



MALANKARA SYRIAN CATHOLIC CHURCH
BIBLE SUNDAY 2025
CIRCULAR

Rt. Rev. Corepiscopoi, Rt. Rev. Rambans, Rev. Priests, Deacons, Religious,
Dear faithful in the Lord,

Today, as the Holy Church observes Bible Sunday, a day dedicated to honouring the Word of God revealed in the Holy Scriptures and to contemplating its mysteries, we are invited, as the People of God, to renew our love for that written Word, to listen more attentively to His Voice speaking to us through its pages, and to commit ourselves anew to living by it and proclaiming its salvific message to the world.

The Divine Scriptures, entrusted to us as the priceless heritage of the Apostles, remain the living wellspring from which the Church draws strength, unity, and renewal. In every age, but especially in ours which is marked by noise, fragmentation, and spiritual weariness, the Word of God stands before us as light for our path (Ps 119:105), anchor of hope, and the sure guide of our ecclesial journey.

Moved by the conviction that the Word of God must once again take its rightful place at the centre of Christian life, the Holy Synod of the Syro-Malankara Catholic Church invites each one of its faithful; priests, parents, youth, children, religious communities, and institutions, to a renewed reverence for the Scriptures.

1. Sacred Scripture as Locus for Encountering Christ

John begins his gospel by presenting Jesus as the Eternal Word of God. “And the Word became flesh and dwelt among us” (Jn 1:14). The Eternal Word, assumed our human nature to meet us in our humble condition and to elevate us into the life of God. The Holy Scriptures bear witness to this ineffable mystery on every page. All of Scripture finds its unity, its

purpose, and its truth in Him, for as He Himself declares, “These are the Scriptures that testify about Me” (Jn 5:39). From the mystery of the Incarnation flows the life of the Church, the sacraments, the Scriptures, and our very vocation as believers.

Thus, the Scriptures constitute a significant locus in which every Christian encounters Christ. The Second Vatican Council earnestly and especially invites all the Christian faithful, especially members of religious institutes, to learn “the surpassing knowledge of Jesus Christ” (Phil 3:8) through frequent reading of the divine Scriptures because the “Ignorance of the Scriptures is ignorance of Christ” (St. Jerome). Therefore, all should gladly put themselves in touch with the sacred text itself, whether through the sacred liturgy rich in the Word of God, or through devotional reading, or through instructions suitable for the purpose and other aids. (Dei Verbum 25).

To know Jesus, to follow Him, and to witness Him in our daily life, we must allow the Word to dwell richly in us. Whenever we open the sacred texts with faith, Christ speaks to us; He walks with us, as He did with the disciples on the road to Emmaus (Lk 24:27), and opens our minds to understand the mysteries of salvation (Lk 24:45). The Scriptures are not distant words, but the living testimony of God’s love made manifest in Christ. To love the Bible is to love Christ Himself; to read it with devotion is to encounter Him personally and to allow Him to form our hearts and minds.

2. Sacred Scripture as Foundation of the Church’s Life

The Word of God enshrined in the Sacred Scripture, is the foundation upon which the life of the Church rests. From it flows our faith, our mission, and our holiness. It is the foundation of our faith, because “faith comes from hearing, and hearing through the word of Christ” (Rom 10:17). It is the foundation of our mission, because our Lord mandated us, “Go therefore and make disciples . . . teaching them to observe all that I have commanded you” (Mt 28:19–20). It is the foundation of our holiness because our Lord prayed “Sanctify them in the truth; your word is truth” (Jn 17:17).

Without the Word, the Church loses her direction, her vigour, and her mission. With the Word, she is ever renewed, vibrant, and missionary, bringing the light of Christ to every generation, nourishing believers, and transforming the world with divine truth and love.

3. Sacred Scripture in Parish Life and Pastoral Ministry

The parish is the living heart of the Church, the domestic assembly of the faithful, and a privileged locus where the Word of God is proclaimed, celebrated, and lived. As Pope Benedict XVI affirms, *"the parish must become a 'house of the Word'"* (Verbum Domini 100). In every liturgical celebration, the sacred Scriptures should be proclaimed with reverence, illuminating the hearts of the faithful and opening them to the mysteries of salvation. Homilies and catechesis, rooted in the Word, must awaken the desire for holiness and inspire the faithful to live according to Christ's teaching.

