**Liturgy Matters Lesson #11**

**The Word Proclaimed**

**By Bishop Chad Zielinski**

Thank you for joining me in this fifth week of the Easter Season as we continue our lessons on “What Happens at Mass.”

We can now turn to the form and order of the ritual in which the Word is proclaimed at Mass. All that we have said in these recent weeks is given concrete form by what we read, how we read, who reads, and the order in which we read. This form and order express that the center of what is proclaimed is the death and resurrection of Jesus. The spreading out of many scriptural texts throughout the liturgical year repeats in our community's experience and understanding of what the Church in each generation discovers with awe and wonder: that the meaning of the whole creation and the whole of human history is revealed in the mystery of the death and resurrection of Jesus Christ.

The scriptures are read in a particular order that follows the order of salvation history; that is, the liturgy begins with a text from the Old Testament, where creation and the history of Israel are recounted and moves toward the climax of the proclamation of the Gospel. This is the order of the Liturgy of the Word because the Gospel is the climax and center of the scripture, or put more comprehensively: because Christ himself is the fulfillment of creation and the history of Israel. Thus, for a Christian, only from the perspective of the Gospel is the Old Testament text understood in its fullness, or again: only in Christ are the creation and the history of Israel understood. Some reading from the writings of the apostles forms a link between the Gospel and the Old Testament, a contemplative insight, a theological insight that helps bind the event of the Gospel to the event of the Old Testament. We are not talking about specific sets of texts as found in the Lectionary for the celebration of a given day, where this connection is sometimes more, sometimes less clear, as the case may be. The point is a general one about this structure in the liturgy. However, once the theological significance of this structure is grasped, "the structure is a mystery!" profound and unexpected connections can emerge between the texts that will not appear when the texts are simply read side by side as texts.

Thank you for joining me as we draw deeper into the Word of God proclaimed at Mass. May the Easter greeting of the Risen Christ fill you with a renewed peace and continue to strengthen us as we grow closer to Him through our understanding and participation in the Holy Mass.

I look forward to sharing Lesson #12 with you next week. Let us keep one another in prayer. May God bless you and your families.

Sincerely in Christ,

Bishop Chad Zielinski