

Session 7

The Liturgy of the Word



Let's Pray

Dear Jesus,

I believe that you are the Word of God. I believe that you speak to me in the Scriptures. Please open my ears so that I may hear you. Please open my heart so that I may understand you. Help me to encounter you in the Scriptures, so that I may be prepared to receive you in Holy Communion.

Amen.

Introduction

Can you imagine being best friends with someone when you didn't know anything about the person, and you never talked? That would be pretty strange. Friendships grow as we spend time together and get to know someone. The better we know the person, the deeper our friendship can be. God knows us better than anyone else, but he also wants us to get to know him. That's why he prepares us to receive Holy Communion by speaking to us in his Word. Before we are united to Jesus in the Eucharist, we first listen to his Word in Scripture.



Let's Read God's Word

The Road to Emmaus – Part 1

From Luke 24:13–27

On Easter Sunday, two of Jesus's disciples were walking from Jerusalem to the village of Emmaus. They were sad because Jesus had been crucified on Friday. They thought everything was over, so they were leaving Jerusalem. They talked about everything that had happened.

As they walked along, Jesus joined them on the road and walked with them. But the disciples did not recognize Jesus.

Jesus asked them what they were talking about. "Are you the only person in Jerusalem who doesn't know what happened?" they replied. "Jesus of Nazareth, the mighty prophet, was crucified. We had hoped he was the Messiah, but he was put to death three days ago. And now we don't know what to think because some of our friends went to the tomb and found it empty. They even said that they saw angels who told them that Jesus is alive!"

Then Jesus explained to them that they shouldn't be surprised at what had happened in Jerusalem. He started at the very beginning of the Scriptures and explained how everything pointed forward to the suffering and death of the Messiah. He helped them to understand the whole story of God's plan of salvation and how it had been fulfilled in the events that had just taken place in Jerusalem.

The disciples were excited. Everything Jesus said made sense and helped them feel better. But they still didn't recognize that it was Jesus!



Let's Talk About It

What are some ways we can listen better to the readings at Mass?

☩ Let's Learn About Our Faith

The Liturgy of the Word

When Jesus joined the two disciples on the road to Emmaus, he began to reveal himself to them using the Scriptures. The same thing happens in the Mass. Jesus is present to us in the Word of God in Scripture even before he is made present in the Eucharist.

Every Mass has the same parts that are celebrated in the same order. In the next two sessions, we will look at each part of the Mass. In today's session, we will look at the first part of the Mass, which is the Liturgy of the Word.

Introductory Rites

The Mass begins with the **Introductory Rites**, which help prepare us for the Liturgy of the Word. The Introductory Rites have several different parts.

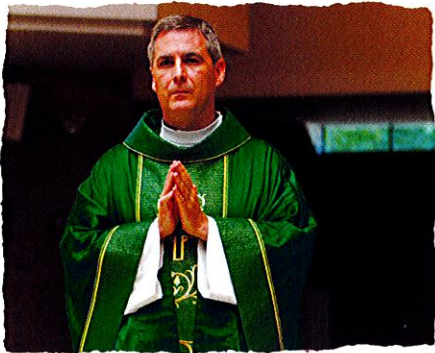


Entrance Antiphon and Greeting

Mass begins with the Entrance Antiphon. This is a song or chant that is sung as the priest and other ministers proceed, or come, into the church. Often, the first person in the procession will carry a cross and another person will hold the Book of the Gospels.

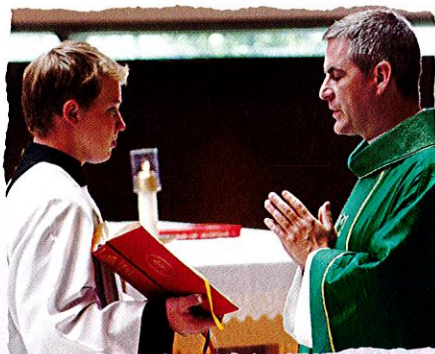


When the procession has ended, the priest kisses the altar and goes to his chair. Together with the priest, we make the **Sign of the Cross**. The priest then says, "The Lord be with you." We respond, "And with your spirit."



