



# Bringing Home the Word

Third Sunday in Ordinary Time (C)  
January 23, 2022

## Rediscovering God's Love

By Fr. Mark Haydu, LC

**H**ave you ever lost something and then, after some time passes, finally found it? Perhaps your keys, a cell phone, or worse still, a credit card? When we find utilitarian items that we've lost or misplaced, we're so relieved and happy because we need these things for daily living. But what if we lose our whole purpose for living? Then we're really in trouble.

The people to whom Nehemiah was speaking lost more than something material; they lost the key to who they were as a people. They lost the law

of God that had been given to them through Moses hundreds of years before. They were now listening to it for the first time. Upon hearing all its wisdom and prescriptions, they were cut to the heart and wept. There was so much they had forgotten and were no longer practicing. As exiles in Babylon, they had lost so much.

Yet the response toward this rediscovery could have been joy, because now they knew once again what made for happiness and living in the Lord. They had discovered the love that called them into existence.

We have been given the Holy Spirit who leads us into all truth and reminds us of everything Jesus taught us in Scriptures and Tradition. Knowing God's truth is the deepest source of joy. Finding him is like finding what was lost. Like the found key, God unlocks our happiness. Like a cell phone, he gives us a constant connection with him. And like a credit card—but infinitely better—God is the love that fulfills our desires. And we never have to pay him back. +

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## A Word from Pope Francis

Without Christ we are condemned to be dominated by everyday weariness, with its worries, and by fear of the future. The Sunday encounter with the Lord gives us the strength to experience the present with confidence and courage, and to go forth with hope. For this reason, we Christians go to encounter the Lord... in the Eucharistic celebration.

—General Audience, December 13, 2017



## REFLECTION QUESTIONS



- Is there any aspect of God's word or truth that I have ignored or forgotten?
- How can I rediscover and accept that truth again?

## Sunday Readings

### Nehemiah 8:2-4a, 5-6, 8-10

Ezra read clearly from the book of the law of God, interpreting it so that all could understand what was read.

### 1 Corinthians 12:12-30 or 12:12-14, 27

As a body is one though it has many parts, and all the parts of the body, though many, are one body, so also Christ.

### Luke 1:1-4, 4:14-21

The Spirit of the Lord is upon me, because he has anointed me to bring glad tidings to the poor.

# Finding the Best Mass

By Very Reverend Bruce Lewandowski, CSsR

I think everyone has his or her list of “bests:” the best ice cream, the best fried chicken, the best seat in the ballpark, the best route to work, the best hospital, or the best movie ever made. You get the idea. We gravitate toward things and experiences that meet a particular set of standards that we hold for others and ourselves. We instinctively rate our experiences, categorizing them as good, better, and best or—on the flip side—not so bad, bad, and awful.

Even Mass is subject to our inner critic and our personal rating system. So, where’s the best Mass? Before I go any further, I feel the need to divulge the fact that I attended Catholic school my entire life, and the idea that, regardless of the details, the Mass is the Mass and no one celebration is better than another was instilled in me repeatedly. Every Mass offers us the opportunity to have an awesome exchange with God, and each one deserves our reverence and respect, even if human weakness and error sometimes take center stage.

But aren’t some celebrations of the Mass really just better than others? I don’t mean your first holy Communion, wedding, or fiftieth anniversary. Certainly, those are special celebrations.

I’m referring to that Sunday Mass in your diocese that everyone talks about, saying, “They have the best Mass.” Maybe the priest gives memorable homilies, or they have an exemplary



music ministry, or they excel at making everyone feel welcome. Everyone flocks to that church and wishes their parish had that kind of Mass.

What if we rated Sunday Masses? What if you could look online or leaf through a diocesan directory to find out how others rate the various components of a Mass? Everything from architecture and parking to the style and character of worship could be described and rated. Many dioceses have relaxed regulations regarding territorial parishes. There are many options for Mass.

The challenge is to make worship relevant. If Masses were rated, competition might result. Competition is good when the goal is to attract more

people to Jesus through the celebration of the Mass. The Mass well-prepared and executed is the best tool we have for evangelization. The Mass has the power to draw us together into the very life of God. So why not market the Mass where it’s done well? We shop for the best in so many areas of life. We search for the best jobs, schools, and other things. Isn’t the Mass worth all that, and so much more? +

*We’re taught that  
all Masses are good,  
but what if we rated them?*

**PRAYER**

*Lord, you created all people equal.  
Open my eyes to recognize  
the dignity of all people and  
my heart to love unconditionally.*

—From *Peaceful Meditations for Every Day  
in Ordinary Time*, Rev. Warren J. Savage  
and Mary Ann McSweeney

## WEEKDAY READINGS

January 24–29

**Monday**, St. Francis de Sales:  
2 Sm 5:1–7, 10 / Mk 3:22–30

**Tuesday**, The Conversion of St. Paul the Apostle:  
Acts 22:3–16 or Acts 9:1–22 / Mk 16:15–18

**Wednesday**, Sts. Timothy and Titus:  
2 Tm 1:1–8 or Ti 1:1–5 / Mk 4:1–20

**Thursday**, Weekday:  
2 Sm 7:18–19, 24–29 / Mk 4:21–25

**Friday**, St. Thomas Aquinas: 2 Sm 11:  
1–4a, 5–10a, 13–17 / Mk 4:26–34

**Saturday**, Weekday:  
2 Sm 12:1–7a, 10–17 / Mk 4:35–41

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