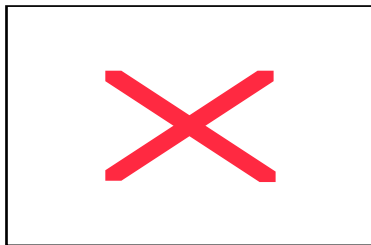


**ANNUAL PRAYER SERVICE  
of the  
EASTERN DIOCESE  
of the  
NATIONAL CATHOLIC CHURCH**

*"Your word is a lamp unto my feet and a  
light unto my path" - Psalm 119:105*



**At the  
Cathedral of the Pines  
Rindge, New Hampshire**

**July 12, 2009**

**This annual Prayer Service at the  
Cathedral of the Pines  
is hosted by:  
*Holy Trinity Cathedral  
and the  
Eastern Diocese of the Polish National Catholic  
Church***

**For more information please contact the  
Eastern Diocese  
166 Pearl Street  
Manchester, NH 03104-4236  
603/669-9278**

**Presiding: Bp. Thomas J. Gnat (Manchester, NH)**

**Celebrant: Fr. Sen. Joseph Krusienski (Plantsville, CT)**

**Sermon: Fr. Sen. Joseph Soltysiak (Westfield, MA)**

**Organist: Donna Wyskiel (Manchester, NH)**

**Acolytes: Stefan Swiadas (Manchester, NH),  
A.J. Menard (New Britain, CT), Kate  
Shaughnessy  
(Westfield, MA)**

**Flag Bearer: Michael Zarek (Central Falls, RI)**

**Also participating: Fr. Sen. Fryderyk S. Banas (Ware, MA), Fr. Walter Biedrawa (Chicopee, MA), Fr. Randolph Calvo (S. Deerfield, MA), Fr. Andrzej**

**Tenus (Lowell, MA), and Deacon Michael Masulli  
(Stratford, CT)**

[Be Seated]

**INTRODUCTION:**

**First Reader: Fr. Randy Calvo**

In 1909, the Second General Synod of our church voted to name a new sacrament: The Word of God Heard and Preached. As both democratic and Catholic, the sacrament fulfills a special need in our denomination. This is why it was called forth and this is why we today celebrate its 100<sup>th</sup> anniversary. The sacrament informs and inspires all the members of the church so that the shared authority of our democracy may reflect the will of God as best as possible. This is why Bp. Hodur referred to the Word of God as the "Great Sacrament" of our church when he wrote the Eleven Great Principles.

The Bible was once more widely utilized. Joe and Peg Kostiuk of South Deerfield reminisced about reading the 23<sup>rd</sup> Psalm at the start of every school day. Today it is often quarantined in specifically religious settings. Because we are the keepers of the Word we must treat it with all the respect possible, and thus its elevation to the dignity of sacrament by and for our church.

The 2008 Eastern Diocese Synod called upon us to gather here at the beautiful Cathedral of the Pines as a part of our diocesan efforts to honour our sacrament on its centenary. The diocese has been diligent in her efforts to publicize and to celebrate our sacrament. To prepare our School of Christian Living classes for this year's anniversary, the SOCL Seminar was dedicated to the theme of the Word of God. This year's Adoration Society Convention followed a similar pattern. And finally, the theme of our August Youth Retreat will be *Spread the Word*. Rachel Quirbach of Lowell submitted her comments: "I think that the most important lesson I learned from Youth Retreats is the importance of getting God's Holy Word spread. I have learned there is so

much to learn from the Bible and our Church ... In retreats the Bible is made fun and enjoyable for everyone."

Let us now collect our thoughts as we prepare to encounter God through His Word as we gather together in prayer before the Altar of the Nation and in this cathedral built by the hand of the Creator.

[Please Stand]

**Cel.:** Our help (+) is in the name of the Lord.

**Resp.:** Who made heaven and earth.

**PROCESSIONAL HYMN**

*"Blessed Is He"- English Hymnal #2, #29*

**Cel.:** *Blessed is he who trusts in God almighty.*

**Cong.:** And he who hopes in God's most gracious mercy. He shall acknowledge: "God is my protector. In life's dark journey, I shall fear no danger, I shall fear no danger."

