



The Armor of Faith

Topic Summary: Scriptural Walk Through the Mass – Liturgy of the Word



Praying Hands
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Introduction

[Greeting:] → Welcome to “The Armor of Faith,” a show where we hope to bring our listeners closer to the Word of God and the blessings we receive through living in the fullness of the Catholic faith. My name is Doug and I will be your host as we discuss the blessings of the Church Christ built upon Peter.

I am joined today by my panel: [names]

Our panelists provide support and catechesis for religious formation at St. Philip Benizi Catholic Mission in Cedaredge CO. Our panelists are also in the process of discernment and study to become lay Dominicans who are also known as the Order of Preachers. So, welcome to our panelists as well as our listeners.

Let us open with a prayer:

Heavenly Father, we lift up our hearts in thanks and praise for this opportunity to open and share your Holy Word this day. We pray that You are with us and all our listeners as we share with one another the blessings of faith. We pray You will grant us wisdom and understanding as we seek to learn Your Holy Truth.

In the name of the Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit we pray.

Opening: Last week we discussed the Introductory Rites and how they prepare us to receive the instruction of the Word and set the table of the Lord. We also spoke about how the Mass is an audience with the King and how that understanding might influence how we prepare for and experience that moment.

Today, we will discuss the Liturgy of the Word. It is the portion of the Mass where we receive the instruction of God through His holy Word. One question we should ask of ourselves, do we open ourselves so that we may hear, we may reflect, and we may contemplate so we may learn, not only how

the Word may apply to the journey of our life, but also for how we may change our lives for the blessings of all who surround us? So let us keep this in mind as we open our discussion today.

The Liturgy of the Word:

[*“Thus faith comes from what is heard, and what is heard comes through the word of Christ.”* (Romans 10:17)]

(Question: We must remember that until the invention of the printing press and the educational efforts to spread literacy, the sharing of our faith was largely by oral tradition. As we experience the Word in our day, do we observe a difference in our learning by hearing or reading? As we reflect upon this difference, how might we prepare for the liturgy of the Word so we might enhance our learning and our understanding of its meaning to us?)

The First Reading: The First Reading is normally a selection from the Old Testament. During Easter, however, the selection is from the New Testament.

Psalm: Reflects the response of the people to the Word of God provided in the First Reading.

The Second Reading: The second reading is a selection from the New Testament, but is not meant to be related as a theme to the First Reading.

Alleluia (meaning praise God): A joyful proclamation of the arrival of the Gospel.

[*Then I heard something like the sound of a great multitude or the sound of rushing water or mighty peals of thunder, as they said: “Alleluia! The Lord has established his reign, [our] God, the almighty.* (Revelation 19:6)]

The Gospel: This is the highlight of the Liturgy of the Word. The selection continues the theme of First Reading and the Psalm. Before the Gospel is read, the priest proclaims, “A reading from the Gospel according to...” The people respond, “Glory to You oh Lord,” then, mark the sign of the cross on the forehead, lips and heart. Through this gesture, we are asking the Word of God to pierce our minds, our lips and heart.

[*“Indeed, the word of God is living and effective, sharper than any two-edged sword, penetrating even between soul and spirit, joints and marrow, and able to discern reflections and thoughts of the heart.”* (Hebrews 4:12)]

(Question: As we listen to these readings, we hear the Word of God proclaimed to us. What are we receiving as we listen to the Word? What is contained in it?)

(Question: As we listen to the Word, we all have the tendency for our minds to wander. Is it bad for our minds to wander? What can we do to enhance our ability to listen and focus on what the spoken Word means to us?)

Homily: The homily is designed to be an explanation of an element of the readings for the benefit of nurturing Christian life, as well as to enable our understanding of the meaning of the Word to the days of our generation and our personal lives.

“Ezra read clearly from the book of the law of God, interpreting it so that all could understand what was read.” (Nehemiah 8:8)

In the charge to Timothy, Paul said, *“I charge you in the presence of God and of Christ Jesus, who will judge the living and the dead, and by his appearing and his kingly power: proclaim the word; be persistent whether it is convenient or inconvenient; convince, reprimand, encourage through all patience and teaching. For the time will come when people will not tolerate sound doctrine but, following their own desires and insatiable curiosity, will accumulate teachers and will stop listening to the truth and will be diverted to myths.” (2 Tim 4:1-2)*

Pope Saint John Paul II wrote: “It should also be borne in mind that the liturgical proclamation of the word of God, especially in the Eucharistic assembly, is not so much a time for meditation and catechesis as a dialogue between God and his People, a dialogue in which the wonders of salvation are proclaimed and the demands of the Covenant are continually restated. On their part, the People of God are drawn to respond to this dialogue of love by giving thanks and praise, also by demonstrating their fidelity to the ask of continual ‘conversion’”. (John Paul II - DIES DOMININI (“THE DAY OF THE LORD”), 41)

(Question: Pope Saint John Paul II draws our attention to the fact that hearing the Word of God is not only about receiving the message He intends for us, but that it is an opportunity for “dialogue between God and his People.” In what ways may we dialogue with God as we receive the instruction of His holy Word?)

