

Some key points from Bishop Declan's talk to Senior Leaders on Scripture

- St Jerome said that 'whoever is ignorant of scripture is ignorant of Christ. This is not simply an academic but a personal response. So, scripture needs to mean something to us. We have to ask ourselves where am in relationship to scripture, in my relationship with God?
- The word Testament means Covenant or Relationship. If we aim to live God's word, how does it effect our relationships with each other, with creation, with the world around us?
- When we read the Bible does it challenge us, does it set us on fire or is it a dead book to us? Only if we find value in the Word of God can we really share with others. In the middle ages, because most people couldn't read the Bible the Church communicated God's word through art and music perhaps this might be a way of communicating with the world around us today.
- Christmas Day is fast approaching. The Gospel for the mass on Christmas Day itself is not the Christmas Story. Instead it is the prologue from John's Gospel. "In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God. 2 He was in the beginning with God. 3 All things came into being through him, and without him not one thing came into being." At first I disliked this and felt people should hear the Christmas story but now I realise how powerful this reading is. The word of God is the logos, Christ who reveals God. In him we see the right relationship between God and man. Jesus is the image of the invisible God. Jesus is truly God and truly man. Scripture helps us discover the fundamental truths of life and our responsibility is to help others discover meaning
- How does God speak to you? God wants to communicate with you and your pupils. Consider the words of scripture. God says, 'Let there be Light' and there is light. It is saying the word of God is alive and active, it always succeeds, it does what it set out to do. Jesus achieves what he set out to do and reminds us of God's love for us and our world.
- The stories of scripture are our stories. In scripture God's love for us never changes, what changes is humanities relationship with God and the way we come to understand that relationship. Throughout scripture the prophets call us back into a right relationship with God. A relationship based on justice, equality, compassion for others etc.

- If you look for example at the creation stories; How do we understand them? What meaning do they hold for us? The second creation story is in fact the first to be written. When you read these stories, you need to remember they were written by different authors combined to make one story to help people reflect. The first story is an ordered story. God brings order into the chaos of our lives, it reminds us what comes from God is good, that we are called into relationships with others. In the account on the seventh day God rested, God takes time to reflect on life. It seems to me that one of the greatest challenges today is superficiality. Life is lived on the surface, a ‘soundbite’ culture. The story reminds us of the need to reflect, to pause, to go deeper. The second story asks some key questions about life. Why do people suffer? Why is our world fractured?
- After Adam and Eve fracture their relationship with God, God asks of them, “Where are you?” This becomes a key question for us. Where are we in our lives, in our relationship with God?
- The word of God becomes flesh in us when we open ourselves to Jesus. The Gospel is first proclaimed by the kind of person we are, the way we live our lives, the decisions we make
- We need to honestly ask ourselves the personal question, ‘How do I proclaim the Gospel’? Then we ask where is the word of God seen in my school? The Future of the church belongs to those who give others reasons for living and hoping. Can we bring the scriptures alive for our school?