

# Archbishop Smith: Stay Tuned In!

In the course of many parish visits over the last year and a half, I've been repeatedly drawing attention to the message at the heart of the pastoral letter *Living in the Word of God*. I do this by asking the simple question: "Who are you listening to?" Many voices compete for our attention, but only one is worthy of our complete trust, namely, the voice of Jesus. It is he to whom we must listen, since he alone has "the words of everlasting life" (John 6:68). So, read the Bible; remain focused on the teachings of Christ; allow them to permeate the entirety of our lives, that they may serve as the lamp for our feet and light for our path (cf. Psalm 119:105).



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The Gospel passage we heard at mass on Sunday is a reminder that listening to Jesus will at times be very challenging. Those who were listening to him preach in his hometown synagogue at Nazareth at first were pleased by what he had to say. But then, they turned on him, violently. What happened? His word struck a sensitive nerve as he challenged prophetically certain assumptions they held about what it means to be the chosen people of God and the recipient of divine blessing. His word was a clear and direct summons to a painful self-examination and subsequent renewal of their minds, and they didn't like it. In fact, so intense was their anger that they sought to throw him off a cliff!

How do we respond when we find our mindsets and behaviour patterns challenged

by the words of Jesus Christ, whether we encounter them in the sacred texts or handed down to us in the teaching of the Church? A habit many of us develop in our multi-channel universe is to “surf” through the many messages on offer in order to remain tuned in only to those we find to our liking. Those which displease us are tuned out by changing the channel, moving on in the news or Twitter feed, and so on. When the word of Jesus challenges us, do we stay on his “channel” or switch to another; do we remain tuned in or turn off the broadcast, the digital equivalent, as it were, of casting Jesus aside?

For help in remaining faithful to the words of Christ, however difficult, it is good to have examples of people who have remained always focused upon Jesus, riveted to his word. I’d like to hold up for consideration the perfect model.



I just returned from eight days of retreat at the shrine in Mexico City dedicated to our Blessed Mother under her title of Our Lady of Guadalupe. Mary is a perpetual source of help for the life of discipleship centered on listening to and following Jesus. Scripture tells us that she pondered deeply all that was said about her son during the events surrounding his birth (cf. Luke 2: 19, 51). We can be sure that she continued to ponder deeply all that unfolded in his life, above all his crucifixion and resurrection. No change of channel in her life! She remained always focused on her son, the Word made flesh. Now, in her maternal love for the world, she wants nothing more than that we do the same and be always ready to do whatever Jesus tells us to do (cf. John 2:5).

Centuries ago, Mary appeared to San Juan Diego. She caused to be imprinted on his tilma an image that presented her son to the Indigenous peoples as the answer to their deepest longings for God. May Mary present him anew to all of us in our own day so that, by her intercession, we will stay focused on his every word as he leads us to salvation.