

Symposium: The Word of God is a person – Jesus

The Word of God is “someone”, not “something”.

This point was repeatedly emphasised during the July 11 Bible Symposium, the first such event organised by the newly formed Archdiocesan Biblical Apostolate.

“The Word of God is Jesus ... with a voice, a face and a heart,” said Verbum Dei Sr Sandra Seow at the daylong event held at Catholic Junior College. “In the Word, Jesus came to give us His very self.”

Have you “known and met the author” of the Bible, she asked the more than 500-strong crowd at the school’s auditorium.

“We encounter Jesus by listening to His Word,” Sr Sandra, director of the biblical apostolate, told participants. “Listening to Jesus pushes us to offer to others the Word of Life.”

Five workshops were held during the symposium, which was held to celebrate Bible Sunday, which falls on July 12 this year.

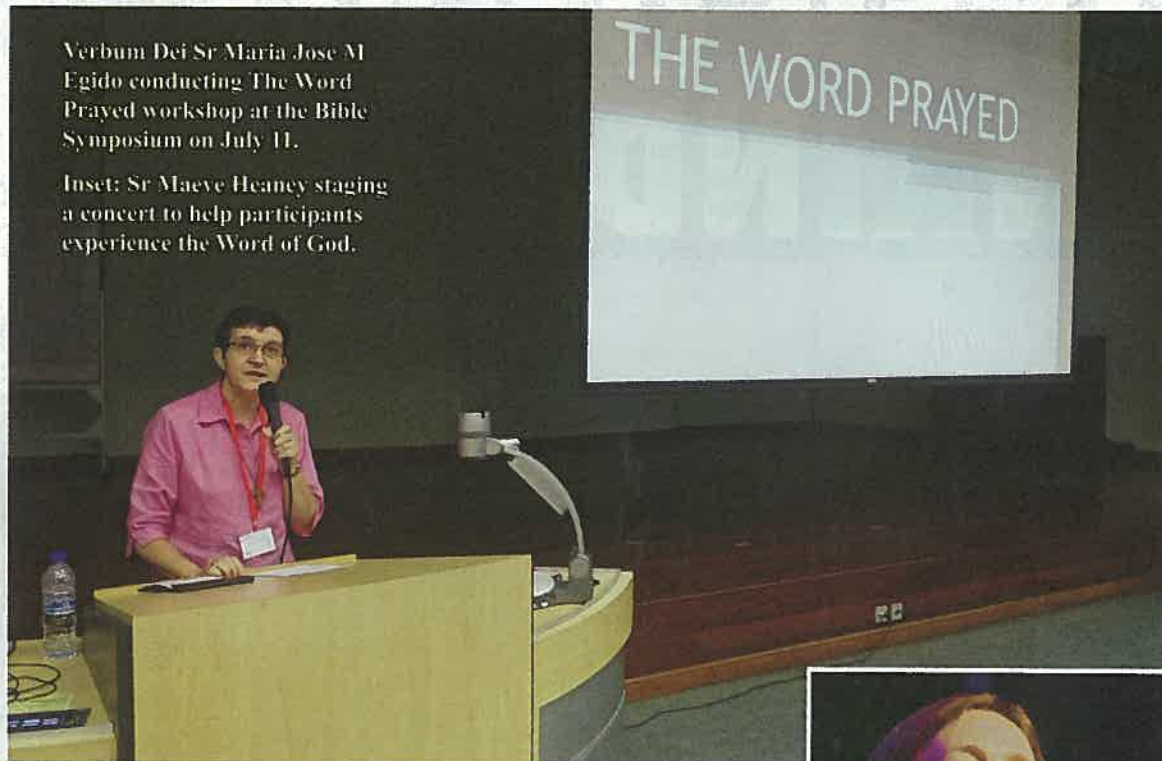
In The Word Prayed workshop, Verbum Dei Sr Maria Jose M Egido, shared with participants that “prayer is relationship”.

“Prayer is a dialogue of love between two people,” she said. “The Word incarnated is a person – Jesus. The first thing when we pray is to encounter the person.”

Participants were then given a biblical passage on Jesus calming the storm, asked to reflect on it and see if there is any word or phrase that touches them.

Verbum Dei Sr Maria Jose M Egido conducting The Word Prayed workshop at the Bible Symposium on July 11.

Inset: Sr Maeve Heaney staging a concert to help participants experience the Word of God.



In the workshop, The Word Proclaimed, Verbum Dei Fr Felipe Paradal told participants that they proclaim the Word of God through how they live their lives. However, this needs to go hand in hand with the actual sharing of the Good News.

In The Word In Asia workshop, Verbum Dei Sr Leticia C Lopez shared how the Word of God was brought to Asia by missionaries such as St Francis Xavier and Jesuit Fr Matteo Ricci.

Malaysian Fr Gerard Theraviam, in his workshop, The Word

Through Time, outlined the history of the Bible and how it came to be. Questions such as who wrote the Bible and when it was written were also addressed.

Irish Verbum Dei Sr Maeve Heaney, in her workshop, The Word Sung, showed how singing conveys a significantly different experience compared to merely reading words. Music draws out deep emotions and makes people more receptive to connecting with God, she shared.

She later staged a concert to help participants experience the Word of God.

In his homily during Mass,



Archbishop William Goh said that one reason for the “lack of missionary evangelical zeal” among Catholics is that they “have not really encountered Jesus, the Good News, in their lives.”

He challenged the crowd to



“The Word of God is Jesus ... with a voice, a face and a heart.”

– Verbum Dei Sr Sandra Seow

go forth and form cell groups of about five people each. “Get together and share the Word of God,” he exhorted. If they were to do that, then “the Church will grow by leaps and bounds.”

Participants told CatholicNews that the symposium gave them new insights into Scripture.

Mr Michael Chong, 42, said the event brought across to him the message that “the Word of God is a person, who has to be incarnated in me”.

Mrs Maureen Pestana, 55, said she is now motivated to pray the Scriptures more.

Another participant, Ms Juliana Tan, said she is going to take up Archbishop Goh’s challenge to start a cell group among her friends. □