

Liturgy of the Word.

The Liturgy of the Word is a powerful moment in the Mass.

Scripture Readings are from the Bible

The Bible is God's Word

God is Love – so these must be Love Letters.

When the Sacred Scriptures are read in the Church, God Himself speaks to His people, and Christ, present in His word, proclaims the Gospel.

All Scripture is to be proclaimed from the Ambo reserved for proclaiming Scripture. Further, the GIRM underlines the fact that the proclamation of the 1st and 2nd readings is a lay, not a clerical, ministry. Ambo is the Altar of the Word

The Lector/Deacon/Priest are lending God, their voice so God's Word can be communicated to the people.

For in the readings, God is speaking to his people, opening up to them the mystery of redemption and salvation, and nourishing their spirit; and Christ himself is present in the midst of the faithful through his word..." (GIRM 55)

(Notice the Lector, Deacon, Priest bows to the Altar on their way to the Ambo.

We should listen as if God and Christ himself were standing at the Ambo.

Usually three readings and a Responsorial psalm.

Readings from the **Lectionary** – 3 Year Cycle.

Matthew (Year A), Mark (Year B), and Luke (Year C). Selections from the Gospel of John are inserted at different times in all the three yearly cycles.

The Old Testament first readings were chosen because of their connection with a particular Sunday Gospel story.

Excerpts from the Letters and Acts of the Apostles make up the larger part of selections for our second readings.

- St. Augustine famously observed that the New Testament is hidden in the Old Testament and the Old Testament is only fully revealed in light of the New Testament.
- This is the **"Great Apostolic Forehead Smack Principle"**.
- John notes that the apostles still did not understand from the Scripture that Jesus had to rise from the dead, even when they were standing at the mouth of the empty tomb.
- They did not even understand it when they met the Risen Christ on the road to Emmaus.

- It took the celebration of the Eucharist for their eyes to be opened and for them to smack their foreheads and realize that the death and resurrection of the Messiah and his saving gospel had been staring them in the face the whole time but they hadn't seen it.
- This is why the Church has always read its Bible (Old and New Testament) at the celebration of the Eucharist: because the Holy Spirit still lurks in the book he inspired and awaits the change to surprise us again. The New Testament doesn't cancel the Old: it makes it come true.

First Reading: Usually from the Old Testament - during the Easter Season from Acts. First Reading chosen for its connection with the Gospel Readings.

Responsorial Psalm: Just encountered God's Holy Word spoken to us in the First Reading and we respond to that word with God's own inspired words of Praise, Thanksgiving, and Petition.

- Responsorial Psalm is not just one more reading at Mass.
- "It is preferable that the responsorial Psalm be sung, at least as far as the people's response is concerned. If the Psalm cannot be sung, then it should be recited in such a way
- Fostering meditation on the word of God. "(GIRM 61)

The Second Reading: From the New Testament and is usually chosen independently from the other Readings. Letters of Paul, other Letters or the Book of Revelation. A lot of emphasis on how to live out our life with Christ.

Lector says, The Word of the Lord, and we respond with such enthusiastic grateful hearts and we say "Thanks be to God."

Proclaiming the Good News (The Gospel)

Rich & significant ritual gestures:

1. Standing speaks of respect and honor.

Community Stands at those times that reveal the Church as the Body of Christ –

- Entrance Procession,
- Gospel
- Profession of Faith and Prayer of Faithful
- Start of the Liturgy of the Eucharist,
- Our Father
- Communion Procession.

2. The Gospel Acclamation – We welcome and greet the Lord who is about to speak to us in the Gospel, and profess our faith by singing. All stand and sing the Alleluia - helps us to reverence the Gospel.

- The second musical piece of the Liturgy of the Word is the Gospel Acclamation (usually the Alleluia) that immediately precedes the proclamation of the Gospel, which is the high point of the Liturgy of the Word.

- Alleluia announces the Gospel
- The acclamation helps us to reverence the Gospel using our most festive of acclamations. It also helps us to know that what is happening next is the most important part of the Liturgy of the Word. - It must always be sung - never recited. (GIRM 62c)

3. Presider (Priest) blesses the deacon;

Deacon bows profoundly before the priest and saying in a low voice:

Your blessing Father.

The priest then prays this blessing over him in a low voice:

May the Lord be in your heart and on your lips that you may proclaim his Gospel worthily and well, in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit.

The deacon crosses himself and says: Amen.

If there's no deacon, Priest quietly says the following as he bows before the altar:

Cleanse my heart and my lips, almighty God,
that I may worthily proclaim your holy Gospel.

4. Procession to the Ambo with the Book of the Gospels;

5. **Lord be with you** (2nd time we hear it at Mass)

R. And with your spirit

6. The dialogue between the minister and the congregation informs us that it is Christ speaking directly to us in the words of the Gospel proclaimed.

Proclamation/response: "A reading from the holy Gospel..."

Response, "Glory to you, Lord." At *that* moment we are all speaking directly to Christ and not the minister.

7. Sign of the Cross on (Book (text), Foreheads, Lips, and Breast).

- The Signs of the Cross
- The act of making the signs of the cross on the forehead, lips and breast is a ritual gesture that we often do without much thought.
- The meaning of the crossing of the forehead, lips, and breast (heart) is revealing: thoughts, words, and works – the whole person and his or her actions are dedicated to Christ.
- "May the Lord be in our minds, on our lips and in our hearts as the words of the holy gospel are proclaimed to us."

8. The Book of Gospels used now at every Sunday Mass.

- The Book of the Gospels contains only the gospel readings for the liturgy,

- The use of the Book of Gospels at liturgy demonstrates ritually the primacy of the Gospel of Christ, the lens through which Christians interpret all Scripture. It signifies the Church's faith that Christ speaks directly to us through the Gospel.

9. Proclaiming the Gospel

10. End of Gospel: "The Gospel of the Lord."

R. "Praise to you, Lord Jesus Christ"

Deacon/Priest venerates the Book of the Gospels with a **kiss** quietly saying: **(See your Kiss Handout)**

Through the words of the Gospel
may our sins be wiped away.

Bible (Scripture) - God's Word. - God is Love – so these must be Love Letters. (3 Types of Love Letters)

Personalize the message by inserting your name.

1. The Four Evangelists and their symbols

- The four evangelists have been associated in Christian art with "the four living creatures." The scriptural background to these symbols can be found in the prophecies taken from the prophet Ezekiel, the book of Daniel, and the book of Revelation. **(see end of your handout)**