

Bulletin Article #13 = Gospel Reading (*Please Stand*)

When non-Catholic visitors come to a Catholic Mass for the first time, one of the most surprising and confusing aspects for them is how often Catholics stand, sit, kneel, stand, sit, etc. We don't stop moving! And furthermore, what is the purpose of all that movement?! If you ever get this comment or this question from someone, you can start by simply saying, "every movement and position has a specific purpose." For example, when we stand for the Alleluia verse (that we reflected on last week), it is because we are standing in preparation to hear a reading from one of the four Gospels. The four Gospels (Matthew, Mark, Luke, and John) are the main source of Scripture that directly testify and explain to us what happened during Jesus' time on this earth. Therefore, we should have a special reverence and respect for these books, and we should try our best to be focused and attentive in our hearts when we are listening to these words. Let's remember that the Bible is God's word ALIVE, which means that not only can we hear about Jesus' life and words being spoken to us from 2,000 years ago, but Jesus Himself, God Himself, can speak to us like He is here standing before us right this very moment in time. Since the four Gospels contain Jesus' life and His very words passed down to us, this is even more privileged and honored than any other book in the Bible! Therefore, to show our respect, reverence, honor, and attention, we all stand during the Alleluia and as the Gospel is read out loud to us (*just like we would stand up in respect and attention if a guest arrives or we are greeting someone famous or powerful in our world*). To drive the point home even more, when the Priest (or Deacon) begins the Gospel reading by saying "A Reading from the Holy Gospel according to Mark", we all respond by saying "Glory to you, O Lord" and at the same time, we draw a cross on our foreheads, lips, and hearts. The traditional prayer while tracing these crosses is to say, "May this Word be in my mind, on my lips, and in my hearts." The purpose of this, once again, is to help us remember the holiness or sacredness of what we are about to hear from the Gospels, and to ask God not only for a greater understanding of Scripture, but especially that we can have the humility of heart to hear Him speaking to us right now in our particular situation, His Word Alive!