Profession of Faith:

I believe in one God, the Father Almighty, maker of heaven and earth,
[*“Blessed be Abram by God Most High, the creator of heaven and earth;”*
(Genesis 14:19)]

of all things visible and invisible.

[*“For in him were created all things in heaven and on earth, the visible and the invisible, whether thrones or dominions or principalities or powers; all things were created through him and for him.”* (Colossians 1:16)]

I believe in one Lord Jesus Christ, the only Begotten Son of God,
[*“And the angel said to her in reply, ‘The holy Spirit will come upon you, and the power of the Most High will overshadow you. Therefore the child to be born will be called holy, the Son of God.’”* (Luke 1:35)]

born of the Father before all ages, God from God, Light from Light, True God from True God, begotten not made, consubstantial with the Father;

["In times past, God spoke in partial and various ways to our ancestors through the prophets; in these last days, he spoke to us through a son, whom he made heir of all things and through whom he created the universe, who is the refulgence of his glory, the very imprint of his being, and who sustains all things by his mighty word. When he had accomplished purification from sins, he took his seat at the right hand of the Majesty on high, as far superior to the angels as the name he has inherited is more excellent than theirs. For to which of the angels did God ever say: 'You are my son; this day I have begotten you'? Or again: 'I will be a father to him, and he shall be a son to me'? And again, when he leads the first-born into the world, he says: 'Let all the angels of God worship him.' Of the angels he says: 'He makes his angels winds and his ministers a fiery flame'; but of the Son: 'Your throne, O God, stands forever and ever; and a righteous scepter is the scepter of your kingdom. You loved justice and hated wickedness; therefore God, your God, anointed you with the oil of gladness above your companions'; and: 'At the beginning, O Lord, you established the earth, and the heavens are the works of your hands. They will perish, but you remain; and they will all grow old like a garment. You will roll them up like a cloak, and like a garment they will be changed. But you are the same, and your years will have no end.' But to which of the angels has he ever said: 'Sit at my right hand until I make your enemies your footstool'? Are they not all ministering spirits sent to serve, for the sake of those who are to inherit salvation? (Hebrews 1:1-14)]

through him all things were made.

["He was in the beginning with God. All things came to be through him, and without him nothing came to be. What came to be" (John 1:2-3)]

For us men and for our salvation he came down from heaven:

["No one has gone up to heaven except the one who has come down from heaven, the Son of Man." (John 3:13)]

and by the power of the Holy Spirit he was incarnate of the Virgin Mary,

["Now this is how the birth of Jesus Christ came about. When his mother Mary was betrothed to Joseph, but before they lived together, she was found with child through the holy Spirit." (Matthew 1:18)]

and became man. For our sake he was crucified under Pontius Pilate,

["Then he handed him over to them to be crucified." (John 19:16)]

he suffered death and was buried, and rose again on the third day in accordance with the Scriptures.

["For I handed on to you as of first importance what I also received: that Christ died for our sins in accordance with the scriptures; that he was buried; that he was raised on the third day in accordance with the scriptures;" (1 Corinthians 15:3-4)]

He ascended into heaven

["As he blessed them he parted from them and was taken up to heaven." (Luke 24:51)]

and is seated at the right hand of the Father.

[*“If then you were raised with Christ, seek what is above, where Christ is seated at the right hand of God.”* (Colossians 3:1)]

He will come again in glory to judge the living and the dead

[*“I charge you in the presence of God and of Christ Jesus, who will judge the living and the dead, and by his appearing and his kingly power:”* (2 Timothy 4:1)]

and his kingdom will have no end.

[*“and he will rule over the house of Jacob forever, and of his kingdom there will be no end.”* (Luke 1:33)]

I believe in the Holy Spirit, the Lord, the giver of Life,

[*“It will come to pass in the last days, ’ God says, ‘that I will pour out a portion of my spirit upon all flesh. Your sons and your daughters shall prophesy, your young men shall see visions, your old men shall dream dreams.”* (Acts 2:17)]

who proceeds from the Father and the Son,

[*“And I will ask the Father, and he will give you another Advocate to be with you always,”* (John 14:16)]

who with the Father and Son is worshiped and glorified. He has spoken through the prophets.

[*“Concerning this salvation, prophets who prophesied about the grace that was to be yours searched and investigated it, investigating the time and circumstances that the Spirit of Christ within them indicated when it testified in advance to the sufferings destined for Christ and the glories to follow them.”* (1 Peter 1:10-11)]

I believe in one holy, catholic and apostolic Church.

