



PART TWO THE LITURGY OF THE WORD

WE COME TOGETHER TO LISTEN TO GOD SPEAKING TO US

A Glossary of Terms

Liturgy – refers to all the official public prayer rituals of the Church

Lectionary – the name of the liturgical book from which the readings are proclaimed. Taken from the bible, the scripture texts have been specially selected for each celebration of liturgy.

There are 3 lectionaries – 1. for Sundays, feasts and seasons 2. for weekdays in ordinary time and 3. for ritual celebrations (weddings, funerals etc).

Lector – the Latin word for Reader, sometimes used for the parish Reader.

Liturgical Year – beginning on the First Sunday of Advent, in the LY the Church celebrates the whole mystery of Christ from the Incarnation until the day of Pentecost and the expectation of Christ's second coming through the seasons of Advent, the Christmas Season, Lent, the Easter Season and Ordinary Time. The highpoint of the year is Easter; the highpoint of the week is Sunday. The readings are chosen specifically for the season we are in within the LY.

Lectern – the place in the sanctuary area reserved for the proclamation of the readings. This is the table of God's word. Often called the *Ambo*.

THE IMPORTANCE OF THE LITURGY OF THE WORD - GOD IS SPEAKING TO US TODAY

We are God's people, and we believe that God continues to speak to us today both as a community and individually. As Catholics, we believe that the scripture texts in the Bible are the inspired Word of God. Each time these scriptures are proclaimed in the liturgies of the Church God is speaking directly into the very circumstances of our lives, nourishing us and calling us to faith. God has a word to say to us.

These are not history lessons or stories of long ago. As St Paul said, the Word of God is alive and active. These are the words that bring us life – the words we need to listen to in the midst of all the words and false messages with which we are constantly bombarded. This is God's living word for us today.

What does a Reader do?

Parish Readers put the word of God out into the midst of the assembly who have gathered. They speak a message from God to us, sharing a word of faith. As ministers of the liturgy, they are called to prepare well – preparing to read aloud the text in a manner that is clear, audible and conveys an understanding in faith of the text. This faith understanding can only come about by the Reader praying with the text.

What are we called to do?

When God shares his word with us he awaits our response: 'Be doers of the word and not hearers only' (James 1:22) What is God saying to me? to us? How can I actively welcome this word into my life? How am I being called to live and share this word with others?

The Word of the Lord – Christ is present in the Word

At the end of the reading, the reader proclaims; 'The Word of the Lord'. This is a faith statement, like the faith statement we hear later in the Mass – 'The Body of Christ'. It declares that Christ is present among us through his word. The Church teaches that 'Christ is present in his word, since it is he himself who speaks when the holy scriptures are read in the Church...' On a Sunday, with the rest of our community, we get to meet Christ present in his word. Do we come prepared for this encounter?

A Word on Silence... Silence is one of the most essential elements of the Mass. Both our own interior silence and the shared external silence in the church building during and between the readings, helps us to really listen to God speaking to us and to begin to hear what God is saying to us. Silence creates a space for God.

An Initiative of the Kildare and Leighlin Diocesan Commission for Liturgical Formation

THE SHAPE OF THE MASS

Introductory Rites

The Liturgy of the Word

The Liturgy of the Eucharist

Concluding Rites

Liturgy draws on all our senses... We **taste**, **see**, **hear**, **touch** and **smell** within our liturgical celebrations. This dialogue of prayer, this communication between ourselves and God, engages our whole body. And what our body experiences in all its senses is important.

From week to week, when we **see** the reader proclaiming from a Ritual book, the Lectionary, rather than from a Missalette (which we will put in the bin or recycle afterwards) we unconsciously come to understand that these words are different to other words. These are sacred words.

Exploring the Liturgy of the Word

* **First Reading:** We sit to listen to God's word to us. Usually from the Old Testament, this First Reading is typically chosen to link with the Gospel. While these texts were written under the inspiration of the Holy Spirit centuries ago, they continue to speak to us. They are the living story of God's relationship with God's people today. In a moment of **silence** at the end of the reading we briefly reflect on what we have heard.

* **Responsorial Psalm:** The Psalm is taken from the Book of Psalms in the Old Testament, often called the Christian prayer book. Jesus, as a faithful Jew, prayed with these texts. The Psalm is a response to the First Reading so it will reflect the mood or sense of the Reading, i.e. praise, thanksgiving, petition...Psalms were originally written to be sung which is why the preference is to sing them within the Mass.

* **Second Reading:** Ideally another reader will proclaim this reading, giving us a variety of voices which can assist our active listening. This text is taken from the New Testament. Often, we hear from one of the letters of St Paul – letters he wrote to some of the early Christian communities who had questions about their faith or who were coping with particular situations that had arisen. In the seasons of Advent-Christmas, Lent-Easter this second reading will be chosen to make a link with the message of the season and the other two readings. In Ordinary Time, the assigned text is often part of a semi-continuous reading of a particular book or letter of the New Testament over a series of weeks.

* **Gospel Acclamation:** We take a moment of **silence** to ready ourselves for the first highpoint of our Mass – the proclamation of the Gospel. Through a series of actions, we underscore the importance of the Gospel. We **stand** and **sing** an acclamation, joyfully welcoming the Gospel. We may also **see** a Gospel procession in which the Book of the Gospels is carried, accompanied by candles and incense.

* **Gospel:** A priest or deacon proclaims the Gospel, beginning with special words of introduction before incensing the book, if incense is being used. As he does so, we mark our foreheads, lips and heart with the Sign of the Cross – we pray that these words of faith that Christ proclaims to us will find a place in our thoughts, words and deeds. The Lectionary for Sundays is organised in a three-year cycle, with a particular Gospel taking precedence each year. Year A – Matthew; Year B – Mark; Year C – Luke. We hear from John's gospel every year during Lent and Easter and in part of Year B.

* **Homily:** We **sit** to listen to the priest-celebrant 'breaking open the word' that has been proclaimed into the very life of the community who have gathered. In the **silence** that follows we can each take a moment to claim these words for ourselves and our own life. *What difference will these words of faith make to me?*

* **Creed:** The Creed contains the central teachings of our faith, a faith that is nourished through our celebration of the Mass. We **stand** to personally affirm this faith.

* **Prayer of the Faithful:** As a community of faith, we turn to our God praying for the needs of all human-kind. In these petitions we hear the struggles and pain of our families, communities and world, and we know that our God, the God of love and compassion, will listen to us and respond.

Sunday Mass



Digging Deeper

We Come
Together

One

Two

Three

Four

•to meet the
risen Lord

•to listen to God
speaking to us

•to share in
Christ's Body
and Blood

•to be sent to
bring Christ
to the world