

# Here's the word: Catholics must know Bible to know Jesus, say bishops

VATICAN CITY - The Catholic Church wants people to know and love the word of God - the Bible - so that they will come to know and love the Word of God - Jesus Christ.

While the world Synod of Bishops is focusing on ways to educate Catholics in the importance of reading, understanding and praying with the Bible, several participants addressing the synod Oct. 6-7 insisted that people understand that for Christians the Word of God is Jesus.

"When asked what 'the word of God' is, many believers respond, 'the Bible.' The response is not wrong, but it is incomplete," said Italian Archbishop Salvatore Fisichella, rector of Rome's Pontifical Lateran University and president of the Pontifical Academy for Life.

Because the word of God is more than the Bible, he told the synod Oct. 7, Christianity is not so much a "religion of the book" as a "religion of the Word," who is Jesus.

Brazilian Bishop Filippo Santoro of Petropolis said it is through reading and hearing the written word that Christians can come into contact with Jesus, the Word made flesh.

Canadian Cardinal Marc Ouellet of Quebec, introducing the synod's work Oct. 6, said, "to begin, we must start from the mystery of a God who speaks, a God who is himself the Word and gives himself to be known by humanity in many ways."

Through creation, through his covenant with the Israelites, through the prophets and the Scriptures, God reveals himself, said the cardinal, the synod's recording secretary. His revelation becomes complete in Jesus Christ.

The Bible contains the essential account of how God has spoken to humanity, he said.

“Thanks to the Bible, humanity knows it has been called by God; the Spirit helps humanity listen and welcome the word of God, thus becoming the ‘ecclesia’ (church), the community assembled by the Word,” Cardinal Ouellet said.