**Liturgy Matters Lesson #14**

**The Word of God – Born anew in our Hearts!**

**By Bishop Chad Zielinski**

I am Bishop Chad Zielinski serving the Diocese of New Ulm. We are in such a beautiful liturgical moment as we have celebrated seven weeks of the Easter Season culminating in the birthday of the Church, Pentecost Sunday, and the coming of the Holy Spirit renewing our hearts and minds as we are sent into the world.

As I record this message, I speak to you on May 29, 2023, the Feast Day of Mary, the Mother of the Church. Pope Francis established the Monday after Pentecost Sunday as this special feast dedicated to Mary, Our Mother, on May 21, 2018. Mary, who said "yes" to God, joined the Holy Spirit in forming Christ in her womb. Her maternal "yes" to this day is her open heart allowing Christ's grace to flow into the life of the Church, His Mystical Body. Also, we remember those men and women who paid the ultimate sacrifice on this National Holiday, Memorial Day, so that we can live in freedom. May Mary, Mother of the Church, embrace those who still carry wounds of war with her healing and maternal embrace.

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Thank you for joining me on this most beautiful Feast of Mary, the Mother of the Church. May the Holy Spirit guide us as we continue our lessons on "What Happens at Mass."

Much of what has been said about the reading of the Word of God from the Old Testament can be applied to the second reading, always taken from one of the letters of the apostles. The direction of movement shifts again. God speaks again to His Church, and the Church listens. But now God's language is no longer the creation and the history of Israel. He speaks to us through the reflective writings of the Lord's chosen apostles. The way in which the writers provide us with these reflections demonstrates the center of our theology; the reflective effort of the first believers to absorb all that had been experienced in the death and Resurrection of Jesus. The writers unfold the consequences, showing us in various ways that the believer is summoned to an unimaginably profound sharing in the Lord's Passion and so in his victory. The texts, as we know, are inspired; that is, through them, the Holy Spirit leads us to the understanding of Jesus' death and Resurrection that God intends. So, at Mass, when the apostles' writings are proclaimed the assembly is led in that moment to a grasping of the mystery. The understanding of the writings in the context of the Mass is what God is now saying to His people, so naturally, the reader concludes with "The Word of the Lord ."In our gratitude, we respond, "Thanks be to God." As was the case after the first reading, our most basic response is one of silence that expresses our reverence for the fact that God has spoken. In this silence, once again, in the new content delivered and grasped in this reading, Jesus Christ himself is opening the minds and hearts of His people to a better understanding of the mysteries.

Thank you for joining me as we draw deeper into the Word of God proclaimed at Mass. May the Holy Spirit fill you with renewed peace, and through the intercession of Mary, Mother of the Church, may we continue to grow closer to her Son through our understanding and participation in the Holy Mass. I look forward to sharing Lesson #15 with you next week. Let us keep one another in prayer. May God bless you and your families.

Sincerely in Christ,

Bishop Chad Zielinski