**Liturgy Matters Lesson #15**

**Sing Alleluia to the Lord**

**By Bishop Chad Zielinski**

I am Bishop Chad Zielinski serving the Diocese of New Ulm. We are in the Ninth Week of Ordinary Time in our Liturgical Calendar. As priests, we say, "We are back to green.”

This coming Sunday (June 11, 2023), we celebrate the Solemnity of the Body and Blood of Christ. This has traditionally been called "Corpus Christi Sunday." I invite you to join me and other faithful of the diocese on Corpus Christy Sunday for a Eucharistic procession beginning at the Diocesan Pastoral Center in New Ulm and processing to the Cathedral of the Holy Trinity. The procession starts at 4 p.m.

Thank you for joining me in asking the Holy Spirit to guide us as we continue our lessons on "What Happens at Mass."

We do not sing a psalm in response to the Second Reading. Instead, after a short silence, we stand and sing not once, but many times, the word that is most closely associated with the Lord's Resurrection: Alleluia! It is a shout of praise. We sing this word now because in the proclamation of the Gospel, our risen Lord intensifies his presence in this assembly.

At this moment, the priest or deacon approaches the altar and lifts the book of the Gospels from its place on the altar in a procession to the lectern where the Gospel will be proclaimed. Through the priest or deacon, the transcendent Lord speaks directly to his Church. The Gospel is always read by a deacon or a priest or by the bishop himself if there are no other ordained ministers present at the Eucharist where he presides. This is a ritual "rule," which alerts us to the fact that Christ himself is now speaking directly to his assembled Church. Further, the bishop is a successor to the apostles. He ordains deacons to proclaim the Gospel, and this mission remains in those deacons whom he later ordains as priests. Reserving the proclamation of the Gospel to the ordained reminds us that the Gospel expresses apostolic faith in a preeminent way.

I have said that when Jesus rises from the dead, everything he ever said and did rises with him. By reading some particular passage from the Gospel text, there is delivered to the community some portion, so to speak, of what has risen with Jesus. The Gospels, too, are apostolic texts, so all that we have said about the faith that comes to us through the apostles also applies to our listening to and accepting what we hear in the Gospel reading. We want to recall here what we have said about being attentive to the direction the liturgy is moving. We can see in the proclamation of the Gospel an intensification and a climax of the movement of God the Father toward the world. And we have help in this. The Holy Spirit ensures that Jesus Christ sinks down, way down, into the community, which stands in reverence, awe, and wonder, listening to the Gospel. We cry out to the very one who is now present among us: "Praise to you, Lord Jesus Christ!"

Thank you for joining me as we draw deeper into the Word of God proclaimed at Mass. May the Holy Spirit fill you with a 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 #16 with you next week. Let us keep one another in prayer. May God bless you and your families.