



Prot. N. (1) 22/2023

January 5, 2023

Dear Brothers and Sisters in Christ,

May the Lord give you peace!

On January 22, during the Third Sunday in Ordinary Time, we will celebrate the Sunday of the Word of God. On the Solemnity of the Queen of Palestine (October 30<sup>th</sup>, 2022), I recalled what a wonderful experience it had been last year, when many parish communities and families stopped for a day to read and pray with the Bible.

The Pope's initiative and the positive response from many give us hope that January 23<sup>rd</sup> will be another opportunity to develop our relationship with the Word of God and particularly with the New Testament, which is the witness to the words and gestures of Jesus and the first disciples. They are the texts on which we base our faith. For this reason, I invite our entire Diocese, individuals and ecclesial realities alike, each to the extent of their own possibilities, to read the entire New Testament. You will soon find on the website of the Patriarchate the necessary indications for participating, as well as some liturgical and spiritual suggestions that will accompany this year's reading.

I would now like to give this reading a special meaning. In our Synod, great importance was given to listening, communion and mission. "These are the three words of the Synod. In order to live in communion with each other, a true communion, it is important to listen to one another. Family members who do not listen to each other lose communion over time, because they are no longer able to share life. And the same thing also happens in beautiful religious communities and our parish communities". (homily of October 30).

The ability to listen to others and the ability to listen to the Word of God go together. One inevitably leads to the other, so listening and living close to the Word of God also makes us capable of paying attention to the other and to the needs of our community, and strengthens and nourishes our faith as Christians as well.



I cannot deny the many problems that afflict our respective societies. "Impoverishment of so many families, economic fragility, rampant violence in cities and villages, social and sometimes even religious tensions, youth unemployment, and increasingly fragile politics, which stand far away from the reality of the country and are unable to give clear and immediate answers to the many needs of our society. I am thinking in particular of the political and military tensions in Palestine, which recently seem to slowly but increasingly resemble the most difficult political and military tensions we've

known in the past, which we've unfortunately experienced several times. There is a deep distrust, especially among young people, who are impatient to find answers to their expectations regarding life and dignity. This year, there have been too many funerals of young people who have died in this interminable conflict.” (homily of October 30).

The hope, therefore, is that this Sunday of the Word of God will bring us all together to listen to the voice of God, who calls us on the paths of peace. In turn, we will raise our voices and ask the Lord to listen to “our desire for justice and peace, to ask those in powers to really commit themselves to the common good of all.” (homily of October 30).

Finally, from the importance we give to listening to the precious Word of God, we hope that, as the Pope wishes, “the Sunday of the Word of God help his people to grow in religious and intimate familiarity with the sacred Scriptures” (Motu proprio *aperuit illis*, 15). Therefore, with this year’s Sunday of the Word of God, I propose for our whole Church to read in its entirety the Gospel of Luke during Lent, and the Acts of the Apostles during Easter. Before Lent, useful information to read the two books of St. Luke day by day will be made available on the website of the Patriarchate.

May the intercession of the Blessed Virgin Mary allow us to find in our relationship with the Word of God a source of consolation and joy,



Pierbattista Pizzaballa  
Latin Patriarch of Jerusalem