

25 April 2024, Feast of the Evangelist Mark

[1 Peter 5:5-14; Mark 16:15-20](#)

Homily

The Evangelist Mark was a disciple of the Apostle Peter, and his Gospel is considered to be the first collection of the words and events surrounding the life and ministry of Jesus. As our Gospel reading this morning, we have the last verses of this Gospel of Mark, and as our first reading, we have the last verses of Peter's First Letter, where he conveys greetings from his disciple and son Mark.

In today's Gospel, after his resurrection and when he ascended into heaven, Jesus gave his disciples the command to go and preach the Good News to the whole of creation. This was the beginning of the time of the Church, in which we now find ourselves. His disciples become witnesses to the Word, and the Lord confirms this Word by the signs he had announced.

Christianity is not a religion of the Book, as is sometimes said. It is a religion of the Word, and that is very different. The Gospels are not simply writings in which the exact words spoken by Jesus are compiled. It is through life itself, through lived experience, that the Word is transmitted. What he heard from his Father, Jesus made known to us through everything he experienced here on earth. In the same way, what the writings of the New Testament reveal to us is this same message, as it was lived by the Apostles and their disciples. It is the experience of the early Church that is revealed to us in these texts. The written texts are the vehicles of an experience; but it is the experience that is the vehicle of faith.

If we are gathered here this morning to celebrate the Eucharist, it is because for two thousand years, generation after generation of faithful have heard the Word of Jesus, incarnated it in their lives and passed it on to us through their lived experience. Each of us is given the same mission to pass on the same Gospel message to our contemporaries and to future generations, letting it permeate our lives and preaching it through what we live even more than through the Word.

The essence of the Christian message is the Word lived - the Word received and transmitted through life itself.

Armand Veilleux