From all the pow'rs of evil God shall save him, of nature's forces, he shall ne'er fall victim. Under the pinions of the Lord almighty, in God's protection, he shall dwell in safety, he shall dwell in safety.

God's mighty strength shall be his shield and buckler, and shall protect him from all nightly danger. Thousands shall fall, yet he shall walk without fear, kept from the arrows of the foe that is near, of the foe that is near.

For God shall charge His angels to uplift him, and shall command them ever to protect him. They shall uphold him, lest he fall in danger, and they shall keep him in their care forever, in their care forever.

Upon arriving at the *Altar of the Nation*, the American flag is displayed front and center. The congregation will then recite the *Pledge of Allegiance* and sing the *National Anthem*.

**PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE**

I pledge allegiance to the flag of the United States of America, and to the Republic for which it stands, one nation, under God, indivisible, with liberty and justice for all.

### NATIONAL ANTHEM

O say can you see, by the dawn's early light, what so proudly we hailed at the twilight's last gleaming, whose broad stripes, and bright stars, through the perilous fight, o'er the ramparts we watched were so gallantly streaming? And the rockets' red glare, the bombs bursting in air, gave proof through the night that our flag was still there! O say does that Star-Spangled Banner yet wave, o'er the land of the free and the home of the brave?

The American flag is now placed in its stand by the *Altar of the Nation*. The celebrant then invites the congregation to prayer.

[Be Seated]

### CALL TO PRAYER

**Cel.:** Let us pray: Almighty God we invoke your name as we ask to become more attuned to your presence here among us now. Through prayer, meditation, your Word heard and preached and this sacred, peaceful place, enliven our spirits and our minds so that we may be receptive to your presence and purpose. This we ask in the name of Jesus Christ, the true and perfect Word of God.

**Resp.:** Amen.

### GOD'S CREATIVE WORD

**Second Reader: Wanda Mercier (New Britain, CT)**

“By the word of the Lord the heavens were made, and all their host by the breath of His mouth.” (Psalm 33:6) The first majestic words spoken by God in the Bible are “Let there be...,” and creation was begun. We are all familiar with the Genesis story as it is told from the perspective of human thought some 3,000 years ago. Let us hear how it may have been written today:

“In the beginning God created the heavens and the earth. They say it was a Big Bang. The universe expanded from what

seemed to be nothing. The earth was still without form and void, and darkness was over everything. And God said, “Let my light shine forth over this world.” And there was light. ... And God said, “Let there be a life support system for the planet.” And God placed the earth just the right distance from the sun so there could be a primitive atmosphere. ...

And God had great plans for His planet. It was going to be an active and dynamic one. God made some of the earth's crust to rise into mountains above the water's surface, and other parts to sink into basins which could collect water. He divided the earth's crust into several large tectonic plates, which would move and collide with each other, creating and destroying land in the process. ...

And God perfected simple microorganisms which could live in this primitive environment, and developed a system where life could evolve into ever more complex organisms. Indeed the system was a beautiful one – one based on building blocks He called genes which could be combined in millions of ways to give rise to all kinds of new life. God experimented with combining these genes in new ways, and the earth brought forth a multitude of different kinds of plants gaining their sustenance from the atmosphere, land and water that He had already created. ...

And God said, “Let us experiment with combining these genes in different ways, and make animals which can move around in the waters. Let some of them climb onto the land, and some develop wings to fly across the earth and the seas.”

