

THE MASS-LITURGY OF THE WORD

April 26, 2015

WHAT'S THIS?

The Mass consists of four main sections. They are:

- Introductory Rites;
- Liturgy of the Word;
- Liturgy of the Eucharist and;
- Concluding Rites

Liturgy of the Word

During this part of the Mass, the Word of God is proclaimed, responded to, explained, and accepted. The Scriptures are God's word spoken to us today. Through the Liturgy of the Word, God speaks to us personally and is fully present to us. We must be open to God's presence by turning a listening ear and heart to the Sacred Scripture proclaimed during the Liturgy.

August 30, 2015

WHAT'S THIS?

Liturgy of the Word

After the Collect is finished and everyone sits down, the Mass continues with the Liturgy of the Word. This is the major part of the Mass during which the Word of God is proclaimed, responded to, explained and accepted. In the readings, the table of God's Word is spread before the faithful, and the treasures of the Bible are opened to us. Why do we proclaim the Word of God at Mass? Every family has its story – how your parents met, or how your cousin earned a particular nickname. When we gather for the Mass, **we hear our story – God's story of His love for us – through Sacred Scriptures.** We tell these stories whenever we gather for Mass because these scriptures reinforce what we believe, to whom we belong, and our relationship with others and with God.

Hearing the Word proclaimed in the midst of the assembly is a communal experience. In the assembly we listen together, as members of the body of Christ being guided by Christ, our head. Within that communal experience, though, each person might hear the Word a bit differently. The Holy Spirit, who inspired the scriptural writings, also enables the listener to hear the message that Christ has for each person.

As any family knows, there is a difference between hearing and truly listening. The structure of the Word lends itself not just to hearing the Word of God, but to listening. To listen, we need an active, engaged mind that is focused on the Word of God, and we need time to process what we have heard for meaning. For this reason, it's important to make good use of the silences in between the readings. Most of us are scared of silence. We aren't sure what we'll hear when we're quiet enough to let the Holy Spirit speak. Strive to move from a "scared" silence to a "sacred" silence, a silence that truly takes time to break down what we've heard and apply it to our lives as individuals.

THE MASS—LITURGY OF THE WORD

September 6, 2015

WHAT'S THIS?

Liturgy of the Word

When we speak of the Word of the Lord, we mean more than the fact that we proclaim the written Word of God in the Scriptures. The proclamation of the Word in the midst of the assembly is recognized as a current event in which Christ speaks to his people gathered as his body. It is thus intended to be a spiritual event, an opportunity to encounter the Lord as he speaks to us. Saint Pope John Paul II wrote

“It should also be borne in mind that *the liturgical proclamation of the word of God*, especially in the Eucharistic assembly, is not so much a time for meditation and catechesis as *a dialogue between God and his People*, a dialogue in which the wonders of salvation are proclaimed and the demands of the Covenant are continually restated. On their part, the People of God are drawn to respond to this dialogue of love by giving thanks and praise, also by demonstrating their fidelity to the task of continual ‘conversion’”.

DIES DOMININI (“THE DAY OF THE LORD”), 41

What is crucial is that we are listening attentively to the Word of the Lord that Christ wants each of us to hear. It may happen that we are struck by a word (or idea) in the first reading and, as a result, we don't even hear the rest of the reading or the next one. That's not necessarily a bad thing. If that word of the Lord has touched us and taken root in us, that may be enough for one week.

The structure of the Liturgy of the Word is that of a dialogue. In the Liturgy of the Word, silence is recommended before the first reading begins, after the first and second reading, and after the homily. The silences after the readings are intended to be significant enough in length to allow the listeners to reflect upon and embrace the word they have just heard.

Excerpts taken from *How We Worship The Eucharist, The Sacraments, and The Hours*
by Reverend Lawrence E. Mick

The Liturgy of the Word includes:

The First Reading
The Responsorial Psalm
The Second Reading
The Gospel Acclamation
The Gospel
The Homily
The Profession of Faith
The General Intercessions or Prayer of the Faithful

The First Reading

- This reading is read by the lector from the lectionary at the ambo (Greek word meaning “to ascend”)
- It is generally taken from the Old Testament
- The Sunday lectionary generally follows a three year cycle
- The First Reading and the Gospel have been picked in coordination with each other so that there will be a theme
- This reading is linked to the Gospel and highlights the Gospel in one of many ways:
 - 1) To show how a prophecy in the Old Testament is fulfilled through Jesus Christ in the Gospel
 - 2) To make a contrast between events and personalities in the Old Testament and the Gospel
 - 3) To make the meaning of the Gospel more clear through giving “the rest of the story”
- The lector pronounces the acclamation “The Word of the Lord” and by means of the reply “Thanks be to God” we give honor to the Word of God that we have received in faith and with gratitude
- A period of silence significant enough to embrace the word we have just heard.

