



## Focus on Religious Freedom

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### Sunday of the Word of God: January 26, 2025

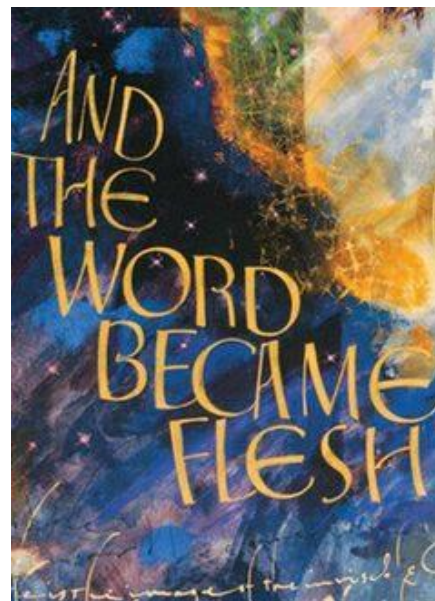
In September, 2019 Pope Francis declared that the third Sunday in Ordinary Time would be the Sunday of the Word of God to reawaken in our lives the importance of scripture.

“To mark Word of God Sunday, Pope Francis leaves it up to parish communities to decide how it will be observed, but he noted that Masses should “highlight the proclamation of the word of the Lord” and the honor that it is due. Pope Francis explained: “The relationship between the Risen Lord, the community of believers, and sacred Scripture is essential to our identity as Christians.” <https://tinyurl.com/mwwwyvwd>  
<https://tinyurl.com/5y2cz7ua>

In the United States the First Amendment to our Constitution protects the right of each citizen to choose his faith and to practice that faith openly, without persecution or retribution. The five First Amendment freedoms are the freedom to choose one’s faith, the right to practice that faith, freedom of the press, freedom of assembly and freedom of redress...all supportive of the ability to worship, evangelize, assemble to worship, and redress the government in case of grievances against religious freedom. Our first amendment is critical to many of the functions of a free people, but our founders placed religious freedom first to emphasize its importance.

Reading the Bible, teaching its lessons and evangelizing the word of God are practices flowing from our rights, not to be taken for granted. Each year Word of God Sunday can remind us to exercise the right to free use of the Bible. Here is a link to suggestions for sharing the Word of God in our homes: <https://tinyurl.com/bdz7jw3m>

A wonderful and unique opportunity to appreciate the beauty of the Bible is to make a plan to see one of the volumes of the hand calligraphed St. John’s Bible on display at museums, universities, churches around the USA. This first Bible of its kind commissioned in over 500 years was the project of monks at St. John’s Abbey in Collegeville, Minnesota. From his scriptorium in Wales the calligraphy was done under the direction of Donald Jackson, the calligrapher to the Queen of England and to the Pope. There his team hand calligraphed the entire Bible and added 160 original illuminations. The pages open to two feet high by three feet wide. Each location has its own viewing schedule: <https://tinyurl.com/mry3asf7>



One of the illuminations from the St. John’s Bible