...  
Then God said, “All is ready. Let us now make humans in our image, after our likeness; and honour them by giving them free will and dominion over our creation. Give them wisdom and allow them to return this honour by being just stewards of all of our creation.” ... And God saw the beauty and harmony in everything that He had made, and behold it was very good.” (Submitted by Charles Kellogg, Hatfield, MA)

If we can free the meaning and purpose of God's eternal word from the constraints of human time and language, then we honour His presence in them as alive and still creative. The Word of God leads each generation, each individual on a path of discovery. This is why the Bible ends with the vision of the book of Revelation where the one seated on the heavenly throne, the one elsewhere named "The Word of God" (19:13), proclaims: "See, I am making all things new." (21:5) God's creative Word begins and ends His Holy Scripture. This is why Bp. Hodur has written for our church that "when [a priest] interprets, simplifies, extends and sounds its depth, according to the needs of the time, he is fulfilling the highest duty attainable by man for he is proclaiming the will of God ..." (*Eleven Great Principles, #VI*) The first biblical expression of the Word of God is creative. May this be reflected in the Sacrament of the Word of God. In Jesus' name we pray.

**Resp.:** Amen.

### RESPONSORIAL

*Psalm 119:11-18*

**Cel.:** "I treasure your word in my heart, so that I may not sin against you. Blessed are you, O Lord; teach me your statutes.

**Resp.:** "With my lips I declare all the ordinances of your mouth. I delight in the way of your decrees as much as in all riches.

**Cel.:** "I will meditate on your precepts, and fix my eyes on your ways. I will delight in your statutes; I will not forget your word.

**Resp.:** "Deal bountifully with your servant, so that I may live and observe your word. Open my eyes so that I may behold wondrous things out of your law."

### OLD TESTAMENT READING

*Jeremiah 1:4-10*

**Third Reader: Dorothy Stahelski (Westfield, MA)**

### GOD'S PROPHETIC WORD

### Fourth Reader: Janice Klimczak (Lowell, MA)

The Psalmist writes: "For the word of the Lord is upright, and all His work is done in faithfulness." (33:4) There is an unbreakable connection between what God says and what He does. In other words, the Word of God is testified to by the work of God. This consistency illustrates the nature of God, and comes to define the true follower of God. To breach this union of word and works is to give evidence of separation from God, and to this degradation the prophets speak unsparingly. "Hear this, you who trample on the needy," warns the prophet Amos, "and who bring to ruin the poor of the land ... [who buy] the poor for silver and the needy for a pair of sandals ... The Lord has sworn by the pride of Jacob: Surely I will never forget any of their deeds. Shall not the land tremble on their account, and everyone mourn who lives in it?" (Amos 8:4, 6-8)

The prophetic word insists that we act upon our faith and speaks out fearlessly when we do not. This same thought was expressed in one submission based on the symbol of our church with the opened Bible at its center and the motto of "Truth, Work and Struggle" below it. Cindy Hubbard of South Deerfield wrote: "To me the Word of God is not only in the Bible, and hearing sermons from my pastor each week, but it is in all the good in the world that we encounter daily – people putting into practice the Word of God." Conveying God's word, Isaiah decries the hypocrisy of those who "draw near with their mouths and honour me with their lips, while their hearts are far from me..." (29:13) The prophetic Word of God is intended to constantly challenge us. It must correct our wrongs and encourage our progress. It can never rest or be satisfied. It calls us to confront the world and to change it. The prophetic word sees beyond what is, and looks out to what can be when we put our faith into action.

The prophet must, therefore, be willing to suffer for the Word of God when that vision strikes against the powerful. Jeremiah is the most poignant of all the prophets when he expresses the heaviness of bearing the burden of the prophetic Word of God: "O Lord, you have seduced me, and I was seduced; you have overpowered

me, and you have prevailed. I have become a laughingstock all day long; everyone mocks me. For whenever I speak, I must cry out, I must shout, 'Violence and destruction!' For the word of the Lord has become for me a reproach and derision all day long. If I say, 'I will not mention Him, or speak any more in His name,' then within me there is something like a burning fire shut up in my bones; I am weary with holding it in, and I cannot." (20:7-9)

The prophetic Word of God is founded on revelation not popularity. The prophet's direct experience of the Almighty inspires his fervent proclamation and his constancy. The book of Ezekiel opens with the prophet speaking of visions seen and words heard as "the hand of the Lord was on him there." (1:3) The Word of God conveys the power and the will of God Himself so that Isaiah can declare in God's voice: "So shall my word be that goes out from my mouth, it shall not return to me empty, but it shall accomplish that which I purpose, and succeed in that for which I sent it." (55:11)

