

This Sunday of the Word of God gives us reason to look back to catechesis on the Liturgy of the Word given by Pope Francis at his weekly audience in 2018, as part of a series of catechetical addresses on the Mass.

...Let us now consider the Liturgy of the Word, which is an integral part because we gather precisely to listen to what God has done and still intends to do for us. It is an experience which occurs “live” and not through hearsay because “when the Sacred Scriptures are read in the Church, God himself speaks to his people, and Christ, present in his own word, proclaims the Gospel” (*General Instruction of the Roman Missal*, (GIRM) 29; cf. *Sacrosanctum Concilium*, 7, 33). And how many times, as the Word of God is being read, are comments made: “Look at him... look at her; look at the hat she is wearing: it’s ridiculous...”. And the comments begin. Isn’t that true? Should comments be made while the Word of God is being read? [They answer: “No!”]. No, because if you are chatting with others, you are not listening to the Word of God. When the Word of God is being read from the Bible — the First Reading, the Second Reading, the Responsorial Psalm and the Gospel — we must listen, open our heart because it is God himself who is speaking to us, and we must not think about other things or talk about other things. Do you understand? I will explain to you what takes places in this Liturgy of the Word.

The pages of the Bible cease to be writings and become living words, spoken by God. It is God, who through the reader, speaks to us and questions us, we who listen with faith. The Spirit “who has spoken through the prophets” (Creed) and has inspired the sacred authors makes the Word of God that “we hear outwardly have its effect inwardly” (Lectionary, Introduction, 9). But in order to listen to the Word of God, we also need our heart to be open to receive the Word in our heart. God speaks and we listen to him, in order to then put into practice what we have heard. It is very important to listen. At times perhaps we do not fully understand because there are a few somewhat difficult Readings. Yet God speaks to us in another way; [we must be] silent and listen to the Word of God. Do not forget this. During Mass, when the Readings begin, let us listen to the Word of God.

We need to listen to him! It is in fact, a question of life, as we are reminded by the profound expression that “Man shall not live by bread alone, but by every word that proceeds from the mouth of God” (Mt 4:4). Life which gives us the Word of God. In this sense, we are speaking of the Liturgy of the Word as a “meal” that the Lord prepares in order to nourish our spiritual life. The meal of the Liturgy is a lavish one which draws largely from the treasures of the Bible (cf. sc, 51), both the Old and the New Testaments, because in them, the Church proclaims the one and the same mystery of Christ (cf. *Lectionary, Introduction*, (LIn) 5). Let us

think about the richness of the Bible readings offered by the three Sunday cycles, which in the light of the Synoptic Gospels, accompany us throughout the Liturgical Year: a great richness. Here I wish to also recall the importance of the Responsorial Psalm whose function is to foster meditation on what was heard in the reading that precedes it. It is preferable that the Psalm be enriched by song, at least in the response (cf. GIRM, 61; LIn, 19-22).

The Liturgical proclamation of the very same readings with the songs derived from Sacred Scripture expresses and fosters ecclesial communion by accompanying the journey of each and every one. It is thus understandable that some subjective choices such as the omission of readings or their substitution with non-biblical texts are forbidden. I have heard that when there is a news story, some people read the newspaper because it is the news of the day. No! The Word of God is the Word of God! We can read the newspaper later. But there, we are reading the Word of God. It is the Lord who is speaking to us. Substituting that Word with other things impoverishes and compromises the dialogue between God and his people in prayer. On the contrary, the dignity of the pulpit and the use of the Lectionary, the availability of good readers and psalmists [are required]. But we must look for good readers! Those who know how to read, not those who read [distorting the words] and nothing is understood. This is how it is. Good readers. They must be prepared and rehearse before the Mass in order to read well. And this creates a climate of receptive silence.

We know that the Word of the Lord is of indispensable help so as not to get lost, as is clearly recognized by the Psalmist who, speaking to the Lord, confesses: “Thy word is a lamp to my feet and a light to my path” (Ps 119[118]:105). How can we face our earthly pilgrimage with its difficulties and its trials without being regularly nourished and enlightened by the Word of God which resounds in the Liturgy?

Of course it is not enough to listen with our ears without welcoming into our heart the seed of the Divine Word, allowing it to bear fruit. Let us remember the Parable of the Sower and of the results achieved by the different types of soil (cf. Mk 4:14-20). The action of the Holy Spirit which renders the response effective needs hearts that allow themselves to be fashioned and cultivated in such a way that what is heard at Mass passes into daily life, according to the admonishment of the Apostle James: “But be doers of the word, and not hearers only, deceiving yourselves” (Jas 1:22). The Word of God makes a pathway within us. We listen to it with our ears and it passes to our hearts; it does not remain in our ears; it must go to the heart. And from the heart, it passes to the hands, to good deeds. This is the path which the Word of God follows: from our ears to our heart and hands. Let us learn these things. Thank you!

