

Our God is not distant, silent, or hidden. From the very beginning, He is the God who speaks. By His Word creation itself came into being, “Let there be light,” and there was light. Through His Word the prophets were sent, carrying messages of hope, correction, and promise to Israel. And in the fullness of time, the eternal Word took flesh and dwelt among us in Jesus Christ. And in Him, God’s voice resounds with perfect clarity.

Brothers and sisters, today we continue our journey through the parts of the Mass with the second great section: **the Liturgy of the Word**. Last week we gathered in the Introductory Rites, confessing, praising, and opening our hearts in prayer. Now we come to another table: **the table of God’s Word**.

Why is this so central? Because here, we do not simply hear old readings. We encounter the living Christ who speaks to His people today.

Remember the disciples on the road to Emmaus: hearts heavy with grief, their faith clouded with doubt. Then a Stranger drew near, and as He opened the Scriptures, their sorrow gave way to fire. Later they exclaimed, “*Were not our hearts burning within us while He spoke to us on the road?*” Eventually, their eyes were opened in the breaking of the Bread, but their hearts were first enkindled at the table of the Word. And so it is for us at every Mass: before we come to the altar to receive the Eucharist, our hearts must first be set ablaze by the Word of God.

Dear sisters and brothers, many have asked me with wonder, **how are the readings chosen for the Mass?** The Church, in her wisdom, has arranged them in cycles so that over time we hear the fullness of God’s story. On Sundays, a three-year cycle focuses on Matthew, Mark, and Luke, with John woven in during special seasons. Daily Mass has its own two-year cycle. Nothing is random—each selection is prayerfully chosen to reveal Christ and to guide us as His disciples.

And here is the beauty of it all: we may not always realize it, but if we are faithful in coming to Mass regularly, we will hear almost the entire Bible proclaimed to us, and Christ Himself will be our teacher.

Dear brothers and sisters, the Liturgy of the Word unfolds in eight parts: the First Reading, Responsorial Psalm, Second Reading, Gospel Acclamation, Gospel, Homily, Profession of Faith, and the Prayers of the Faithful. Each step draws us deeper into the mystery, preparing us to meet Christ in the Eucharist.

It begins with the **First Reading**, proclaimed by a lector from among the assembly. The lector does more than read words on a page—they lend their voice to God’s Word. In that moment, they stand in the line of the prophets, announcing God’s message to His people, then and now. This is why lectors prepare carefully and prayerfully, so that what they proclaim may truly be received as the living voice of God speaking to His Church today.

And just as the lector’s task is holy, so is ours: to listen with prayerful attention, with hearts ready to receive. When the lector proclaims with faith and the assembly listens with faith, the Word of God truly comes alive among us.

The **First Reading** is almost always taken from the Old Testament, because it roots us in the story of God’s covenant. We might wonder—why begin here? The Church does this to remind us that our faith is part of a great story of salvation history.

These readings are not just background or prelude to the Gospel. They show us that God has been speaking and acting from the very beginning—through patriarchs, prophets, judges, and kings. Even when His people wander away, God never abandoned them. Again and again, He raised up prophets to call them back, to renew the covenant, and to keep hope alive.

Each Sunday, the First Reading is chosen to connect with the Gospel. What we hear in the Old Testament finds its fulfillment in Christ. A promise made through a prophet long ago comes alive when Jesus proclaims the Good News. In this way, the Church teaches us that Scripture is one seamless story—from Genesis to Revelation—with Jesus Christ at its center.

After the First Reading comes **the Responsorial Psalm**, and it is no small detail. The Church tells us it has “great liturgical and pastoral importance” because it helps us meditate on God’s Word. In the 150 psalms, every human emotion is found—lament, joy, trust, and praise. They are raw, honest, and real.

At Mass, it also serves as a bridge, linking the First Reading to the Gospel, showing us the unity of Scripture. In praying the Psalms, we not only speak back to God, but we also speak back to Christ in the language of His own prayer. Thus, the dialogue of the Liturgy of the Word comes alive: God speaks in the First Reading, and through the Psalm, we answer with the inspired words of Scripture.