God calls Ezekiel "a sentinel for the house of Israel." (3:17) The prophet must proclaim what he hears in the presence of God to the people. The people may not listen, but the prophet must speak. The prophet is called upon by God not so much to tell the future as to address the present, to encourage people to faithfulness, and to warn them against unrighteousness. It is in this spirit that Bp. Hodur explains that through the Sacrament of the Word of God "[people] actually receive the power of the Holy Spirit in order to transform [themselves], renew [themselves] and become a new [person] in the spirit of our Divine Master." (1928 Warsaw Synod Address) The second biblical expression of the Word of God is prophetic. May this be reflected in the Sacrament of the Word of God. In Jesus' name we pray.

**Resp.:** Amen.

### RESPONSORIAL

*Psalm 119:25b-28, 41-44*

**Cel.:** "Revive me according to your word. When I told of my ways, you answered me; teach me your statutes. Make me

understand the way of your precepts, and I will meditate on your wondrous works.

**Resp.:** "My soul melts away for sorrow; strengthen me according to your word..."

**Cel.:** "Let your steadfast love come to me, O Lord, your salvation according to your promise. Then I shall have an answer for those who taunt me, for I trust in your word.

**Resp.:** "Do not take the word of truth utterly out of my mouth, for my hope is in your ordinances. I will keep your law continually, forever and ever."

### NEW TESTAMENT READING

*Romans 10:8-17*

**Fifth Reader: Chris Piekarski (S. Deerfield, MA)**

### HYMN

*"Amazing Grace"*

<Solo by Joey Grieve of the Lowell Parish>

### GOD'S INCARNATE WORD

**Sixth Reader: Alina Swiadas (Manchester, NH)**

Luke records the phrase: "The word of God came to John [the Baptist]..." (3:2) This description will never be used again in the Bible. John is the last of the Hebrew prophets. With the coming of Christ into the world, with all that Jesus says and does, the Word of God is now contained fully in His person. The divine unity of word and work is revealed perfectly for us in Jesus. This is why the evangelist John says, "The Word became flesh and dwelt among us, and we have seen His glory, the glory as of the Father's only Son, full of grace and truth." (1:14) It is because Jesus is the perfect Word of God that He can say without any false pretense: "Everyone then who hears these words of mine and acts on them will be like a wise man who built his house on rock." (Matt. 7:24) Jesus is not the prophetic spokesman of the Word of God. He can say "these words of mine" because He is the Word of God.

As God's all-powerful word merely needs to be spoken in Genesis for the act of creation to follow, so Jesus' word conveys the same divine authority. The centurion in Matthew's Gospel recognizes this divine power in Jesus and says, "Only speak the word and my servant will be healed." (8:8) That same power is evident in a different way when early in His ministry Jesus preaches the Sermon on the Mount. Here Jesus distinguishes His gospel from that which came before. Six times Jesus repeats the phrase "But I say to you." On the power of His own authority and nothing more, Jesus reinterprets the age-old Covenant given to Moses. At the end of the Sermon, Matthew tells us, "The crowds were astounded at His teaching for [Jesus] taught them as one having authority." (7:28-29)

At another time Jesus displays the power of His word when He says to a man, "Your sins are forgiven." (Lk 5:20) These words scandalized the religious authorities of His day and they complained, "Who can forgive sins but God alone?" (Lk. 5:21) They could not recognize that Jesus' word is the Word of God. As Jesus Himself says in John, "You have already been cleansed by the word that I have spoken to you." (15:3)

And lastly, judgment itself is affected by Jesus' word. Our Lord reveals: "Truly I tell you, anyone who hears my word and believes him who sent me has eternal life;" (John 5:24) and on the other side of the coin: "The one who rejects me and does not receive my word has a judge; on the last day the word that I have spoken will serve as judge." (John 12:48)

Jesus is the perfect Word of God, and as such His word conveys the very essence of God's power, teaching, forgiveness, and judgment. This awakening to the full identity of Christ unfolds in the Gospel-story. After healing a man, Jesus orders him, "Return to your home and declare how much God has done for you," but without any contradiction the man proclaims instead how much Jesus had done for him. (Lk. 8:39) The one who preached the Word of God is becoming the one preached as the Word of God. Robert Adamski from South Deerfield wrote: "The Word of God is Jesus of Nazareth. He speaks the glory of

grace and righteousness ... Come sit among His people and ponder these words and honor them with worship." The third biblical expression of the Word of God is Jesus, the Incarnate Word of God. May this be reflected in the Sacrament of the Word of God. In Jesus' name we pray.