Penitential Act

In the Penitential Act, we tell God that we are sorry for our sins and ask for his mercy so that we can prepare ourselves to celebrate Mass. The two main prayers of the Penitential Act are the general confession, which begins “I confess to Almighty God,” and the prayer “Lord, Have Mercy.”



Gloria

Following the Penitential Act, we sing the Gloria, an ancient hymn of praise to the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit. The Gloria is omitted during Advent and Lent.

Collect

When the Gloria is finished, the priest prays a special prayer for the day called the Collect, and everyone says, “Amen.”

The Liturgy of the Word

In the **Liturgy of the Word**, we hear several readings from Scripture. When we listen to the readings, God is speaking directly to us! He reveals himself to us and makes himself present to us in Scripture.



First Reading

The First Reading is usually from the Old Testament. It tells us the story of God’s people and God’s plan of salvation before Jesus came. During the Easter season, the First Reading is from the Acts of the Apostles. The Acts of

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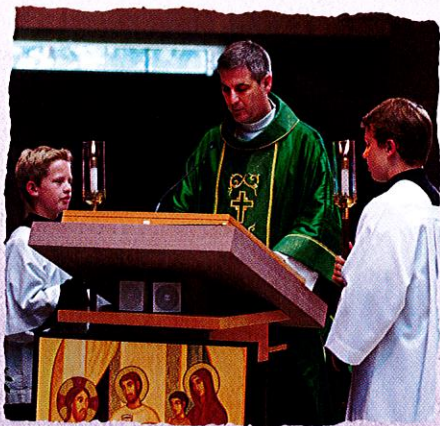
the Apostles tells us the story of the first Christians. When the reading is finished, we respond, “Thanks be to God.”

Responsorial Psalm

After the First Reading, we sing the Responsorial Psalm. The First Reading was God’s word to us, and the psalm is our response to God.

Second Reading

On Sundays and other special feast days, we have a Second Reading. This comes from the New Testament **epistles**, the letters written to the early Church. Just as in the First Reading, we respond, “Thanks be to God.”

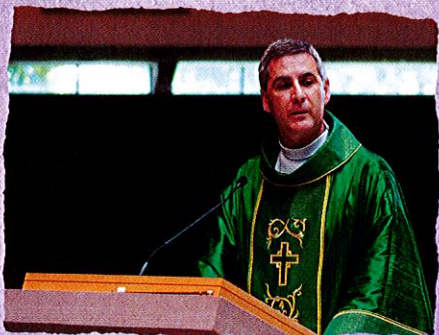


Alleluia

Then we sing the Alleluia or a different chant during Lent. *Alleluia* is a Hebrew word meaning “Praise the Lord.”

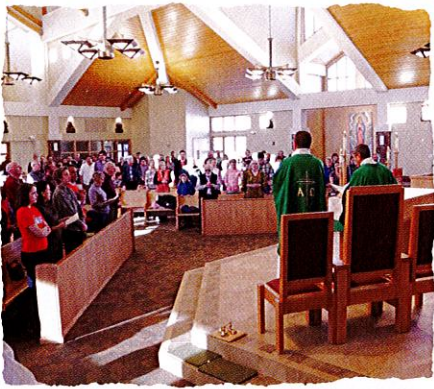
Gospel

We stand for the reading from the Gospel because Jesus himself is speaking directly to us. The Gospel reading tells us the story of Jesus and how he fulfills God’s plan of salvation, which began in the Old Testament. When the Gospel reading is finished, we respond, “Praise to you, Lord Jesus Christ.”



Homily

After the Gospel, the priest or deacon explains the readings to us in a homily.



Creed

When the homily is finished, we pray the Creed, also called the **Profession of Faith**. This is a summary of what we believe as Catholics. At Mass, we usually pray the Nicene Creed, but sometimes we might pray the shorter Apostles' Creed. When we say "I believe," we are giving our response of faith to the Word of God.