After the Psalm, we hear the **Second Reading**, taken from the New Testament letters, most often from St. Paul, but also from Peter, John, James, and others.

If the **First Reading** roots us in Israel’s faith, the **Second Reading** draws us into the life of the early Church. Here we hear the apostles, the first witnesses of the Resurrection, still speaking with urgency and conviction. What Paul once wrote to Corinth or Philippi, he now speaks to us, the Church of the Resurrection parish, to our community, to our lives today.

And their message is clear: faith is not only about knowing the story of salvation, but about living it, steadfast in faith, joyful in hope, and generous in love.

Having heard the prophets in the First Reading and the apostles in the Second, we now come to the voice of Christ Himself in the **Gospel**. That is why we stand and sing the

Alleluia, a joyful cry of welcome, saying, “**Lord, we are ready to listen.**” The verse we sing prepares our hearts and points us toward the Gospel of the day.

During this acclamation, as witness every Sunday, the Book of the Gospels is carried in procession, showing us that what we are about to hear is the heart of God’s Word. Before proclaiming it, we trace the cross on our forehead, lips, and heart, praying silently: “***May the Word of the Lord be in my mind, on my lips, and in my heart.***” asking that the Word may be in our minds, on our lips, and in our hearts.

Dear brothers and sisters, the **climax of the Liturgy of the Word** is the proclamation of the Gospel, the living Christ speaking to us. The Old Testament prepared the way, the apostles bore witness, and the Alleluia welcomed Him with joy. Now, in the Gospel, we stand in reverence as Christ Himself addresses His people, praying that His Word may live in our minds, on our lips, and in our hearts.

And because the Gospel is so central, it cannot be left unexplained. The Church gives us the **Homily**, which flows directly from the Gospel and the other readings. Following the example of Christ on the road to Emmaus, the priest “breaks open” the Word so that it can be received and applied to our lives today.

Sometimes people say, “*For me, the homily is the Mass.*” It is true that the homily is vital, because here the Word is broken open for us. But the focus is never on the preacher or his eloquence—the focus is on the Word itself, which pierces our hearts, challenges us, and calls us to conversion. Whether it comforts or unsettles, the homily always must point us toward the Eucharist, preparing us to recognize Christ in the breaking of the Bread.

After the homily, we stand and profess the **Creed**. This is more than a list of doctrines. It is our shared confession of faith in the God who has spoken to us through His Word. It unites us with the Church across time and space, centered on Christ, **true God and true man**, whose Incarnation we honor with a solemn bow at the words, “*and by the Holy*

Spirit was incarnate of the Virgin Mary, and became man.” The Creed is both our personal testimony and a sign of unity as the Body of Christ.

Finally, the **Universal Prayer** concludes the Liturgy of the Word. Having heard God speak, we now speak to Him for the needs of the Church and the world: for leaders, for those who suffer, for our community, and for all people. These intercessions stretch our hearts beyond ourselves and remind us that as Christ’s Body we are called to bring peace, healing, shelter, and hope. With one voice we answer, “*Lord, hear our prayer,*” joining our petitions to Christ’s own prayer for His people.

So, dear sisters and brothers, as we conclude our reflection on the Liturgy of the Word, let us remember that the Liturgy of the Word is not simply an introduction to the Eucharist—it is Christ Himself, the eternal Word, speaking to His people here and now, opening our hearts to receive the gift of His Body and Blood. Just as on the road to Emmaus, our hearts must be set on fire by the Word before our eyes can be opened in the breaking of the Bread.

And here is the challenge for us: in order to truly participate in the Liturgy of the Eucharist, we must actively participate in the Liturgy of the Word. The two cannot be separated. The Word prepares us for the Sacrament, and the Sacrament sends us forth to live the Word.

So, I say to you: the Word is life. Each time we gather for Mass, focus on the Word of God that are proclaimed. Listen not with half an ear, but with the ears of faith. Allow the Word to sink in deeply, to dwell within you, to shape your mind, soften your heart, and strengthen your soul. Then the eternal Word—Christ Himself—will lead us from this table of the Word to the table of the Eucharist, and from the altar into the liturgy of our daily lives, in our families, our workplaces, our neighborhoods, and our community. **May God Bless us. Amen.**