**Resp.:** Amen.

### RESPONSORIAL

*Psalm 119: 65-68, 89-90, 92-93, 105*

**Cel.:** "You have dealt well with your servant, O Lord, according to your word. Teach me good judgment and knowledge, for I believe in your commandments.

**Resp.:** "Before I was humbled I went astray, but now I keep your word. You are good and do good; teach me your statutes.

**Cel.:** "The Lord exists forever; your word is firmly fixed in heaven. Your faithfulness endures to all generations; you have established the earth, and it stands fast.

**Resp.:** "If your law had not been my delight, I would have perished in my misery. I will never forget your precepts, for by them you have given me life. ... Your word is a lamp unto my feet and a light unto my path."

### HYMN

*"Thy Word"*

<Recording by Amy Grant>

During the singing of the hymn, a special freewill collection will be accepted for the **Military Child Education Coalition**. This organization is a 501(c)(3) non-profit, world-wide organization. Its work is focused on ensuring quality educational opportunities for all military children affected by mobility, family separation, and transition. A recipient of the 2004 Congressional Club Charity of the Year, MCEC has also been certified *Best in*

*America* by the Independent Charities of America. For more information about this charity visit: [www.militarychild.org](http://www.militarychild.org).

This charity was chosen because its focus on education reflects our theme this year of the Word of God, and because its assistance to military families melds with that of the Cathedral of the Pines as a “living memorial to those who gave their lives for our country.” We thank you for your generosity.

[Please Stand]

### **GOSPEL READING**

*Matthew 13:1-9, 18-23*

**Seventh Reader: Deacon Michael Masulli**

[Be Seated]

### **GOD’S SACRAMENTAL WORD**

**Eighth Reader: Stefan Swiadas**

The oldest piece of Christian literature still in existence is St. Paul’s First Epistle to the Thessalonians, thus it is the earliest example of the Christian proclamation available to us today. And the first message it shares turns around to explain itself. Paul thanks God that “our message of the gospel came to you not in word only, but also in power and in the Holy Spirit.” (1:5) The Word that is preached conveys the power of Christ and the presence of the Holy Spirit. Paul follows this testimony with the additional revelation that “when you received the word of God that you heard from us, you accepted it not as a human word but as what it really is, God’s word, which is also at work in you believers.” (2:13-14) What Paul makes clear is that the Word of God continues to act through those who hear the proclamation and are affected by it.

Sacraments are instruments that convey the grace and presence of Christ. What is exceptional about the Sacrament of the Word of God is that it is the only sacrament offered to all people whether or not they believe in Jesus. The resurrected Jesus tells

His disciples, “Go into all the world and proclaim the gospel to the whole creation. The one who believes and is [then] baptized will be saved.” (Mark 16:15-16a) The Word of God is the sacramental vehicle that the glorified Jesus uses to reach out to all of creation, and in this sense it may be the most important of all the sacraments.

