



The Holy See

**ADDRESS OF THE HOLY FATHER JOHN PAUL II
ON THE OCCASION OF THE PRESENTATION
OF AN ARTISTIC EDITION
OF THE EVANGELIARIUM (GOSPEL BOOK)
PREPARED BY THE CONGREGATION FOR DIVINE WORSHIP
AND THE DISCIPLINE OF THE SACRAMENTS**

Friday, 15 December 2000

*Venerable Brothers in the Episcopate and the Priesthood,
Dear Brothers and Sisters,*

1. I am pleased to meet you today for the presentation of the first copy of the Latin edition of the *Evangeliarium* prepared by this dicastery. I cordially greet Archbishop Francesco Pio Tamburrino, Secretary of the Congregation for Divine Worship and the Discipline of the Sacraments, the members of his staff and all who in various ways helped to produce this interesting edition.

Today's happy occasion gives us a chance to pause and reflect on the value of the word of God in salvation history and its efficacy when proclaimed liturgically. From all eternity in his inscrutable loving plan, God chose the word as the way to reveal himself, and in the fullness of time he wanted to present himself in the person of the Son Jesus Christ, so that the force and the very power of the word could become an event of saving history for all. The eternal mystery of love for man, hidden in the very heart of God, was thus revealed in a tangible and sublime way in the beloved Son, in whom the Father has established his covenant forever.

2. The testimony of this revelation, contained in Sacred Scripture and Sacred Tradition, was entrusted by the Apostles to the whole Church, which has always venerated the divine Scriptures as she has the very Body of Christ (cf. *Dei Verbum*, nn. 8, 21). The centrality of Christ in the

economy of salvation grounds and determines the very pre-eminence that the Church reserves for the Gospel during the Eucharistic celebration, making it the high point of the Liturgy of the Word.

This awareness leads each and every one to respect the Sacred Scriptures and encourages a special care and decorum in preparing the respective editions. Therefore, I express to you my great pleasure for having prepared such a handsomely presented text for the proclamation of the Lord's Gospel on especially important occasions during the liturgical year. Following the ancient practice of the Eastern and Western liturgical tradition, and according to what is stated in the *Ordo lectionum Missae*, you have gathered into a single volume the Gospel readings for the various celebrations and feasts, arranged according to their liturgical order.

3. I hope that this new initiative will give renewed impetus to pastoral activity concerned with hearing and receiving the Gospel message, by encouraging an authentic renewal which, as I said on another occasion, "sets further and ever new requirements: fidelity to the authentic meaning of the Scriptures which must never be lost from view, especially when the Scriptures are translated into different languages; the manner of proclaiming the word of God so that it may be perceived for what it is; the use of appropriate technical means, the interior disposition of the ministers of the word so that they carry out properly their function in the liturgical assembly; careful preparation of the homily through study and meditation; effort on the part of the faithful to participate at the table of the word; a taste for prayer with the Psalms; a desire to discover Christ - like the disciples at Emmaus - at the table of the word and the bread" (*Vicesimus quintus annus*, n. 8).

With these sentiments, as I invoke Mary's maternal protection on your daily service to the Church, I impart a special Apostolic Blessing to you all.

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