

Notes from the Liturgist, Ace Tupasi

The Liturgy of the Word

Reference from Journey of Faith (Liguori Publications)

The **Liturgy of the Word** is the first of two main parts of the Mass. The entire assembly – including the priest, deacon, and other ministers should listen attentively to the readings, reflect on them in silence, voice a hearty response in the psalm refrain and acknowledge their message with an enthusiastic “Thanks be to God”

During the readings the assembly’s focus rightfully shifts to the lectern/ambo: through the reader who proclaims God’s Word there, God speaks divine words to human hearts. The First Reading is from the Old Testament (except during the Easter season). It usually relates to the Gospel.

The Responsorial Psalm is a hymn of praise from the Book of Psalms in the Old Testament. The psalms were composed as song – prayers so it’s usually sung or chanted with the assembled people repeating a response.

The Second Reading is from the epistles (letters) of Paul or another New Testament letter. This reading doesn’t always relate to the others but expresses us to more of sacred Scripture.

The Gospel Acclamation, usually an Alleluia – Praise to the Lord – or another acclamation during Lent, acknowledges and welcomes Christ’s presence in God’s presence in God’s word. The Gospel Reading is proclaimed by the priest or deacon and is given highest honor because it contains the words of Jesus. With a thumb, we trace a small cross on our forehead, lips, and chest and silently pray these or similar words: **May your word, O Lord, be in my thoughts, on my lips, and in my heart.**

The Homily follows the Gospel. In the homily, the priest or deacon explains the Scripture proclaimed, feast days or solemnities we celebrate at this Mass, and applies it to our lives today. We stand and recite the main beliefs of our faith using the words of the Nicene Creed or Apostle’s Creed.

A deacon or lector presents our petitions (request or appeal) in the Universal Prayer, also called the Prayer of the Faithful or general intercessions. After each petition we say, “Lord, hear our prayer” or a similar response.

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