It is said of the Word of God in the Epistle to the Hebrews: “Indeed, the Word of God is living and active, sharper than any two-edged sword, piercing until it divides soul from spirit, joints from marrow; it is able to judge the thoughts and intentions of the heart.” (4:12) The Word of God confronts all who hear it with the real presence of Jesus and forces them to decide how they will respond to the invitation of faith. To those who hear and believe it is said: “You have been born anew, not of perishable but of imperishable seed, through the living and enduring Word of God ... That word is the good news that was announced to you.” (1 Peter 1:23, 25) This is the basis for the incredible New Testament phrase “you yourselves have been taught by God” (1 Thess. 4:9) But the Word of God also says to us that no one is forgotten by Jesus, separated from Him. His Word reaches out and encourages all people to believe. Could we expect anything less from the Saviour who says: “God did not send the Son into the world to condemn the world, but in order that the world might be saved through Him.” (John 3:17)

Bp. Hodur writes in 1923: “Those who hear the Word of God worthily ... are united with the Lord God, are coworkers with Him.” This is also an important aspect of our sacrament that cannot be ignored. To believe is not a passive verb. It expects an active faith. The Word of God is to regenerate us so that we work with Christ toward the goal of salvation, ours and the world’s. Since God has shared with us the responsibility of building His earthly kingdom, then all who are the church must be constantly exposed to the teaching, challenge and inspiration that is the Word of God. Leonora Szruba of Norwich, CT shares with us this perspective: “To me this is living God’s word – being of service to others; giving of one’s self, not for recognition or praise, but

because it's the right thing to do. It's what the Word of God teaches us."

St. Peter writes of our stewardship of the church: "Serve one another with whatever gift each of you has received. Whoever speaks must do so as one speaking the very words of God; whoever serves must do so with the strength that God supplies, so that God may be glorified in all things through Jesus Christ. To Him belong the glory and the power forever and ever. Amen." (1 Peter 4:10-11) This idea of serving through "whatever gift" we have received was beautifully presented in a two page submission by Jan Trudell of Westfield. Sadly, it cannot be reproduced in its entirety, but she tells of serving as a church organist while still in high school. Through the mentoring of another choir member, Jan began to appreciate the connection between hymn and scripture. She writes: "Specific Scripture readings translated into beautiful, timeless, classic pieces of music. It became a personal challenge to try to identify pieces, and my soloist mentor was a willing co-conspirator. This opened up a very inspired music venue for our parish." Jan's personal experience of the Word of God translated into a benefit for her parish as well, which exemplifies Peter's message of "serve one another with whatever gift each of you has received." The Word of God can speak to us in many and varied ways for our good and that of others, but we must be open and receptive to its voice for anything to happen. The fourth biblical expression of the Word of God is as sacrament. Both heard and preached, may the Word of God shape, challenge and inspire our lives. In Jesus' name we pray.

**Resp.:** Amen.

### **HYMN TO THE HOLY SPIRIT**

*"Holy Spirit, Come" - Vol. #1, #23*

Holy Spirit, come, inspire us. Send Thy seven fold gifts upon us. (As we hear Thy word most solemn, teach our hearts to know Thy wisdom.)

### **SACRAMENT OF THE WORD OF GOD HEARD & PREACHED**

<Delivered by Fr. Sen. Joseph Soltysiak>

#### **CLOSING REMARKS**

<Offered by Bp. Thomas Gnat>

#### **FINAL BLESSING**

**Cel.:** Blessed be the name of the Lord.

**Resp.:** From henceforth, now, and forevermore.

**Cel.:** Our help is in the name of the Lord.

**Resp.:** Who made heaven and earth.

**Cel.:** May the almighty and merciful God bless you: the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit.

**Resp.:** Amen.

[Please Stand]

#### **HYMN OF THE CHURCH**

*"Through the Years"*

Through the years unto Thee, O Lord, faithful service we have rendered, at the break of dawn marched sunward, (at the chains of bondage straining.)

Unto Thee we built a temple, which for us became a treasure, pouring gifts of faith and courage, (in it is our hope forever.) Would to God we be faithful ever, would to God this sacred banner, in our souls and hearts be opened, (until death our life does sever.)

#### **RECESSIONAL HYMN**

*"Hymn of Resolve"*

Moved to the depths of our very souls, Lord, we now turn homeward with grateful tear. For words divine, the breaking of bread and Thy joyous myst'ries which we did hear. For now, O Christ, we gain understanding, of Thine own purpose and judgments true; Thy fount of grace and water of cleansing, with which Thy children, Thou didst imbue.

Prayer Service composed by Fr. Randolph Calvo

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