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Scripture apps & podcasts for your phone & tablet

by Thomas Reese

NCR Today

Pope Francis this week urged commuters to get a pocket Bible and read it while traveling to and from work.

"A Christian's first task is to listen to the word of God, to listen to Jesus, because he speaks to us and saves us with his word," the pope said Sunday during a homily at the parish of Santa Maria dell'Orazione on the northeast outskirts of Rome, according to CNS.

A pocket Bible? How 20th century! Why not try an app?

My favorite free app for reading the daily Scripture readings used at the Eucharist is iBreviary, available for iPhones, iPads, and Androids. It allows you to download the day's readings or a week's worth. It can even automatically delete them as the day passes so you don't feel guilty if you missed one.

Apple users should go to the App Store, while Android users should go to the Android Market. Use the search function to find the app and download it to your device for free. Or ask one of your kids to do it for you.

If your phone is not compatible, iBreviary has instructions to download the APK and install it manually on your smartphone.

These readings come from the USCCB website, where they are also available to anyone with access to the Internet.

Another way to enjoy the daily Scripture readings is by listening to "Daily Readings from the New American Bible" on Podcasts.

For Apple products, go to iTunes and search for "Daily Readings from the New American Bible." You can also get the audio files (mp3) from the USCCB website or sign up for a RSS feed.

The lectors are members of the USCCB staff along with bishops and cardinals, which sometimes distracts me as I try to figure out who the reader is.

Earlier on Sunday, CNS reported, Pope Francis asked members of the crowd in St. Peter's Square to commit to reading a few lines of the Gospel each day. "This is important," he said. "It's Jesus who speaks to us in the Gospel. Think about that."

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He told the crowd, "Next Sunday, tell me if you've done this (and) if you have a little Bible in your pocket or purse to read a passage during the day."

So download right away. You may get a call next Sunday from the pope asking if you have read any Scripture this week.

You have no excuse now. You don't even need to buy a pocket Bible.

P.S. In the comments below, tell us your favorite way to read the Scriptures.

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