



“... but by every word that comes forth from the mouth of God!”
Heed the Word! Return to Power

On the *VIII Sunday in Ordinary Time* (26 February 2017), Mass-goers at Our Holy Redeemer in Freeport, N.Y. had the opportunity to walk out of our absolutely beautiful church with a Parish bulletin. If you were amongst those who *came home* and received that bulletin, you may recall that its cover featured images that tried to convey the depth of God’s love for us. The Pastor’s Message in that same bulletin, asked readers to consider (in Light of that descent) the depth of *their* love for God; imagining Christ Jesus risen from the dead asking them (as He did Saint Peter): “Do you love Me?” (cf. Saint John XXI:15-18)

Within that same bulletin, readers could (and with help from www.ohrfreeport.org can still) also *seek and find Messages for Lent 2017* from both His Holiness, Pope Francis, and Bishop Barres; both of which – together and apart – offer ways – both implicit and explicit – for readers to manifest their love for God. “At the basis of everything” writes the Pope “is the Word of God, which during this Season we are invited to hear and ponder more deeply.” *And so it happened* that Bishop Barres in his message, appeals to every inactive Catholic in the Diocese: “come back to the power of the Word of God, the power of the Sacrament of Penance, and the power of the Catholic Mass.”

It is that Trinitarian return to Power, yes Power that will bring about the *dramatic missionary growth* which as you may recall from his Lenten Message, Bishop Barres has asked us to pray for during Lent 2017. *Growth* in our rectories where Priests are not heeding the Word to “deny thyself, pick up thy cross, and follow Me” (Saint Luke IX:23). *Growth* in our parishes where inactive Catholics are not heeding the Word to “come to Me” (Saint Matthew XI:28) at Sunday Mass and active Catholics are not heeding the Word to “go, make disciples” (Saint Matthew XXVIII:19). *Growth* in our families where husbands and wives are not heeding the Word to “love one another as I have loved you” (Saint John XV:12), daughters and sons are not heeding the Word to “keep the Commandments” (Saint John XIV:15), siblings are not heeding the Word to “come to my assistance” (Psalm LXIX). *Growth* in the workplace where employers and employees are not heeding the Word to “do to others as you would have them do to you” (Saint Luke VI:31).

“At the root of (the rich man’s ills)”, writes Pope Francis in his Lenten Message, “was the failure to heed God’s word.” That same failure is why we are not seeing today the *dramatic missionary growth* of which Bishop Barres speaks of in *his* message. Too many of us it would seem, have yet to heed the Word that came forth from the mouth of God when on *II Sunday of Lent* we (with Saints Peter, John, and James) ascended the mountain with Jesus and heard: “(Jesus) is My beloved Son in Whom I am well pleased. **Listen to Him**”.

In other words: “**heed the Word**”! That is what the woman at the well did on this *III Sunday of Lent*, and look at the dramatic missionary growth that takes place: *Many of the Samaritans of that town began to believe in Jesus. He stayed there two days. And many more began to believe in Him because of His Word!* (Saint Matthew IV:39-42)