Prayer of the Faithful

The Creed is followed by the Prayer of the Faithful. These are prayers of intercession, or prayers where we pray for our parish, our community, and the whole world. This is the last part of the Liturgy of the Word.

Let's Talk About It

What is your favorite part of the Liturgy of the Word, and why?



Did You Know?

The Word of God

"In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God."

—John 1:1

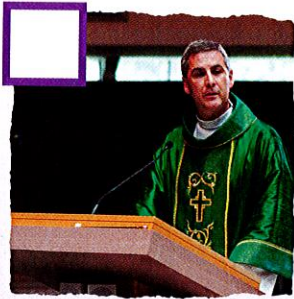
God reveals himself to us in his Word. The Word of God means two things. It means the Bible contains God's own words written down for us by human authors with the help of the Holy Spirit. But the Word of God also refers to Jesus himself. Jesus is the Word of God made flesh. He perfectly reveals God to us because he is God.



Let's Do Activities

The Liturgy of the Word

In the Liturgy of the Word, we hear special readings from the Bible. These stories remind us of all the wonderful things God has done for us! They help us to know how much God loves us even today. **Match the different parts of the Liturgy of the Word with the pictures by writing the correct number in the box.**



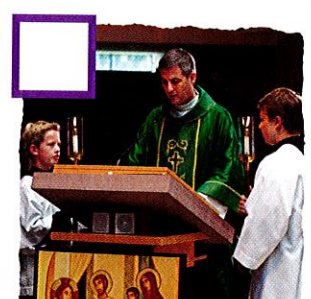
The priest talks about the Readings



We hear from the Old Testament



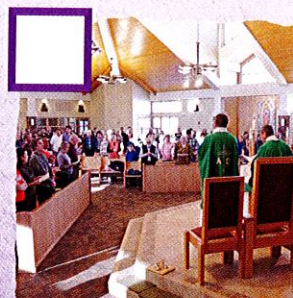
We offer special prayers to God



The priest or deacon reads from the Gospels



We sing a psalm response



We stand and say what we believe



We hear from the New Testament epistles

1. First Reading

2. Responsorial Psalm

3. Second Reading

4. Gospel

5. Homily


6. Creed

7. Prayer of the Faithful

The Nicene Creed

Fill in the blanks to complete this statement of our faith. Use the pictures as clues.

I believe in one God, the _____  almighty, maker of heaven and earth,



of all things visible and invisible. I believe in one Lord _____  Christ,


the Only Begotten Son of God, born of the Father before all ages. God from God,

_____  from _____ , true God from true God,


begotten, not made, consubstantial with the Father; through him all things were made. For us men


and for our salvation he came down from heaven, and by the _____

_____  was incarnate of the Virgin _____ , and


became man. For our sake he was _____  under Pontius Pilate, he suffered


death and was buried, and rose again on the third day in accordance with the

_____  . He ascended into heaven and is seated at the right



_____  of the Father. He will come again in glory to judge the living and the

dead and his kingdom will have no end.

I believe in the _____ , the Lord, the giver of life,

who proceeds from the Father and the Son, who with the _____  and the

Son is adored and glorified, who has spoken through the prophets. I believe in one, holy, catholic, and

apostolic _____  . I confess one _____  for the

forgiveness of sins and I look forward to the resurrection of the dead and the life of the

_____  to come. Amen.

Word Bank

Jesus

Church

world

Light (2 times)

Father (2 times)

Baptism

Mary

crucified

hand

Scriptures

Holy Spirit (2 times)

Let's Recall and Reflect

When we hear Scripture, we hear God speaking to us. Why is it important that we both listen and respond?

What do we mean by “the Liturgy of the Word”? How does it prepare us for the Liturgy of the Eucharist?

What are the two parts of the Mass? The two parts of the Mass are the Liturgy of the Word and the Liturgy of the Eucharist.

