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## **Pope Francis: Mass on Day of Word of God, “it frees us from the bondage of our selfishness, it has the power to change our lives”**

“Jesus tells us that the kingdom of heaven is at hand, that God is near. Here is the novelty, the first message: God is not far from us. The One who dwells in heaven has come down to earth; he became man. He has torn down walls and shortened distances”. Pope Francis said this in the homily of the Mass he celebrated yesterday in Saint Peter’s Basilica to mark the first Day of the Word of God. The Pope cited the evangelist Matthew, focusing his remarks on the words that lie at the core of Christ’s preaching. “This is the main message of all Jesus’ sermons: to tell us that the kingdom of heaven is at hand”. “We ourselves did not deserve this: he came down to meet us”, Pope Francis explained. And “this nearness of God to his people is one of the ways he has done things since the beginning, even of the Old Testament”. The Pope called the message brought by Christ a “joyful message”: God “did not embrace our human condition out of duty, no, but out of love”. The Pontiff then focused on Jesus’ invitation: “Repent”, in other words, “Change your life”. “Change your life, - the Pope explained - for a new way of living has begun. The time when you lived for yourself is over; now is the time for living with and for God, with and for others, with and for love”. Pope Francis went on to say about the Word of God: “The Lord gives you his word, so that you can receive it like a love letter he has written to you, to help you realize that he is at your side. His word - he added - consoles and encourages us. At the same time it challenges us, frees us from the bondage of our selfishness”. The Pontiff then said about the power of His Word: “His word has the power to change our lives and to lead us out of darkness into the light”.

Valentina Bombelli