

WEEKLY SERMON

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Are the scriptures vital to your life?

On February 15 of this year my son, George, was born. As you can imagine the last 11 weeks have been quite the rollercoaster for my wife, Hannah, and I as we welcomed this new life into the world.

It was perhaps because of this new set of life experiences that we are currently going through that I was struck in a fresh way by the epistle reading for this coming Sunday.

Saint Peter writes in his first letter: 'Like newborn infants, long for the pure, spiritual milk, so that by it you may grow into salvation - if indeed you have tasted that the Lord is good.' (1 Peter 2:2-3).

Over the course of my life, I have read this verse many times and never taken the time to reflect on the metaphor that Saint Peter is employing. Saint Peter's words in this verse took on new meaning for me as I considered them having observed my wife breastfeeding over the last three months. Isn't it wonderful that as we age and have new life experiences, the Scriptures grow with us and speak in fresh ways?

In the last few months it has been made abundantly clear to me just how ravenously hungry babies and infants are for their milk. As Saint Peter says, they **long** for it.

When George wakes up from a nap and is hungry he is single-minded in his pursuit of sustenance and will cry at the top of his lungs until he gets what he needs.

There is a challenge here for us: I wonder, do we long for spiritual nourishment the way a newborn baby longs for their milk? For a newborn, milk is **vital**. Vital meaning both that it gives life and vitality, but also vital in the sense that it is of the highest priority in their life.

Do you consider prayer and reading the scriptures to be **vital** in your life? Do you prioritise receiving the eucharist because it gives the spiritual nourishment that you long for?

This weekend many of us will be watching the Coronation of King Charles III. During the service he will be presented with a Bible and told: "*Sir: to keep you ever mindful of the law and the Gospel of God as the Rule for the whole life and government of Christian Princes, receive this Book, the most valuable thing that this world affords. Here is Wisdom; This is the royal Law; These are the lively Oracles of God.*"

Lively, here in bold, does not of course mean that the oracles of God create an exciting atmosphere at the local pub, but that they give life, energy and stimulation to the reader which sustains them for their ministry.

It doesn't matter if you are a newborn baby, or the King of the United Kingdom, each of us needs to be sustained. God sustains us by his life-giving Spirit through the scriptures (the lively oracles of God) through the sacraments and through His body the Church.

HEALTHY CHURCHES TRANSFORMING COMMUNITIES

My prayer for you today is that, as you read and reflect on these words, you would find within yourself a longing for the pure spiritual milk, the sustaining vital and life-giving gift of God. And that by drinking deeply you would grow into all that God has for you in your life and ministry.

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