

Series on the Mass, Part 83: The Last Gospel, Part 1

Nov. 7, 2021

The Prologue to the Gospel of St. John fits well at the end of Mass since the Incarnation that it presents is prolonged through the Eucharistic celebration. This Prologue beautifully summarizes the entire Gospel of St. John. He who rested his head on the Sacred Heart at the Last Supper drew from that Heart a doctrine that is simple but also wholly spiritual. The Prologue is a very rich text which we never tire of reading.

In the Middle Ages, the faithful frequently demanded from the priests that they read a passage from the Gospel. The reading of the Gospel is a sacramental, a sign that obtains graces for those who use it well. In the face of these demands, the habit began of reading a passage for all the faithful at the end of Mass. The priests would often read the Prologue of the Gospel of St. John, though other texts were also read. This practice began in the 12th century and generalized from there. The practice was enshrined in the rubrics of the Mass with the codification of the missal by Pope St. Pius V, becoming obligatory for all.

Sincerely in Christ,

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