Franciscus



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Our Parish is part of the Archdiocese of Birmingham: Registered Charity No. 234216

PARISH MASSES DURING THE COMING WEEK

Sa	22	6pm	3rd Sunday in Ordinary Time	For the parish
Su	23	9am 11am		Theresa O'Doneill RIP (Egan) Danny Scally RIP
M	24	11am	St Francis de Sales	Funeral Mass - Peter Becque RIP
T	25	10am	Conversion S Paul	William and Alice Williams RIP
W	26	10am	Ss Timothy & Titus	Rose McKiernan RIP (Yates)
Th	27			
Fr	28	7pm	St Thomas Aquinas	Michael and Pauline Venables RIP (V)
Sa	29	6pm	4th Sunday in Ordinary Time	For the parish
Su	30	9am 11am		Ints Ann Byrne (Byrne) Claire O'Neill RIP (Egan)

Sacrament of Confession: Friday evenings after 7pm Mass until 8pm; and 5-5.30pm on Saturday. (Also by appointment)
Anointing of the Sick: Last Friday of month at 11am

Please pray for parishioners who are sick including Jean Lawlor, Stephen Burke, Brenda Davies, Elizabeth Barker, Lyn Hunt; Joan James; Thomas Stevenson. Please pray for Peter Becque whose funeral is here on Monday at 11am, and for Mary O'Haara, Gerard McGrath, Michael Venables, Kizah Johnson, Bridget Kelly, Rosemary Robinson, Raymnd Jones and all those whose anniversaries occur at this time. **Eternal rest grant unto them, O Lord, may they rest in peace.**

The Week of Prayer for Christian Unity begins on Tuesday 18 January and continues until Tuesday 25.

Perhaps you could include the following words of Jesus in your daily prayer during the Week of Prayer.

Creator of light,
 Illumine our path by the light of Christ
 who moves before us and leads us.
 May he be a beacon for our pilgrimage.
 Enlighten us and dwell within us.
 Guide us to discover a manger in our hearts
 where a great light still shines.
 We thank you for the gift of that unfading Star,
 Jesus Christ, our Lord and Saviour.
 Heal our divisions and draw us closer to the Light
 that we may find our unity in him. Amen.

The prayer is taken from the resources produced for the Week by the Churches of the Middle East.
 These can all be found at <https://bit.ly/3qdqMbE>

RESOURCES FOR PRAYER.

1. Parish prayer on Zoom(links on parish website)
Morning Prayer: Zoom meeting Monday to Saturday at 8.30am;
Lectio Sunday at 4pm; **Rosary** Mon at 7pm.
2. Readings of the day and much more at Universalis.com
3. Read your way through Luke's Gospel - the Gospel of the year
 (Text available at <https://www.esv.org>)

A new Deanery

Archbishop Bernard has this week confirmed that the former Birmingham East and Birmingham North deaneries have been combined, and with the addition of a further parish, Holy Name – Great Barr, a new deanery has been established, Birmingham East and North Deanery.

The first meeting of the clergy of the new Deanery will be in March.

Archbishop Bernard has written to priests reminding of some of the background to this change:

You are aware that I have set before us a diocesan vision of vibrant parish communities serving the Lord with a focus on evangelisation, formation of disciples, liturgy and worship and social outreach to those in need. Within this vision families and young people are a priority for us all. There is so much good ministry going on in our parishes already and I thank you for your time and commitment in ensuring that is the case.

As we look to the future we do so with hope and trust in the Lord's abiding presence. We seek to build on all the good work that is present. We also look forward recognising that the present placement of clergy to serve our parishes is not sustainable. That is an undeniable fact, given the age profile of clergy. It would be remiss of us all not to plan for the future, which will require clergy and parishioners from different parishes working more closely together.

What IS a Deanery? *It is a group of parishes brought together for administrative convenience and to help the collaboration on clergy and lay faithful to assist with the pastoral life of the Church.*

Help needed (so please read on...)

We are in urgent need of additional parish readers and ministers of Holy Communion.

It is likely that new readers would assist at Mass twice a month and new ministers of Holy Communion assist with distributing Holy Communion at Mass once a month. An introductory session, of about an hour, will be provided for new ministers at a time convenient for you.

The Introductory Rites

Opening Song

A new commandment I give unto you

That you love one another as I have loved you,

That you love one another as I have loved you.

By this shall all mankind
know you are my disciples
If you have love one for another.

