



Hearing the Word of God

The words of **Sacred Scripture** are unlike any other text we will ever hear because they are the primary vehicle God uses to reveal himself to us. It is through these words that we come to know the depth of God's love for us and the responsibilities entailed in being a disciple of Jesus, a member of his Body.

The Word of God proclaimed at Mass possesses a special sacramental power to bring about in us what it proclaims. It not only tells us of God and God's will for us, it also helps us to put the will of God into practice in our own lives.

The Liturgy of the Word consists of three Scripture Readings, one of which is from one of the four Gospel accounts; a psalm; and the homily. The psalm is a meditation on God's word through the inspired words of one of the prayers from the psalter, the Bible's prayer book. The homily applies the message of the readings to our lives today.

The Gospel Reading is the highpoint of the Liturgy of the Word because it contains the words and deeds of Jesus himself. The Church has always given special honor to the Gospel reading. It is read by an ordained minister. During the entrance procession, the Book of the Gospels may be reverently carried aloft and be placed on the altar until the Gospel reading to show the unity of Scripture and Eucharist. Then for the reading of the Gospel, it may be carried to the ambo to the accompaniment of an acclamation sung by the people. The book containing the reading of the day may be incensed before the reading and the book is kissed at the conclusion of the reading. **All stand as the Gospel is proclaimed to pay homage to Jesus who is present in his Word and who proclaims his Gospel.**

What must we do to receive the Word of God proclaimed at Mass so that its transforming power may touch our minds and hearts?

First of all, we must take some time before Mass to ponder the Word of God which will be proclaimed. Then we must listen to it with reverent attention.

The Word of God, which is living and active, calls each of us individually and all of us together for a response that moves beyond the liturgy itself and affects our daily lives, leading us to engage fully in the task of making Jesus known to the world by all that we do and say.