



WELCOMING THE ROMAN MISSAL 3RD EDITION

Part IV -- Overview of the Mass

The Liturgy of the Word (part a)

Profession of Faith

The following is the text of the Profession of Faith as it will appear in the third edition of the Roman Missal.

I believe in one God,
the Father almighty,
maker of heaven and earth,
of all things visible and invisible.
I believe in one Lord Jesus Christ,
the Only Begotten Son of God,
born of the Father before all ages.
God from God, Light from Light,
true God from true God,
begotten, not made, consubstantial
with the Father;
through him all things were made.
For us men and for our salvation
he came down from heaven,
and by the Holy Spirit was incarnate
of the Virgin Mary,
and became man.
For our sake he was crucified under
Pontius Pilate,
he suffered death and was buried,
and rose again on the third day
in accordance with the Scriptures.
He ascended into heaven
and is seated at the right hand of the
Father.
He will come again in glory
to judge the living and the dead
and his kingdom will have no end.
I believe in the Holy Spirit, the
Lord, the giver of life,
who proceeds from the Father and
the Son,
who with the Father and the Son is
adored and glorified,
who has spoken through the
prophets.
I believe in one, holy, catholic and
apostolic Church.
I confess one Baptism for the for-
giveness of sins
and I look forward to the resurrec-
tion of the dead
and the life of the world to come.
Amen.

*Published by the
Office of Worship for the
Roman Catholic Diocese of
Owensboro, KY.*

*For questions or comments,
contact
Martha Hagan at
martha.hagan@pastoral.org
270-852-8366
or
Fr. Larry McBride at
fatherlarry@bellsouth.net*

On November 27, 2011, English-speaking Catholics in the United States will begin using a new translation of the Roman Missal (the book containing the prescribed prayers, chants, and instructions for the celebration of Mass in the Roman Catholic Church).

God wants to speak to us about so many things. He wants to speak to us about his love for us, a love that began before we were born, before the first human walked this earth.

God wants to speak to us about the goodness of all creation, about the goodness of this earth, of this world. He wants to speak about the incredible goodness of the men and women who have lived, who inhabit this place now, and who are yet to be born.

God wants to speak to us about life that is yet to come; about life in the yet to be fulfilled Kingdom of God; about the incredible, incomprehensible, wonderful new life in heaven; about a new life beyond the one we now know. At every celebration of the Mass, we are provided with the opportunity to hear God speak to us.

Nature of the Liturgy of the Word

Simply stated, the Liturgy of the Word is the Church's special moment to hear God speaking through the scriptures. From its earliest days, the Christian community has always deemed it essential that its members be nourished at both the table of the Word (the ambo) and at the table of the Eucharist (the altar).

Our Task

Our task is to listen to God speaking -- to be attentive to God's Word. Our task is to open ourselves to hear what God has to say. We know and believe that God is always present with us. Yet because we cannot always reach out with our hands and touch God, we often find it very hard to listen. The structure of the Liturgy of the Word provides us with a pattern for truly listening and responding to God. In reading, in song, and in silence we attend to the spoken word of the Lord.

First Reading

This selection is generally taken from the Old Testament (during the Easter Season, it comes from the Acts of the Apostles). The presence of the Old Testament reading reminds us that there is a continuity between the two Testaments: both lead us to Jesus Christ. As St. Augustine stated it: "In the Old Testament the New is hidden, in the New Testament the Old appears." Also, the story of the people of old is our story as well. It is part of our heritage. On Sundays, the selection is usually connected to the Gospel reading.

Responsorial Psalm

The Book of Psalms is the most ancient songbook of the Church. It is the inspired word which has always served as the basis and inspiration for the community's sung praise of God. The responsorial psalm following the first reading is the only psalm used in the Mass for its own sake and not to accompany an action. This text is primarily our response to the reading that has just been proclaimed. We use God's word to respond to God's word. To

a certain extent, the psalm serves to stimulate reflection on the reading giving us an opportunity to mull over some aspect of God's word. As the most important psalm found in the celebration, the text should ordinarily be sung.

Second Reading

This selection, always from the New Testament, opens up to us the belief and practice of the early Church. The witness of the apostolic community provides an example for all time since Christians of every age are to recall the love of the Father which has been enfleshed in Christ, the good news of redemption, as seen and lived by the early followers. During certain seasons of the year, the reading echoes the mood and focus of the other bible passages. At other times, we hear selections from one letter presented over a period of Sundays.

Gospel

The highpoint of the Liturgy of the Word is the proclamation of the gospel. The Good News of salvation is proclaimed to us by the Risen Lord. It is Christ, living and present among his people, who continues to speak as he calls us to deeper faith and conversion. From earliest times, the primacy of the gospel has been emphasized by special signs of respect and honor surrounding its proclamation at Mass. It is preceded by an acclamation. Ordinarily we sing "Alleluia," meaning "Praise God". During Lent we use an equivalent acclamation of praise so that at Easter we may sing "Alleluia" with even more joy. This acclamation is so important that liturgical directives insist that it must be sung.

Homily

The homily is an integral part of the liturgy of the word since the homilist shows how Christ is continuing to act and speak among us today. The task of the homilist is not just to help us understand what we have heard, but also to "break open the word", to remind us that it is a living word still very much at work in our world today.

Profession of Faith

As a response to God's word proclaimed in the scriptures and preached in the homily, we stand and give a corporate profession of faith in a formula dating back to the early councils of the Church. Through this text we assent not only to the doctrines we believe, but also to the very person of Christ in his word. *(While the beliefs professed are most certainly the same, the text of the Profession of Faith is changing somewhat with the third edition of the Roman Missal. See "Profession of Faith" on page 1 of this article.)*

General Intercessions

In the New Testament we are urged to offer "petitions, prayers, and intercessions" (1 Timothy 2:1). These prayers draw us away from an exclusive concern with our own needs and invite us to also pray for the needs of the Church at large, for public authorities, the salvation of the world, and for those oppressed by any need.

Next time we will continue our reflection on the Liturgy of the Word by focusing on several things that can help us more fully experience the word of God proclaimed in the celebration of the Mass.

Discussion Questions

1. What did St. Augustine mean when he said: "In the Old Testament the New is hidden, in the New Testament the Old appears"?
2. What does it mean that the altar and the ambo (the place where the readings are proclaimed) are both tables ("table of the Word" and "table of the Eucharist")?
3. Do you notice the absence of the "Alleluia" during Lent? What does the absence of the Alleluia during the season of Lent signify?