

Pastor's Message

This Sunday on our liturgical calendar we return to ordinary time and the 13th Sunday of the year. With the return to ordinary time these messages return to an explanation and consideration of the parts of the Mass. In February before Lent began these reflections ended with the opening prayer of the Mass which concludes the introductory rites of our celebration. So now that we have settled in and recognized who we are (In the Name of the Father ...), acknowledged our sinfulness and asked for mercy (Lord have mercy...), praised God for God's goodness to us (Glory to God in the highest ..), and gathered our prayers into one prayer (the opening prayer), we are now ready to listen to God's Word.

The Second Vatican Council in its document on the liturgy in one of its major contributions to revising the Mass gave us a three year cycle for reading the Bible. This document also reminded us that God is present to us in Christ Jesus whenever we gather (*For where two or three are gathered together, in my name, there am I in the midst of them.* Mt. 18: 20), in the breaking of the bread and in the sharing of the cup of wine, and also in the Word of God proclaimed. God is as present to us in the Word proclaimed as in the bread and the wine. Unfortunately during the Protestant reformation, when the protesting members of the Christian faith were emphasizing the Word of God, the Bible, and reminding the church how we were disregarding God's Word in some respects, Roman Catholics began emphasizing the sacrament of the bread and wine. The Second Vatican Council wanted to reconnect the two major ways God is present to us in the Mass. The Council put God's Word back into our celebration of the Mass thereby making the Word of God and the sacrament of the Body and Blood of the Lord equal once again in value in our celebration.

And so there are two major sections of the Mass called the liturgy of the Word and the liturgy of the sacrament. The liturgy of the Word has eight parts: the first reading usually taken from the Hebrew Bible (the Old Testament), a sung psalm response to that reading, a second reading often sequential from one of the epistles (letters) often from St. Paul, a sung alleluia response, a Gospel reading, homily, profession of faith and prayer of the faithful. Over the next few weeks we shall consider each of these parts of the liturgy of the Word.

Fr. Chris