

## The Pray More Retreat Study Guide



### **The Importance of the Scriptures Through the Theology of Pope Benedict XVI and ‘Verbum Domini’**

by Tom Perna

“God hears us and responds to our questions

23. “In this dialogue with God we come to understand ourselves and we discover an answer to our heart’s deepest questions. The word of God in fact is not inimical to us; it does not stifle our authentic desires, but rather illuminates them, purifies them and brings them to fulfillment. How important it is for our time to discover that God alone responds to the yearning present in the heart of every man and woman! Sad to say, in our days, and in the West, there is a widespread notion that God is extraneous to people’s lives and problems, and that his very presence can be a threat to human autonomy. Yet the entire economy of salvation demonstrates that God speaks and acts in history for our good and our integral salvation. Thus it is decisive, from the pastoral standpoint, to present the word of God in its capacity to enter into dialogue with the everyday problems which people face. Jesus himself says that he came that we might have life in abundance (cf. Jn 10:10).

Consequently, we need to make every effort to share the word of God as an openness to our problems, a response to our questions, a broadening of our values and the fulfilment of our aspirations. The Church’s pastoral activity needs to bring out clearly how God listens to our need and our plea for help. As Saint Bonaventure says in the *Breviloquium*: “The fruit of sacred Scripture is not any fruit whatsoever, but the very fullness of eternal happiness. Sacred Scripture is the book containing the words of eternal life, so that we may not only believe in, but also possess eternal life, in which we will see and love, and all our desires will be fulfilled”. [72] — *Verbum Domini*, Pope Benedict XVI

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## Reflective Questions

- How many times throughout the week do I allow God to speak to me? Is it only at Mass on Sundays, or do I let Him speak to me more often -- even daily?
- When I read Sacred Scripture, am I reading it just to finish it, or am I allowing it to penetrate my heart and mind?
- There is no separation between what God says and what God does. Is this true in my life as well? Do I do the things that I tell God I will do?
- Do I live my life in accordance with the Church teachings that I proclaim to believe in every Mass?
- Do I complain that it is hard to know Jesus, or do I search for Him in Sacred Scripture and see Him in the Liturgy?
- Am I working so hard to bring the Gospel to other people that I do not allow myself the time to enter into prayer with the Lord?

## Scripture Passages to Visit When You're Searching for God

Psalm 46:10

“He says, ‘Be still, and know that I am God;  
I will be exalted among the nations,  
I will be exalted in the earth.’”

James 4:8

“Come near to God and he will come near to you.”

John 15:5

“I am the vine; you are the branches. If you remain in me and I in you, you will bear much fruit; apart from me you can do nothing.”

Deuteronomy 31:6

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“Be strong and courageous. Do not be afraid or terrified because of them, for the Lord your God goes with you; he will never leave you nor forsake you.”

Psalm 139

“You examine me and know me, you know when I sit, when I rise, you understand my thoughts from afar. You watch when I walk or lie down, you know every detail of my conduct. A word is not yet on my tongue before you, Yahweh, know all about it.”

Matthew 28:20b

“And surely I am with you always, to the very end of the age.”

Isaiah 41:10

“So do not fear, for I am with you; do not be dismayed, for I am your God. I will strengthen you and help you; I will uphold you with my righteous right hand.”

Jeremiah 29

“Yes, I know what plans I have in mind for you, Yahweh declares, plans for peace, not for disaster, to give you a future and a hope. When you call to me and come and pray to me, I shall listen to you.”