

CATECHESIS #18

July 6, 2019

Why is the Gospel reading more important than the other readings?

The significance of the Gospel is that it is Jesus' own words and deeds. Remembering that Jesus is God come in the flesh as man, to listen to the gospel is to listen to God. We notice in Mass the priest will reverence with a kiss only two things – the Altar and the Gospel, demonstrating their sublime nature.

From the dawn of time in the Garden of Eden, humanity has been in mortal combat for our souls. Adam lost the first battle and left us defenseless. The new Adam, Jesus, came entering our ranks on the battle front. While He was among us, Jesus strengthened our defenses and gave us access to invincible weapons.

The Greek word for Gospel, "εὐαγγέλιον" (ah-van-gel-eon) means "good news" and it was used in the context of victory in battle. After a general won a battle he would send out messengers to proclaim the "good news" or victory. By Jesus' words and deeds, he defeated sin and death. This is why the Gospels all culminate in the Paschal mystery and why Easter is the liturgical high point of the year: it is the definitive defeat of sin and the victory of God. The Gospels are Jesus' victory message.

In the Gospel, Jesus began by preaching repentance. This is because unless we recognize our sinfulness and need for a savior, we remain deaf to the Gospel. In the Gospels, Jesus dares us to love unconditionally. He summons us to give up bad habits and sin. He promises us that we will never be left alone in our battle, Jesus is with us always.

The invincible weapons Jesus gave us for our battle are the Church to guide us and the Sacraments to strengthen us. Above all the other Sacraments is the Holy Mass. The Mass is the place where the True Victory of Jesus won 2000 years ago on Calvary in Palestine is made present for us here today. In Mass we are strengthened by the Word of God in the Gospel and the Flesh of God in the Eucharist. It is necessary to fully understand the Mass so that we can wield these weapons properly and gain the strength of spiritual superheroes. When the Gospel is proclaimed in Mass, we don't only hear about the King's great victory; we live it.