

## Words are important

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Words are important. Words give voice to our thoughts and feelings, to our hopes and aspirations, to our sorrows and our pain. Words can be the music of our hearts or the cry of our anguished souls. Words can be gentle, soothing and inspiring, or they can be harsh, mean and insulting. They can bring us closer and unite us; they can separate and divide us.

Words are important. With them, I can tell you who I am and you can do the same. In the exchange of words, you and I share a pact, a sort of bond because for words to mean something both of us are necessary: One to speak and the other to listen.

In the beginning... God spoke and the world was created. In the fullness of time, the Holy Spirit came upon the Virgin Mary and the Word became flesh... Jesus took bread into his hands, blessed it, broke it and said...

Words are important. One of the beautiful features of our liturgy is the ritual use of words. The use of language is spare, not overly abundant and not austere, using only the words needed to advance the ritual action.

Consider the Penitential Rite in the Mass when we acknowledge, openly and before God, that we are sinners in need of mercy. "Lord Jesus, you are mighty God and Prince of peace. Lord have mercy."

Or, most notably, consider the quiet prayer of the deacon as he prepares the chalice for the priest, pouring the wine and a little water: "By the mystery of this water and wine may we come to share in the divinity of Christ, who humbled Himself to share in our humanity."

The words of the brief and ancient rite are plain and simple, rich in meaning, calling to mind the wonderful truths of our salvation and the Paschal Mystery we celebrate. They remind us of the blood and water that flowed from the Sacred Heart of Jesus on the cross when the soldier pierced his side with a lance.

They can bring us to think also of the mystery of the Incarnation, the union of the human and the divine natures in the one Person of Jesus Christ. Fully human and fully divine, one Person, He lived for a time on earth and now lives and rules forever in glory.

The symbolism of the mingling of the few drops of ordinary water with the rich and exhilarating wine that will become the Blood of Christ speaks to us of the promised transformation to be brought about in us through the working of the Holy Spirit. Through the grace of the Sacrament of the Holy Eucharist, we become partakers in the very life of God (*Catechism of the Catholic Church*, 1996-97). We are transformed.

In the wonderful and inspiring words of the *Catechism*, through the grace of the Sacrament, "The Spirit heals and transforms those who receive Him by conforming them to the Son of God. The fruit of the sacramental life is that the Spirit of Adoption makes the faithful partakers in the divine nature by uniting them in a living union with the only Son, the Savior."

The rite of preparation is simple but the words and the actions have such profound meaning! They speak to us of who we are and the wondrous promise to which we are called.