

## **Diocese of Menevia**

### **Year of the Word, The God Who Speaks: The Journey so far and the way forward**

#### **Preamble**

The Year of the Word has been a source of great blessing to the Church in Wales and England. It has given us all an opportunity to renew our love for the Holy Scriptures through celebrating, living and sharing them with others. Here in Menevia, we developed a programme to deepen our knowledge and love of the sacred Scriptures, with our journey beginning with the pre-launch by His Grace, Archbishop George Stack

#### **Diocesan Pre-Launch**

The Clergy and Lay Faithful of the Diocese gathered at St. Mary's Catholic Church, Carmarthen, on October 19, 2019, for the Pre-Launch of the Year of the Word. This event was well attended and was presided over by His Grace the Archbishop. Our special thanks to for the Fr Cyril Thadathil and Theresa Hacche, for the singing of the Mass which was led by the Choir from Holy Cross Church, Gendros. During the Mass, the Archbishop conducted two ceremonies. The first was the formal pre-launch of the Year of the Word, by unveiling the banner bearing the images of the four Gospel writers. The second ceremony was the formal inauguration of the Diocese of Menevia School of Evangelization and Catechetics (DOMSEC) by the unveiling of its own banner. St. Mary's Parish, Carmarthen hosted everyone at the school hall where the Archbishop and the clergy present cut two wonderfully designed cakes with inscriptions of the Year of the Word.

#### **First Sunday of Advent (December 5, 2019)**

The first Sunday of Advent marked the official launch of the Year of the Word in the Diocese. At St. Joseph's Cathedral, there was a well-prepared liturgy by Fr. Paul Brophy and Canon Benedict of the Evening Prayer and Benediction. Fr. Matthew Roche-Saunders was the Cantor. Rt. Rev. Thomas Burns, Bishop Emeritus of Menevia Diocese, presided at the liturgical function and gave a very insightful reflection. It was a solemn moment of prayer and reflection on the Word of God. The Cathedral parish hosted everyone present at the hall to some refreshment.

#### **Deanery Days of Reflection**

For effective outreach to the grass-roots, the Year of the Word moved to the different Deaneries. Three rounds of talks were planned to take place in all five deaneries during the year. The first series of talks, with the theme "The New Testament lies hidden in the Old and the Old Testament is unveiled in the New", was delivered by Fr. Jerome Ituah, OCD. These talks took place at St. Joseph's Catholic Church, Port Talbot for Port Talbot Deanery on Saturday, November 16, 2019; Belmont Abbey for Llandrindod Wells Deanery on Tuesday, December 10, 2019; Sacred Heart Catholic Church, Morriston for Swansea Deanery on Saturday, January 25, 2020; St. Mary's Catholic Church, Carmarthen for Carmarthen Deanery on Saturday, February 15, 2020; and St. David and St. Patrick Catholic Church, Haverfordwest for Pembroke Deanery on Saturday, February 22, 2020. Most of these events were well attended, and the feedback was terrific. Many priests attended and concelebrated at the Masses preceding or after the Talks. Our thanks to the Deans and clergy in all the Deaneries for their support and presence.

## **Corona Virus Pandemic**

We had only just concluded the first round of Deanery Talks and about beginning the second round of Talks when Corona Virus disrupted everything. Fr. Matthew Roche-Saunders was to do the second round of talks on the Gospel of Matthew and Fr. Michael the third round of talks on the Gospel of John. The Scripture Day Celebration for Catholic Schools planned for June 18, 2020, and the Diocesan Scripture Day scheduled for July 18, 2020 had to be cancelled.

## **During the Lockdown**

During the Lockdown, we successfully ran a five-week online Scripture Course which was live-streamed on the DOMSEC website where they can still be viewed.. The sessions took place on May 19, May 26, June 2, June 9 and June 16. The first course focused on the organization of the Bible and the Catholic approach to interpretation. The second and third weeks were a general introduction to the Old Testament, and the last two sessions were a general introduction to the New Testament.

Fr. Jerome began reflecting on a Verse of the Bible daily, a programme he calls, A Verse for the Day. Usually, he picks a verse from the readings or psalm of the day. Please encourage your parishioners to visit the YouTube channel <http://www.youtube.com/c/PKRMenevia>. They can subscribe (for free) on their mobile phones and other devices, and receive a notification each day for a new verse.

## **Upcoming Events**

We have reorganized the programme for the remaining part of the year as follows.

1. Talks on the Four Gospels. They will be live-streamed on DOMSEC website on the dates indicated between 11 am and 1 pm.
  1. The Gospel of Matthew by Fr. Matthew Roche-Saunders on August 22, 2020.
  2. The gospel of Mark by Fr. Jerome Ituah, OCD on September 19, 2020.
  3. The gospel of Luke by Rev. Robert Davies on October 17, 2020.
  4. The gospel of John by Fr. Michael Akpoghiran, OP on November 14, 2020.
2. The Diocesan Scripture Day and Scripture Kit Event will be rescheduled for next year and dates decided later.
3. Scripture Day for Catholic Schools will be rescheduled for some time next year, and the date decided later.
4. Diocesan Thanksgiving Mass earlier scheduled for November 28, 2020, will be rescheduled for some time next year and the date will be decided later.

## **Appreciation and Recommendations**

I am very grateful to the Archbishop and the clergy for the support and encouragement I have received so far. I am particularly grateful to the Vicar General and the Chancellor, the Deans, Fr. Michael and DOMSEC Team, and all those who have supported the various programmes. May the Good Lord continue to keep and bless you all.

I wish to appeal to the Deans and parish priests to continue to help propagate the message of the Year of the Word and give a little gentle push in announcing the forthcoming events.

Fr. Jerome Ituah, OCD  
Scripture Champion, Diocese of Menevia