

### ***Message from Father Pergjini:***

Did you ever wonder how the readings used at Sunday Holy Mass are selected? Our Catholic Church uses a three-year liturgical cycle, year A, B and C. A liturgical year starts the first Sunday of advent and ends celebrating the solemnity of Christ the King of the Universe. During the year A the readings are taken from the gospel of Saint Mathew, year B Saint Mark, and year C Saint Luke. This year we are year B in which the gospel of Saint Mark is used. One may ask but where does the Gospel of Saint John fit in? The Gospel of Saint John is read on the great feasts such as Christmas and Easter but is not assigned a year on its own. Also, the gospel of Saint John is used in the middle of the summer, during the year B because the gospel of Saint Mark is the shortest of all the gospels. Since we are in year B, beginning this Sunday, chapter 6 of the Gospel of Saint John is read following for four Sundays. The center theme of this chapter of Saint John is the Holy Eucharist. **During these Sundays I will try my best to describe how the parts of the Holy Mass are structured and how we should worship during this divine celebration.** The Holy Mass has two basic parts: The liturgy of the Word and the liturgy of the Eucharist. The Holy Mass starts always by the priest who makes the sign of the cross and the faithful do the same. It is not meant to start by saying good morning or good afternoon. The Holy Mass is not a human invention, it is the most powerful divine celebration that takes place on earth. It is the mystery of our salvation. After the sign of the cross, the priest greets the people with the most beautiful greeting: "The Lord be with you" and the faithful respond "and also with your spirit." It is not only a unique greeting but also a blessing for the faithful. Then the priest invites the faithful to remind our sins asking God's mercy. It is followed by a moment of silence: the priest and people together pose for few seconds in a deep prayer. Then the ancient penitential prayer is recited, Confiteor which means I confess..... Next is the Gloria, the powerful ancient Christian hymn of praise is sung or recited. It is followed by the opening prayer. After the opening prayer, the Liturgy of the Word starts. The faithful and priest sit down. Sitting is a position of listening and meditation. The lector reverently goes to read the first reading from the Old Testament followed by the responsorial psalm. The second reading is read from the letters of the New Testament. Then the alleluia is sung, and the congregation stands. The priest, bowing before the Altar, says quietly: "Cleanse my heart and my lips, almighty God, that I may worthily proclaim your Gospel." The priest greets people by singing or saying: "the Lord be with you" and announces the reading from the holy gospel according to John. With his thumb on his right hand he makes the cross on the gospel, on his forehead, lips, and heart. The faithful do the same. It means to declare that they will never be ashamed of the word of God, that they are ready to confess it by word of mouth, and that they love it with all their heart. After the gospel is read the priest or deacon kisses the book and quietly says: "Through the words of the Gospel may our sins be wiped away." Then the homily or preaching takes place. The preaching is supposed to provide reflections on the implications and meaning of the readings, especially the Gospel. The truth of the Gospel should be applied to our daily living and practical life to help us to live as faithful Catholics. The preaching should engage the mind and the soul leading the faithful toward an interior conversion.

