

Series on the Mass, Part 19: The Gospel, conclusion

March 1, 2020

The Church has these specific ceremonies in preparation for the singing or reading of the Gospel because the Gospel is Our Lord speaking to us. The Gospels contain the core of Christ's teachings and we should listen with great attention and follow in our missals, trying to understand and absorb each word. We should receive the words of the Gospel with reverence, and so, we stand and face in the direction that the Gospel is being proclaimed. The Gospel is Our Lord being given to us in the form of words, for He is the Word of God, and this is similar to receiving Our Lord in Communion, where we receive Him under the appearance of bread. To be willfully distracted, or to distract others, during Mass and during the Gospel, in particular, is sinful and something to be corrected.

One thing that might help us fight distraction is to remember that, while assisting at Mass, we are assisting at our Lord's sacrifice. He is truly present in the tabernacle, in the proclaiming of the Gospel and during the consecration. Thus if we envision ourselves amongst the crowds that followed Jesus and listened to Him, we have great reasons to rejoice and pay attention, for our Lord is truly with us as He promised: "I am with you all days, even to the consummation of the world" (Mat 28:20).

Many who followed our Lord when He walked on the face of this earth failed to believe in Him and many persecuted Him and put Him to death. It is not the mere hearing of the words that is going to save; rather, it is what we do with them. The sound of the words enters through our ears so that the Word, our Lord, can enter our hearts. "It is the spirit that quickeneth" (John 6:64). The Gospel will only save us in the measure that we live it. This has to begin with attentively hearing the words of Christ and putting them into practice.

Sincerely in Christ,

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