

# Liturgy of the Word

Commentator's Copy – Week Three: New Translation of the Roman Missal

The commentator will read the Introduction right before Mass begins, before the Opening Hymn is announced and sung.

**Introduction:** The General Instruction of the Roman Missal encourages the use of frequent instruction at Mass:

“Lest Christ’s flock go hungry...the Holy Synod commands pastors and all others having the care of souls to give frequent instructions during the celebration of Mass...among other things, they should include some explanation of the mystery of this most holy Sacrifice (11).”

This weekend we will focus on the **Liturgy of the Word**. The main part of the *Liturgy of the Word* is made up of the readings from Sacred Scripture. The *Homily*, *Profession of Faith*, and *Prayer of the Faithful* develop and conclude this part of the Mass. In the readings God speaks to His people, offering them spiritual nourishment. Christ himself is present in the midst of the faithful through his word. The people make God’s word their own, and they also affirm their adherence to it, by means of the *Profession of Faith*. Finally, having been nourished by it, they pour out their petitions in the *Prayer of the Faithful* for the needs of the entire Church and for the salvation of the whole world.

The commentator will read numbers #1, #2 and #3 after the Opening Prayer and before the First Reading.

## 1. Method of Choosing Readings for the Mass

The readings for daily Mass are based on a two year cycle. Sunday Mass readings are based on a three year cycle. It is the Church’s earnest desire to proclaim the majority of the Scriptures within this time period, thus keeping the full breadth of the *Word of God* present in the minds of the faithful.

## 2. Readings from the Sacred Scripture

The readings are a time for God our Father to speak to us His children through both the Word and the Holy Spirit. By their proclamation the work of salvation and the plan of God is made known to us. Most Sunday readings come from a Prophet, an Apostle, and a Gospel.

### 3. **Silence**

In order for the *Word of God* to speak to us most powerfully and faithfully, moments of reflective silence are necessary. These moments attune us to what is said and provide the opportunity for prayerful response. It may be appropriate to observe such periods of silence before the **Liturgy of the Word** itself begins, after the first and second reading, and lastly at the conclusion of the homily. It is important that the **Liturgy of the Word** not be rushed.

The commentator will read #4 after the First Reading before the Psalm is sung.

### 4. **Psalm**

Most of the *Psalms* are credited to King David, who wrote them in both trial and jubilation and thus express some of the deepest yearnings of the human spirit. They are often chosen based on the theme that runs throughout the Liturgy for that day. The *Psalm* fosters meditation on the *Word of God*, and it is preferred that the *Psalm* be sung when possible.

The commentator will read #5 after the Second Reading and before the *Alleluia* is sung.

### 5. **The Alleluia**

The chanting of the *Alleluia*, and other appropriate chants according to the liturgical season, is an act of faith as we sing out to and welcome the Lord Jesus who is about to speak to us in the Gospel.

The commentator will read #6 after the *Alleluia* and before the Gospel is proclaimed.

### 6. **Gospel**

The reading of the *Gospel* is the high point of the *Liturgy of the Word*. It should be received with great reverence, for it is truly the Lord Himself who is speaking to us. After the introductory rite to the *Gospel* is announced, all use the thumb to make the sign of the cross on their forehead, mouth and breast. A short prayer could be said like; “Lord, help me to understand Your *Gospel* with my mind, to proclaim it with my lips, and to believe it with all my heart.”

The commentator will read #7 after the Gospel and before the Homily.

### 7. **Homily**

The homilist relates the readings from Sacred Scripture to the lives of the faithful through a short explanation of the Gospel message. The *Homily* is preached in order that a community of believers who have gathered to celebrate the liturgy may do so more deeply and more faithfully, and thus be formed for Christian witness in the world. The *Homily* should only be given by a bishop, priest or deacon.

The commentator will read #8 after the Homily and before the Profession of Faith.

**8. Profession of Faith**

The recitation of the *Profession of Faith* is a public profession of the summed doctrines of our faith. It is an ascent to and reminder of what we believe. Beginning the Creed with “I” makes it very clear that each person has to take personal responsibility for what they believe. Professing “of all things visible and invisible” strengthens our belief in what can only be seen with eyes of faith. “Incarnate of the Virgin Mary” clarifies that the birth of Jesus was very different than our own birth. It reminds us that although Jesus as man was born into the world, as the Son of God He has always existed with the Father and the Holy Spirit. Finally, in now professing “confess” instead of “acknowledge” we are dragged from just an intellectual stating of our faith with our minds to a confession of our faith from our hearts; to the point that we are willing to die for our faith.

The commentator will read #9 after the Profession of Faith and before the Prayers of the Faithful.

**9. Prayers of the Faithful**

The faithful gathered offer to God prayers for the salvation of all. It is fitting that petitions be offered for the holy Church, for civil authorities, for those weighed down by various needs, for all men and women, and for the salvation of the whole world. The intentions announced should be sober, be composed freely but prudently, be succinct, and they should express the prayer of the entire community.