

Understanding the Mass

The Homily

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 **Homily**.*

After the Gospel Reading is finished, we sit down to listen to the **homily**, a word coming from the Ancient Greek *ὁμιλία* or *homilia*, and meaning “conversation” or “speaking with”.

From the earliest days of the Church, reading the Word of God in a group was followed by an explanation of what had been read, and guidance on how to apply God’s Word in daily life. Many of the writings of early saints are actually their homilies, which they wrote down before sharing them with the members of their congregation - people like us.



Another way of thinking about this is that just as we cut a big loaf of bread into smaller pieces for everyone to share, the Word of God is broken open in the homily so it can be received and digested (understood) by all of us.

In the homily, the priest reflects on the Scripture readings, and helps us connect with them, to make them relevant to each of us. The priest may reflect on the entire Liturgy of the Word, or may choose to focus on a particular reading or concept.

Because the homily shows us how to live God’s Word in our lives, it is more than just a talk: it is an act of worship. The homily also leads us from considering the Word of God into the celebration of the Liturgy of the Eucharist.

Find these words: gospel, liturgy, priest, reading, psalm, homily, God, truth, word, saint

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