Vatican
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Pope Francis, wearing a mitre and no mask, is flanked by two masked priests and hands a cru

A newly installed catechist receives a crucifix from Pope Francis during a Mass marking Sunday of the Word of God in St. Peter's Basilica at the Vatican in this Jan. 23, 2022, file photo. The pope's liturgical calendar for January and early February includes Mass for the Sunday of the Word of God and vespers to close the Week of Prayer for Christian Unity. (CNS photo/Paul Haring)



by Catholic News Service

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Pope Francis will celebrate the fourth annual Sunday of the Word of God Jan. 22 and, like he did last year, will confer the ministries of lector and catechist on several lay people, according to the Dicastery for Evangelization.

The theme for the 2023 celebration is: "We proclaim what we have seen," a quotation from 1 John 1:3, the dicastery said.

Francis began the Sunday of the Word of God to promote "the celebration, study and dissemination of the word of God," which will help the church "experience anew how the risen Lord opens up for us the treasury of his word and enables us to proclaim its unfathomable riches before the world."

The Mass in St. Peter's Basilica Jan. 22 for the annual event was included in the Vatican's short calendar of papal liturgical celebrations for January and early February. The calendar was published Jan. 12.

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Also on the calendar is Francis' celebration of an ecumenical evening prayer service at Rome's Basilica of St. Paul Outside the Walls Jan. 25 to close the Week of Prayer for Christian Unity.

The week is organized by the Vatican Dicastery for Promoting Christian Unity and the Commission on Faith and Order of the World Council of Churches. The theme for 2023 is: "Do good; seek justice," which comes from Isaiah 1:17.

The calendar also includes Francis' trip to Congo and South Sudan Jan. 31-Feb. 5, which means he will not celebrate at the Vatican the Feb. 2 feast of the Presentation of the Lord and the World Day for Consecrated Life.