

Understanding the Mass

The Liturgy of the Word

Each week, we are explaining the different parts of the Mass - what is in the church, what we use in the Mass, and why (and how) we celebrate Mass the way we do.

*Today our topic is the **Liturgy of the Word**.*

The Mass is a kind of conversation between God and ourselves. He speaks to us and we reply in our prayers and songs. While this goes on during the whole of the Mass, the most obvious time that God speaks to us is in the **Liturgy of the Word**, which is the part of the Mass when we listen to Holy Scripture.

The word liturgy comes from the Greek *leitourgia* (“public service for / on behalf of the people”). In the Mass, we have the Liturgy of the Word and the Liturgy of the Eucharist.

The Liturgy of the Word has several parts, which we will explore in the coming weeks:

READINGS: On Sundays, we have two readings. The First Reading normally comes from the Old Testament, while the Second Reading is from the New Testament, from the Letters of the Apostles or from the “Acts of the Apostles” (but not from the Gospels).

RESPONSORIAL PSALM: The Psalms are ancient songs - prayers from the Bible. The Psalm is sung, or said, immediately after the First Reading, with someone singing or saying the verses and the congregation making the responses.



GOSPEL ACCLAMATION: Just before the reading of the Gospel we sing, or say, a short verse that normally begins and ends with the word “Alleluia” (though we use different words during Lent).

GOSPEL: The priest reads from one of the four Gospels that tell us about the life of Christ.

HOMILY: The priest, or a deacon, explains some part of the Readings, to help us to put God's teaching into practice in our own lives.

CREED: We profess our faith together using the Apostles Creed or the Nicene Creed.

BIDDING PRAYERS: Also known as the “Prayers of the Faithful”, these are prayers we address to God together as a parish community.