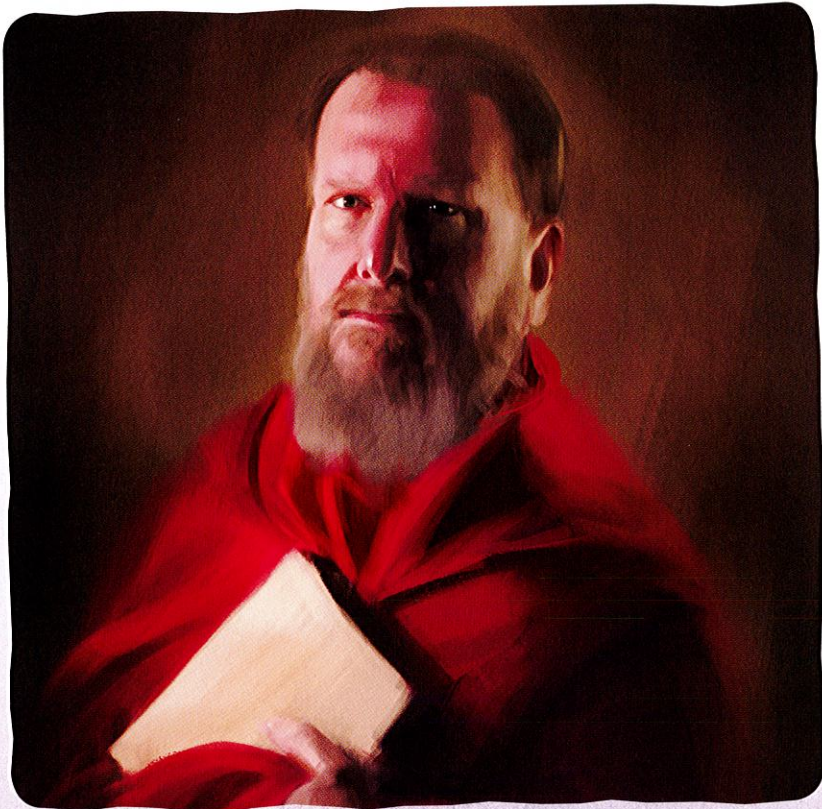
What is the Liturgy of the Word? The Liturgy of the Word is the first part of Mass where we hear several readings from Scripture.

What are the four readings from Scripture at Sunday Mass? The readings are the First Reading (usually from the Old Testament), the Responsorial Psalm, the Second Reading (from the New Testament epistles), and the Gospel reading.

What is the Creed? The Creed is a summary of what we believe as Catholics. It is our response of faith to the Word of God.

What does the Liturgy of the Word prepare us for? The Liturgy of the Word prepares our hearts for the Liturgy of the Eucharist.

Story of a Saint



Saint Justin Martyr (100–165)

Saint Justin Martyr spent much of his life studying ancient philosophers and searching for the truth. Once, before he was Christian, an older man shared the teachings of the Bible with him. Justin was amazed when he learned about the Word of God, Jesus, and the Scriptures. He began to study more and share God's teaching with others. He loved writing about the Eucharist. He taught the importance of each part of the Mass and about the amazing miracle of the Real Presence of Christ in the Eucharist.

Let's Pray

Prayer to the Holy Spirit

Come, Holy Spirit, and fill the hearts of your faithful, and enkindle in them the fire of your love. Send forth your Spirit, and they shall be created, and you shall renew the face of the earth.

Amen.

Memory Verse

"Did not our hearts burn within us while he talked to us on the road, while he opened to us the Scriptures?"

—Luke 24:32

Let's Read a Story

Love Letters

It was the coffee and doughnut time after Mass. Samantha saw her friend Kim Lee sitting in a corner talking to Mr. and Mrs. Lee. Sam went over to say hello.

Mr. and Mrs. Lee smiled at Sam and said hello.

“May Kim and I go outside?” Sam asked.

Mr. Lee said yes. The girls walked out to the school playground next door.

Sam told Kim the story about her great-great grandfather being saved by Old Stockyard Willis.

Sam thought Kim would like the story. But Kim’s face turned red. She looked like she might cry.