THE MASS—LITURGY OF THE WORD

September 13, 2015

WHAT'S THIS?

Liturgy of the Word

The Liturgy of the Word includes:

The First Reading
The Responsorial Psalm
The Second Reading
The Gospel Acclamation
The Gospel
The Homily
The Profession of Faith
The General Intercessions or Prayer of the Faithful

The Responsorial Psalm

The Responsorial Psalm follows the First Reading, which is an integral part of the Liturgy of the Word and has great liturgical and pastoral importance, since it fosters meditation on the Word of God. It is called “responsorial” because it is a response to the first reading in some way, often echoing its message or complementing it. It provides us a way to reply to the Word we have heard.

- Taken from one of the 150 Psalms or from an Old or New Testament Canticle
- The Psalm is a response to the first reading and helps us to focus on the theme of the liturgy
- The Psalm is preferred to be sung but may be recited
- Each Psalm is a prayer which reflects the wide range of human needs and emotions.

September 20, 2015

WHAT'S THIS?

Liturgy of the Word

The Liturgy of the Word includes:

The First Reading
The Responsorial Psalm
The Second Reading
The Gospel Acclamation
The Gospel
The Homily
The Profession of Faith
The General Intercessions or Prayer of the Faithful

The Second Reading

The Second Reading is taken from the New Testament and doesn't always tie in with the First Reading or the Gospel. Why, then, do we proclaim this reading at Mass? The Letters in the New Testament were written to the early church by St. Paul and the Apostles. These letters offered support, encouragement, correction and guidance to a young Church finding its way in a society that did not support them. We also need the direction of the Apostles, guided by the Holy Spirit, as we make our way through a society that doesn't always support us in living our faith! Listen to the Second Reading as you would to the sage advice of a grandparent, mentor or teacher.

- This reading is read by the lector from the lectionary at the ambo
- This reading is only on Sundays, solemnities and special feast days
- It is generally taken from the epistles (another word for letter) of the New Testament from: The Acts of the Apostles; Letters of St. Paul; one of the other letters of the New Testament; or The Book of Revelation
- The Sunday lectionary generally follows a three year cycle
- The Second Reading is not chosen with any reference to the other readings
- The lector pronounces the acclamation “The Word of the Lord” and by means of the reply “Thanks be to God” we give honor to the Word of God that we have received in faith and with gratitude
- A period of silence follows this reading significant enough to embrace the word we have just heard.

THE MASS—LITURGY OF THE WORD

September 27, 2015

WHAT'S THIS?

Liturgy of the Word

The Liturgy of the Word includes:

The First Reading
The Responsorial Psalm
The Second Reading
The Gospel Acclamation
The Gospel
The Homily
The Profession of Faith
The General Intercessions or Prayer of the Faithful

The Gospel Acclamation

After the reading that immediately proceeds the Gospel, the Alleluia (or another chant) is sung. An acclamation of this kind constitutes a rite or act in itself, by which the gathering of the faithful welcomes and greets the Lord who is about to speak to them in the Gospel and profess their faith by means of the chant.

- The Gospel Acclamation is sung before and after the scripture passage that proceeds the Gospel, and is led by the cantor or choir
- The faithful rise during the Alleluia to honor the Gospel
- It accompanies the procession with the Book of the Gospels from the altar to the ambo when that takes place at more solemn liturgies
- Outside of Lent, it is an Alleluia acclamation, during Lent another acclamation is sung
- Alleluia in Hebrew means “praise to you, Lord”
- The Alleluia is an acclamation of God’s presence in the Sacred Scriptures, particularly in the Gospel which follows immediately.

October 4, 2015

WHAT'S THIS?

Liturgy of the Word

The Liturgy of the Word includes:

The First Reading
The Responsorial Psalm
The Second Reading
The Gospel Acclamation
The Gospel
The Homily
The Profession of Faith
The General Intercessions or Prayer of the Faithful

The Gospel

The high point of the Liturgy of the Word is the reading of the Gospel (the word Gospel means “good news”). What we hear proclaimed at Mass truly is good news – the best news we can hear. Jesus Christ speaks to us! It is important to remember that when the Gospel is proclaimed, it is no longer the priest or deacon speaking, but Christ himself. Because the gospels tell of the life, ministry, miracles, parables, sayings, compassion, mercy and preaching of Christ, it receives several special signs of honor and reference.

- The assembly stands to hear the Gospel
- It is introduced by an acclamation of praise (Alleluia)
- Only a deacon or priest reads the Gospel
- This is a reading taken from one of the four Gospels (Matthew, Mark, Luke or John)
- As the priest introduces the Gospel, we trace the sign of the cross with our thumb on our forehead, lips and heart. In doing so, we ask God to be in our mind, on our lips and in our heart as we listen to the Gospel and then strive to live it in our daily lives.