Scripture must also permeate parish life beyond the liturgy. Bible study groups, catechetical programs, youth gatherings, and prayer meetings are opportunities for the faithful to encounter the living Word, to meditate on its wisdom, and to be formed in Christian virtue. The parish is called to cultivate a culture in which the Scriptures are read prayerfully, reflected upon, and shared communally, allowing every member to experience the transforming power of God's Word. As Pope Francis reminds us in *Evangelii Gaudium*: *"All evangelization is based on the Word of God, listened to, meditated upon, lived, celebrated, and witnessed"* (EG 174).

4. Sacred Scripture in the Family: The First School of the Word

The Christian Family, as the domestic Church and the smallest unit of the Universal Church should be a place where the Bible is honoured, read, prayed with, and lived. As the first school of the Word, in the Family, it is the responsibility of the parents to initiate the children into the study of the Scriptures. As Moses instructed Israel, *"These words... you shall teach them diligently to your children and speak of them at home and on the way"* (Dt 6:6-7). Moreover, it is a divine mandate entrusted to every Christian parent who has known God to transmit their faith to the generations to come, so that each generation might 'know the works of God, put their trust in Him and keep his commandments' (cf. Ps 78:5-7).

A family rooted in Scripture stands strong against fear, division, and confusion. Through prayerful reading and reflection on Scripture together, the Christian family becomes a living school of discipleship, where the Word is not only known but experienced, celebrated, and lived. In this way, the

family bears witness to God's love, passing on the faith from one generation to the next, and cultivating hearts ever ready to obey and serve the Lord.

5. ' Sacred Scripture in Its Transforming Power

The transformative power of Sacred Scripture is awe-inspiring. It has converted sinners, comforted the afflicted and inspired countless ordinary men and women to renounce worldly pleasures and dedicate their lives to holiness. The Word of God that is proclaimed does not return empty but accomplishes that which the Lord purposes (Is 55:11) and bears abundant fruit, "in one case a hundredfold, in another sixty, and in another thirty" (Mt 13:23). The more the faithful immerse themselves in the sacred texts, the more their hearts become conformed to the heart of Christ.

Thus, when read with faith, Sacred Scripture becomes a living instrument of transformation for its hearers and readers: it converts the sinner, heals the wounded, gives hope to the discouraged, strengthens the weak, guides the confused, and rebukes injustice.

6. Sacred Scripture for All: The Mission of the Bible Apostolate

Those who have encountered Christ in the Sacred Scripture and have been transformed by His Word bear the responsibility to share it with others, bringing its life-giving message into families, parishes, and all areas of human life. This is the mission of the Bible Apostolate.

As the Second Vatican Council declares, "Easy access to Sacred Scripture should be provided for all the Christian faithful. That is why the Church from the very beginning accepted as her own the ancient Christian tradition of having translations of the sacred books into various languages. And, as she has always held them in honour, she continues to do so." (DV 22).

Therefore, Every baptized person is called to be a servant of the Word, promoting its reading, study, and meditation, and bearing witness to its message in daily life.

Conclusion

Having reflected on the richness and power of the Sacred Scriptures, let us entrust ourselves anew to the Word that became flesh and dwelt among us. May the Holy Spirit, who inspired the sacred authors, enlighten

our minds and inflame our hearts, so that we may live in harmony with God's will and bear witness to His truth.

I warmly encourage all of you to continue nurturing the spirit of love for Sacred Scripture that we renewed so beautifully and effectively during the Year of the Word of God, which we celebrated last year in the Malankara Catholic Church. That special year was not meant to be a one-time event, but a spark, an invitation to make the Word of God the daily bread of our spiritual life. Let us carry that same enthusiasm forward.

May this Bible Sunday become a moment of grace and to allow the Word made flesh to shape our minds, purify our hearts, and guide our steps.

May the intercession of St. Jerome, St. Paul the Apostle, and the Blessed Virgin Mary guide us in our study, meditation, and proclamation of the Word. May the Scriptures illumine your paths, strengthen your faith, transform your families and communities, and inspire every apostolic endeavor.

May Almighty God, Father, Son, and Holy Spirit, bless you abundantly, guard you in His peace, and make His Word a living power in your life, today and always.

sd/-

✠ Abraham Mar Julios

Chairman Synodal Commission for Bible Apostolate.

10.12.2025

Catholicate Center

Pattom, Thiruvananthapuram

NB: This circular should be read during the Holy Mass in all our churches, mission centres and places of worship on Sunday, 21 December, 2025 and should be communicated to the people through appropriate channels.
