

## Pastor's Message

Jesus Christ tells us and our Church confirms for us that Christ will be present to us in three primary ways. First, *whenever two or more of you are gathered together in my name, I am there among you.* (Mt. 18:20). Second, Jesus promised to be with us in the breaking of the bread and the sharing of the chalice: *whenever you do this do it in remembrance of me.* (Mk. 14:22-25). Third, Jesus is present to us in his holy Word, especially the Gospels. The Constitution on the Sacred Liturgy states: "It is Christ who speaks when the holy Scriptures are read in the Church."

The showing of the book of the Gospels while the alleluia is being sung is actually supposed to be a procession around the church, is meant to be the most joyful procession of the Mass. Why? Because we recognize that Christ is present among us and is about to speak to us. The reading of the Gospel is the high point of the whole first part of the Mass, the liturgy of the Word. Over the course of three years the church invites us to hear the greater part of the Gospels of Mark, Matthew and Luke. Next year we begin the three year cycle all over again. Next year (actually this November when Advent and our new liturgical year begins) we will read the Gospel of Matthew. In cycle B we will read the Gospel of Mark. And in cycle C, the third year, the year we are currently in, we read the Gospel of Luke. The Gospel of John is read during the holy season of Easter and sometimes during cycle B.

If you are old enough to remember the rules about attending Mass from before the Vatican Council, we were told that Mass "counted" if you got there before the Gospel and stayed for the consecration of the Eucharist. Did you ever wonder why those were the parts that seemed to count "more"? It was because we have always believed Jesus' promise that he would be present to us in his Word and in his Sacrament. Jesus is truly present and among us when the Gospel is proclaimed and when the bread and the wine, his body and blood, are shared.

The homily is meant to reflect on God's word spoken and to explain and translate it for our current time and situation. Karl Barth, a famous 20th century Protestant theologian used to tell his seminarian students that when you enter the pulpit to preach you should have the Bible in one hand and the newspaper (now it would be a tablet) in the other.

May we always be attentive to God's Word among us. May we listen deeply for Christ's message and be challenged and consoled by God's Word as were the disciples of old.

*Fr. Chris*