



## Fr. Daniel's Corner

### Mass Moment: Part 9

#### Liturgy of the Word:

When we gather at a friend's home for a meal, we always begin with conversation, telling our stories. At Mass, after the rites of gathering, we sit down and listen as readings from the Word of God are proclaimed. They are the stories of God's people. After the introductory rite (Sign of the Cross to Collect), we come to the first of the two major parts of Mass; this is called the Liturgy of the Word. The main part of the Liturgy of the Word is the readings from Sacred Scriptures (First reading, Second reading, the Gospel) and Responsorial Psalm, the Homily, the Profession of Faith (I believe in One God), and the Prayers of the Faithful (also called the Universal Prayer), which concludes it. In the Liturgy of the Word, one encounters the movement of God toward the world and of the world toward God. He speaks and we respond.

One crucial point to underline is about the WORD, the LOGOS, which forms the substance of the Liturgy of the Word. At different moments in history, God spoke to his people through various means, but in the fullness of time, He spoke to us through his Son, the Eternal Word. The Word made flesh becomes the fullness of God's revelation. The definitive manifestation of God who lives among us. The WORD creates, brings existence into being, revives the soul and more so, resurrects what is dead in us.

Therefore, the Word of God in the Liturgy of the Word does not simply mean the words of the Bible considered merely as words like our words. The LOGOS (WORD MADE FLESH) is an EVENT. This is underlined succinctly in the readings at Mass; the *event* of creation, the *event* of what God is doing and saying in Israel and finally the event of what God is doing and saying in Jesus. Hence, the readings carry the very events of which they speak. When the readings are proclaimed, these *events* become present. The event character, that is the events of the past that are proclaimed become event for the gathered assembly that hears them at Mass. All these events (in the readings) find their focal point in the DEFINITIVE EVENT OF JESUS CHRIST: his death and resurrection. The event in which God once acted to save His people is now delivered to us at Mass in the Liturgy of the Word by means of the Holy Spirit.

The Holy Spirit, who inspired the human authors in the composition of the Sacred Scripture, enkindles us to receive anew the *events* as an actual communication of salvation. We should be aware, therefore, that every proclamation of the Word in the liturgy is a new moment. The whole events of both Old and New Testament is now concentrated into the one event of this liturgy. What a beautiful blessing that often eludes us when we do not participate actively at Mass! We must rely on the Holy Spirit to enlighten the eyes of our mind to see what revelation and power lie in the Words proclaimed. With the Holy Spirit our minds grasp nothing less than the wonderful reality that this moment of listening becomes in the very hearing of an event of salvation, the same that the words proclaim.

Furthermore, the Liturgy of the Word has a structure. The Scriptures (*the events*) are read in a certain order, an order that follows the order of salvation history. You notice that the liturgy begins with a text from the Old Testament (first reading), where creation and the history of Israel are recounted, and moves toward the climax in the Gospel reading. The latter (Gospel) showcases once again that 'through Christ, in Christ, and with Christ,' creation and history of salvation is fulfilled and understood. Meanwhile, some reading from the writings of the apostles forms a link between the Gospel and the first reading, which usually offer a contemplative and theological insight into the *events* of the Word, that is the second reading.

In general, the Liturgy of the Word is to be celebrated in a way to help us reflect on the mystery of salvation. To this end, the readings are to be PROCLAIMED without haste. In fact, it is recommended that brief periods of silence be observed, for example before the Liturgy of the Word itself begins, after the First and Second Reading, and lastly, at the conclusion of the Homily. In the next weeks, we shall be looking at each of the main parts (see the first paragraph above) of the Liturgy of the Word.

*And that is your Mass Moment for the week.*