotion of the New Evangelization, the Vatican Dicastery entrusted by the Holy Father with the promotion of the event, has made available a *liturgical-pastoral resource* useful for meditating on the Word of God in the community, in the family and personally. This liturgical resource is available in Italian in a printed version published by Edizioni San Paolo and can be downloaded in its English, Spanish, Portuguese and Romanian versions in the "activities" section of the Dicastery's web page (www.pcpne.va).

The *Sunday of the Word of God* seeks to highlight the presence of the Lord in the life of men and women. God really walks with us and is present through the Word, as expressed in the logo of the Sunday of the Word of God, inspired by the biblical story of the Disciples of Emmaus who, while on their way, revisit the Scriptures with the Lord, allowing themselves to be taught and enlightened.