“What’s wrong?” Sam asked.

“Your story makes me think of my parents,” Kim said.

Sam looked back at the church. “What’s wrong with your parents?” she asked. “They looked okay to me.”

“Those aren’t my parents,” Kim said.

Sam stopped in her tracks. “But you are Kim Lee, and that’s Mr. and Mrs. Lee.”

Kim shook her head. “He is Guzhang— my father’s brother, and she is Yima—my father’s brother’s wife.”

Sam had to think about it. “You mean they’re your uncle and aunt,” she said. “But where are your parents?”

“My parents are in China,” Kim said. “They are in jail.”

Sam was shocked. “Why are they in jail?” she asked.

“My father is a deacon in a Catholic church there,” Kim said. “The Chinese leaders don’t like the Catholic Church. They want to stop Christians from worshipping God. They arrest the priests and the deacons and the parish members.”

Sam had heard her parents talk about how Christians were mistreated in other countries. Kim explained that her parents were put in jail when she was two years old, and she doesn't know where they are. She was sent to America to live with her uncle and aunt. Sam felt sad for Kim.



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Kim said, "That's why I don't like the homework assignment. I don't have any pictures of them. I don't have anything to show in class. I am an orphan." Kim began to cry.

Sam looked at Kim. "You aren't an orphan. You have your uncle and aunt. You have your friends. You have Jesus and his Church. You can pray for your parents. I'm sure that they pray for you every day!"

Kim rubbed her eyes.

Sam hugged her friend.

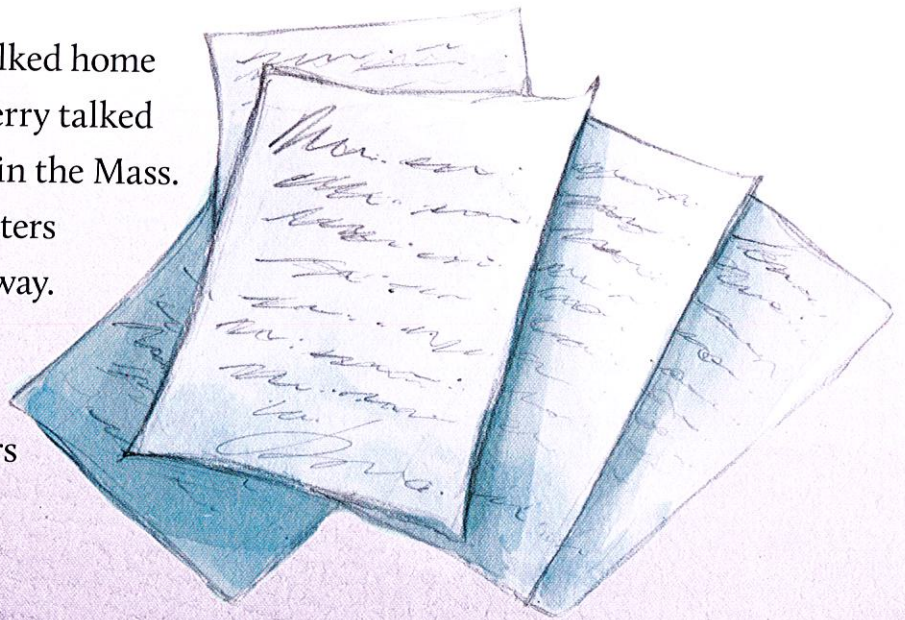
"I have letters from my parents that got smuggled out of the country," Kim said. "I love those letters."

Later, the Perry family walked home from church. Mr. and Mrs. Perry talked about the Scripture readings in the Mass.

Sam thought about the letters Kim's parents sent from far away.

"Those are like the Scripture readings," Sam thought.

"The Scriptures are love letters from God."



Let's Talk About It

If you were writing a letter to a loved one who was far away, what kinds of things would you say in your letter? What would you want to read about if that person wrote back to you?

How are the readings at Mass like letters from God?

What are some ways that we might suffer for being followers of Jesus?