

Mass Series #2 - The Liturgy of the Word

The proclamation of Scripture recaptures the age-old art of speaking and listening. God's presence appears in the assembly as word. In actively listening to the Word of God, as we naturally do in conversation, we open our hearts to wonder. The event requires both the proclamation of the reader and the eagerness of listeners. Hearing the word together bonds and expresses our community. If everyone reads the text silently, we become individuals again, with noses in our laps and faces turned down from one another.

We'll hear the Word of God with better attention if we prepare. Worshipers can read the texts prior to coming to Mass and pray over them throughout the week before. Then our ears will be open to listen attentively to the Word of God. Our hearts will be joined as one body of believers. When the divine word resounds in our assembly—heads up! And listen.

Responsorial Psalm: We often call the Responsorial Psalm the “response” to the First Reading. That's true, but it's really “responsorial” since it has a responsory—a refrain that occurs with each verse. Listen carefully to the first reading and figure out its connection to the psalm. Then we can really pray the psalm while we sing.

Gospel: When the priest or deacon announces the Gospel at Mass, the people respond, “Glory to you, O Lord.” The people respond by glorifying the Lord. Their words acclaim Jesus Christ the Lord, who is about to speak to them through his word. The proclamation of the Gospel is a sacramental moment. Christ is present to his people. He is speaking to them. This is not a mere reading of an old book; it is a living proclamation of Christ's word to his people today.

Homily: In the structure of the Catholic Mass, the homily is not as important as the biblical readings or the Eucharistic Prayer. Its length pertains not just to its content, but also to its role in the entire celebration. In many other Christian churches, the preaching is the centerpiece of the gathering. Mass is more than a homily with some ceremonies before and after. In Catholic liturgy, the reading of Scripture takes precedence. The homily offers an exhortation on the spiritual life and prepares people for the Liturgy of the Eucharist.

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Do you want to stop simply watching the Mass and start worshipping at Mass? Watch Fr. Mike Schmitz presentation “Pray the Mass Like Never Before.” <https://youtu.be/YpUp6zSGCb4>