

## Catechist Corner

*Saint Joseph and Saint Rose of Lima Catholic Parish Communities  
Cecilia, Louisiana*

*Jesus, the Mass, and You: A Walk Through the Parts of Holy Mass  
January 19, 2025*

### ***The Liturgy of the Word***

1.) With the closing of the introductory prayers, we move to the readings or the Liturgy of the Word. Opening the Scriptures allows us to encounter the living Christ, the Eternal Word of God. Reading from the Bible and the homily, the Prayers of the faithful, and the profession of faith make up the structure of the Liturgy of the Word. "Liturgy" comes from the Greek word for public service or duty. As Christians, it is a Baptismal right and duty to gather together, for prayer, listen to the Sacred Scriptures, and break bread. (See Acts 2:2-4).

2.) The most obvious part of the Liturgy of the Word is reading or hearing the Scriptures. The Liturgical Year follows a three-year cycle that covers most of the Bible. We use both the Old and New Testaments because they are equally valid and make up the one "Word of God." For us Christians, pride of place is given to the Gospels as they reveal the person and mission of Our Divine Redeemer.

#### ***Why do we sit during the readings?***

3.) When the Divine Teacher, Our Lord Jesus, gave his Sermon on the Mount, he gathered the people and had them sit around him. *"When he saw the crowds, he went up the mountain, and after he had sat down, his disciples came to him. He began to teach them...."* (Mtt 5:1-2). It's common practice to be seated when a person addresses a crowd. Sitting tells the person speaking that they have your complete attention, and you want to hear them. We sit to listen and to be instructed by the Divine Teacher who speaks through the sacred pages of Scripture. This posture indicates an interest in the message as well as the messenger.

*The question for us becomes simple. Are we attentive during the readings? Are we opening the ears of the heart, mind, and soul to hear Our Divine Lord speak? Do we take advantage of the moments of silence to prepare to hear Jesus speak? It sounds overly simple, but the simplest preparation can make the difference between boredom and inspiration.*

### ***“The Word of the Lord, Thanks Be to God.”***

4.) The ***First Reading and the Gospel*** have a common theme. As the great St Augustine says, "The Old Testament prepares for the New, and the New Testament is hidden in the Old." Old and New Testaments are one message, one revelation, and one Word of God. The ***Second Reading*** is mainly St Paul's letters and the remaining letters that make up the New Testament.

5.) Between the First and Second Reading is the Psalms. Christians and Jews from ancient times would pray or sing the Psalms as part of their private devotion and liturgical worship. The ***Responsorial Psalm*** serves as a moment of pause, for meditation on the Word of God. Unlike the two readings, the Psalms are hymns of praise to God.

### ***The Response – Thanks Be to God***

6.) Our response should be more than just a habit that we learned. On the other hand, it is not necessary to be heard by the people across the street. The wonders and mystery of God were just announced. In the Scripture Readings, it is God Himself who has spoken to you. He has announced your redemption, salvation, peace, healing, and strength. Thanks be to God should come from the depths of a grateful heart and soul to Our Merciful God. A good habit to start is bowing the head at the response as an act of humility. His written word, Sacred Scripture is a great gift, thank Him for it.

*Preparation for and participation in Mass enhances the encounter with the Living Christ.*

Next Sunday's bulletin – The Gospel and Homily

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#### Sources:

- *General Instruction on the Roman Missal, 1993*
- *Catechism of the Catholic Church, 1997*
- *Holy Bible, RSVCE, 2011*
- *Eucharistic Revival: Walk Through the Mass, [Eucharistic Revival: Walk Through the Mass - St. Philomena Catholic Church](#)*