[*“so we, though many, are one body in Christ and individually parts of one another.”* (Romans 12:5)]

I confess one baptism for the forgiveness of sins

[*“Peter [said] to them, “Repent and be baptized, every one of you, in the name of Jesus Christ for the forgiveness of your sins; and you will receive the gift of the holy Spirit.”* (Acts 2:38)]

and I look forward to the resurrection of the dead and the life of the world to come.

[*“For if we have grown into union with him through a death like his, we shall also be united with him in the resurrection.”* (Romans 6:5)]

Amen

[*Blessed be the LORD, the God of Israel, from everlasting to everlasting! Let all the people say, Amen! Hallelujah.* (1 Chronicles 16:36)]

(Question: Of course we recognize that the profession of faith is a quick journey through what we believe. What is the purpose of the profession of faith – what do we accomplish as we recite it?)

The Universal Prayer (General Intercessions or Prayers of the Faithful): It is desirable that there usually be such a form of prayer in Masses celebrated with the people, so that petitions may be offered for holy Church, for those who govern with authority over us, for those weighed down by various needs, for all humanity, and for the salvation of the whole world. (No 69, GIRM).

The Prayers of the Faithful normally include prayers for the following:

- ◇ The needs of the Church
- ◇ Public authorities and the salvation of the world
- ◇ Those burdened with any kind of difficulty
- ◇ The local community
- ◇ Vocations
- ◇ Those who have died
- ◇ Special intentions

Lord, hear our prayer.

“Again, [amen,] I say to you, if two of you agree on earth about anything for which they are to pray, it shall be granted to them by my heavenly Father.” (Matthew 18:19)

(Question: During the Prayers of the Faithful, we have the opportunity to lift up our own special intentions. In what ways may we prepare ourselves to lift up our intentions? If we do not speak out loud what is in our heart, is our prayer heard?)

Quotes:

“...we need to assess how well the word of God is being proclaimed and how effectively the People of God have grown in knowledge and love of Sacred Scripture. There are two aspects of this—that of celebration and that of personal appropriation—and they are very closely related.” (Pope Saint John Paul II – n40, Dies Domini)

“If Christian individuals and families are not regularly drawing new life from the reading of the sacred text in a spirit of prayer and docility to the Church’s interpretation, then it is difficult for the liturgical proclamation of the word of God alone to produce the fruit we might expect.” (Pope Saint John Paul II – n40, Dies Domini)

Final Thoughts: As we opened our discussion today, we mentioned that the Liturgy of the Word is our opportunity to receive the instruction of God. Pope Saint Paul II reminded us that this portion of the Mass “is not so much a time for meditation and catechesis as a dialogue between God and his People.” We see this dialogue in our hearing, in the reflection and contemplation in our hearts, and our responses through prayers of praise and intercession for the church, the needs of the world, the needs of those who face difficulty, the needs of the community, and our special intentions.

We might have the tendency to view this portion of the Mass from the perspective that we listen only and perhaps reflect, but we are not merely spectators. We have the opportunity to enhance what we

receive through the Liturgy of the Word through our preparation. We can read and reflect upon the readings prior to Mass. As we prepare for the Mass, we may reflect upon our special intentions; prayers which we lift up in intercession for others. Our reading and reflection before we attend the Mass will enable our ability to participate and receive the blessings God intends through His instruction.

We also have the opportunity after Mass to reflect on what we heard in the readings, the homily, and the prayers. We also have the opportunity to continue in prayer outside the Mass. We might take a moment before we depart, but we can also find a quiet space where we might further reflect and contemplate. We might even keep a prayer journal through which we capture our thoughts as to what we heard with both our ears and our hearts.

Just a thought to consider. What we receive through the Liturgy of the Word is not a matter of being spoon fed. We do have the choice to simply be a spectator or limit our participation to the responses, but if we truly desire to gain from our experience, we should consider what we do, both in preparation as well as after we receive. What we do in preparation, reflection, contemplation, and prayer will enhance both our understanding and our inspiration.

Wrap Up: Again, our time has come to an end. We hope you will be able to join us next week as we pick up our discussion with the Liturgy of the Eucharist.

Let us conclude with a prayer: Heavenly Father, we thank you for this opportunity to open and discuss Your Holy Word. We pray that as we go our separate ways, You will continue to walk with us and help us to see how we may put on the armor of **truth, righteousness, peace, faith, salvation**, and the **Word** of the gospel not only for the benefit of our lives, but also the lives of all who cross our path. In the name of the Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit, we pray. Amen.

Thank you all and God bless.

Next Session: Scriptural Walk Through the Mass – Liturgy of the Eucharist