THE MASS—LITURGY OF THE WORD

October 11, 2015

WHAT'S THIS?

Liturgy of the Word

The Liturgy of the Word includes:

The First Reading
The Responsorial Psalm
The Second Reading
The Gospel Acclamation
The Gospel
The Homily
The Profession of Faith
The General Intercessions or Prayers of the Faithful

The Homily

The homily has also been called the sermon. The word homily means “conversation with the people.”

- There is to be a homily at every Sunday and Holyday Mass and may not be omitted without a grave reason
- The homily is meant to explain the scriptures (the readings and Gospel of the day)
- It should make practical applications and connections to daily Christian living
- It should ordinarily be given by the priest celebrant himself or be entrusted by him to a concelebrating priest, or from time to time to the deacon
- It is appropriate for a brief period of silence to be observed after the homily.

October 18, 2015

WHAT'S THIS?

Liturgy of the Word

The Liturgy of the Word includes:

The First Reading
The Responsorial Psalm
The Second Reading
The Gospel Acclamation
The Gospel
The Homily
The Profession of Faith
The General Intercessions or Prayers of the Faithful

The Profession of Faith

A creed is a statement or summary of belief. The purpose of the Creed or Profession of Faith is that the whole assembly may respond to the Word of God proclaimed in the readings taken from Sacred Scripture and explained in the Homily.

- We stand when we recite the Creed
- The Profession of Faith can either be the Nicene Creed, Apostle's Creed or the renewal of our Baptismal Vows
- The Creed is a statement of the truths which we hold as Catholic Christians
- The Nicene Creed expresses our basic Catholic beliefs and enables the faithful to renew their faith and their baptismal commitment
- It is recited or sung on all Sundays and solemnities
- When we recite or sing this prayer together, we express not only our individual belief but the faith which all of us hold in common

THE MASS—LITURGY OF THE WORD

October 25, 2015

WHAT'S THIS?

Liturgy of the Word

The Liturgy of the Word includes:

The First Reading
The Responsorial Psalm
The Second Reading
The Gospel Acclamation
The Gospel
The Homily
The Profession of Faith
The General Intercessions or Prayers of the Faithful

The Profession of Faith Continued

We honor and confess the great mysteries of the faith by pronouncing the rule of faith, in a formula approved for liturgical use before the celebration of these mysteries in the Eucharist.

- The structure of the Creed reinforces our belief in the Holy Trinity, first addressing the Father, then the Son, and then the Holy Spirit, stressing that the three persons are one God
- At the heart of our faith *is our belief* that God became one of us at the birth of Christ. **To highlight our belief in this truth, we are asked to bow** at the words in the Nicene Creed “By the power of the Holy Spirit, he was born of the Virgin Mary, and became man” or in the Apostle’s Creed “who was conceived by the Holy Spirit, born of the Virgin Mary”
- On Easter Sunday or on Sundays when we have baptisms, we are asked to renew our baptismal promises. We are asked about our belief, to which we respond “I do” to each statement of our faith. The renewal of our baptismal promises is also a creed, a statement of belief, based on the Apostle’s Creed
- **The Creed is a very important prayer!** We return to these familiar “words of faith” week after week· to remind and refocus ourselves on the truth.

THE MASS—LITURGY OF THE WORD

November 1, 2015

WHAT'S THIS?

The Liturgy of the Word includes:

The First Reading
The Responsorial Psalm
The Second Reading
The Gospel Acclamation
The Gospel
The Homily
The Profession of Faith
The General Intercessions or Prayers of the Faithful

The General Intercessions or Prayers of the Faithful

The Prayers of the Faithful, also known as the General Intercessions or the Universal Prayers, take place at the conclusion of the Liturgy of the Word and serves to connect the Liturgy of the Word to the Liturgy of the Eucharist (the next part of the Mass). The structure of the Prayers of the Faithful is generally the same:

- A short introduction by the priest
- Followed by intercessions proclaimed by the lector or deacon
- A short concluding prayer (called an oration) led by the priest
- At the end of each petition, we respond “Lord hear our prayer”
- While there are no official texts for the Prayers of the Faithful, they follow a general order:
 - ◇ For the needs of the Church
 - ◇ For public authorities and the salvation of the world
 - ◇ For those burdened with any kind of difficulty
 - ◇ For the local community
 - ◇ For vocations
 - ◇ For all those who have died
 - ◇ For our own special intentions
- When we pray in this way, we recognize our place within the larger community of the baptized and bring these prayers and intentions with us as we move forward in the Mass.