

SUNDAY OF THE WORD OF GOD
“The word of Christ dwells among you” (Col 3:16)
January 25th, 2026

This year marks the seventh edition of Sunday of the Word of God. It falls on January 25th, a date the liturgy links to Saul's encounter on the road to Damascus—a journey defined by revelation, vocation, and profound inner enlightenment.

As we acknowledge the vital roles played by the Society of St. Paul and the Community of St. Giles in establishing this day, we approach this year's observance with particular intensity.

The theme for 2026 presents several challenging questions: What makes our service to the Word unique or "unprecedented" compared to other publishers? What keeps our work vibrant and reverent toward a Word that reveals—yet never exhausts—the mystery of God? Ultimately, how can we foster the vision St. Paul describes in Colossians 3:16: "The word of Christ dwells among you"?

To outline an initial response to these questions, we find four key areas of focus:

1. **The Mystery of the Incarnation:** The Word became flesh and assumed a human face. In the Book of Revelation, this is the face of the Risen One—the First and the Last, the Living One—who holds the keys to life, death, and Sheol, and who alone is worthy to open the Book and its seven seals. Our service to the Word is prophetic only when it leads to an encounter with a person, not just a text; when it invites us into a living experience rather than mere content consumption. This Word shapes and challenges us from within, liberating us from the complacency of academic knowledge and placing us before a mystery that can never be exhausted. These qualities must define our editorial mission, invigorate our pastoral ministry, and characterize our formative programmes.
2. **The Relational Dimension:** In its most fundamental sense, a "word" only gains meaning when it is addressed to another, weaving a relationship. This is profoundly true of the Word of God. Typically, when someone enters a bookstore seeking a Bible, they are shown editions reflecting the perspectives of specific groups: the *Jerusalem Bible* (Dominican), the *Bible in Contemporary Language* (Salesian), or the *Way, Truth, and Life Bible* (Pauline). While these are expertly curated, a risk remains: receiving the Word without its "ecclesial breath." Producing a Catholic

Bible involves more than adding introductions and footnotes; it requires listening to a Word that surpasses us, valuing the richness of Jewish tradition, the wisdom of the Church Fathers, the liturgy, and the diverse charisms stirred by the Spirit. Only then does the Word truly "breathe," moving beyond self-promotion or narrow academic exercise.

3. **Universality:** The Bible is a Word "for everyone" and "of everyone," and it must be translated into every tongue. Currently, 3,500 of the world's 7,100 languages still lack a translation of even a single book of the Old Testament. It is estimated that 1.6 billion people—nearly 20% of the global population—cannot access the Bible in their native language. While the Gospels have a wider reach, available in roughly 5,600 languages, the technical work of Bible Societies is not enough. We must consider both East and West, seekers and the consecrated, the simple and the learned, children and the youth. For us, reaching diverse audiences requires more than a new cover design. After a century of service, we possess a vast legacy of textual, iconographic, and multimedia resources. Our task is to circulate this heritage in a coordinated, thoughtful way, passing on to future generations what our predecessors prepared with passion and foresight, especially through charismatic initiatives like SOBICAIN.
4. **Communicative Style:** Today, relying solely on static text or isolated images is insufficient. The Word is reclaiming its original dimensions: listening, relationship, and an immersive experience of mystery. We must create communicative environments where text and image "speak" to one another within the context of a personal relationship. A proclamation without relationship is not evangelization; it is merely propaganda, marketing, or a commercial transaction. In a world where mediation is increasingly "artificial" (AI, digital automation, and chatbots), our service must be distinguished by a "relational imprint" that fosters deep listening and a mystagogical journey. The world is thirsty for this, as evidenced by the rising demand for Bibles—not only in the U.S. (up 20% in two years) but also across Latin America and Europe.

In summary, what renders our service to the Word 'prophetic' and alive? It is our love for Christ, our fidelity to the Church, our universal openness, and our distinct style of communication. In these qualities, we find the unique spirit of the Apostle Paul. We are not inventing a new path; we simply desire to be, at our very core, true 'children' of St. Paul.