

## **KISSING THE WORD OF GOD**

Today we celebrate what is called the *Word of God Day*. We are called to focus and attentively listen to the content of Holy Scripture in every Sunday Mass. If one cannot remember what the Gospel was, after the Priest proclaims (reads) it, then one was not interested in what Jesus wanted to say to them in their hearts. We are not allowing the Word to fulfil us and so we leave Mass missing out on so many graces. The Word of God is alive and active. This is why the Priest kisses the page of the Gospel in every Mass. It is in recognition of the presence of God in His Word. It also replaces the betrayal kiss of Judas, who deceitfully placed it on the face of Jesus in the Garden of Gethsemane. The laity stand up to receive the Gospel of the Word out of reverence and respect for Jesus. To be distracted is to fall for Satan's trickery. The Word does not supersede Jesus' Real physical presence in the Eucharist. However, this Word will become Flesh in the Eucharist, on every holy Altar, in every Mass.

## **THE WORD WAS MADE FLESH IN THE PERSON OF JESUS**

The Priest is transformed into the 'Person of Christ' in all Masses. It is the Priest we hear reading, but it is Jesus speaking to us through scripture. If we do not know Scripture then we do not know Christ. If we neglect to listen to the Holy Scripture in Mass, then we neglect Christ and His teachings. Why attend Mass if we are not prepared to participate by listening attentively? We have to ask ourselves the question: "Do I have a Bible in my home, and if so, do I ever read it?" Do I bring a Mass Missalette home and read it again during the week? It will be very embarrassing and offensive to Jesus, on our Day of Judgement, if we tell Him we didn't bother reading His autobiography, as it were. Imagine if one of our family members wrote a book about the family and we never bothered to read it. How disrespectful that would be? The Priest also kisses the Altar before and after every Mass. It symbolises the Cross on Calvary, the holy Table of the last Supper, and an extension of the Banqueting Table in heaven. The rectangular stone/marble Altars of old, also symbolised the Tomb of Christ. In today's Gospel (Luke 1:1-4,4:14-21), after Jesus reads Scripture, which reveals Himself. They knew He could heal the sick, forgive sins and raise the dead but they still crucified Him, because they did not listen attentively to scripture, revealing to them that He was the Messiah from heaven. Let us not make the same mistake. Open the ears of our hearts and allow the Word of God to fulfil our lives. If we do not listen to the Word then we will get lost on our way to heaven. God bless, Fr. Brendan.