You are my friends
if you do what I command you.
Without my help you can do nothing.

The Gloria

Glory to God in the highest,
and on earth peace to people of good will.

We praise you, we bless you,
we adore you, we glorify you,
we give you thanks for your great glory,
Lord God, heavenly King,
O God, almighty Father.

Lord Jesus Christ, Only Begotten Son,
Lord God, Lamb of God, Son of the Father,
you take away the sins of the world, have mercy on us;
you take away the sins of the world,
receive our prayer;
you are seated at the right hand of the Father,
have mercy on us.

For you alone are the Holy One, you alone are the Lord,
you alone are the Most High,
Jesus Christ, with the Holy Spirit,
in the glory of God the Father. Amen.

The Collect

The Liturgy of the Word

Nehemiah 8:2-6,8-10

Ezra the priest brought the Law before the assembly, consisting of men, women, and children old enough to understand. This was the first day of the seventh month. On the square before the Water Gate, in the presence of the men and women, and children old enough to understand, he read from the book from early morning till noon; all the people listened attentively to the Book of the Law.

Ezra the scribe stood on a wooden dais erected for the purpose. In full view of all the people – since he stood higher than all the people – Ezra opened the book; and when he opened it all the people stood up. Then Ezra blessed the Lord, the great God, and all the people raised their hands and answered, ‘Amen! Amen!’ Then they bowed down and, face to the ground, prostrated themselves before the Lord. And Ezra read from the Law of God, translating and giving the sense, so that the people understood what was read.

Then Nehemiah – His Excellency – and Ezra, priest and scribe, and the Levites who were instructing the people, said to all the people, ‘This day is sacred to the Lord your God. Do not be mournful, do not weep.’ For the people were all in tears as they listened to the words of the Law. He then said, ‘Go, eat

the fat, drink the sweet wine, and send a portion to the man who has nothing prepared ready. For this day is sacred to our Lord. Do not be sad: the joy of the Lord is your stronghold.’

Psalm 18(19):8-10,15

The law of the Lord is perfect,
it revives the soul.

The rule of the Lord is to be trusted,
it gives wisdom to the simple.

The precepts of the Lord are right,
they gladden the heart.

The command of the Lord is clear,
it gives light to the eyes.

The fear of the Lord is holy,
abiding for ever.

The decrees of the Lord are truth
and all of them just.

May the spoken words of my mouth,
the thoughts of my heart,
win favour in your sight, O Lord,
my rescuer, my rock!

1 Corinthians 12:12-30

Just as a human body, though it is made up of many parts, is a single unit because all these parts, though many, make one body, so it is with Christ. In the one Spirit we were all baptised, Jews as well as Greeks, slaves as well as citizens, and one Spirit was given to us all to drink.

Nor is the body to be identified with any one of its many parts. If the foot were to say, ‘I am not a hand and so I do not belong to the body’, would that mean that it stopped being part of the body? If the ear were to say, ‘I am not an eye, and so I do not belong to the body’, would that mean that it was not a part of the body? If your whole body was just one eye, how would you hear anything? If it was just one ear, how would you smell anything?

Instead of that, God put all the separate parts into the body on purpose. If all the parts were the same, how could it be a body? As it is, the parts are many but the body is one. The eye cannot say to the hand, ‘I do not need you’, nor can the head say to the feet, ‘I do not need you.’ What is more, it is precisely the parts of the body that seem to be the weakest which are the indispensable ones; and it is the least honourable parts of the body that we clothe with the greatest care. So our more improper parts get decorated in a way that our more proper parts do not need. God has arranged the body so that more dignity is given to the parts which are without it, and that there may not be disagreements inside the body, but that each part may be equally concerned for all the others. If one part is hurt, all parts are hurt with it. If one part is given special honour, all parts enjoy it.

Now you together are Christ’s body; but each of you is a different part of it. In the Church, God has given the first place to apostles, the second to prophets, the third to teachers; after them, miracles, and after them the gift of healing; helpers, good leaders, those with many

languages. Are all of them apostles, or all of them prophets, or all of them teachers? Do they all have the gift of miracles, or all have the gift of healing? Do all speak strange languages, and all interpret them?

Gospel Acclamation

Alleluia, alleluia! The Lord has sent me to bring the good news to the poor, to proclaim liberty to captives.
Alleluia!

Luke 1:1-4,4:14-21

Seeing that many others have undertaken to draw up accounts of the events that have taken place among us, exactly as these were handed down to us by those who from the outset were eyewitnesses and ministers of the word, I in my turn, after carefully going over the whole story from the beginning, have decided to write an ordered account for you, Theophilus, so that your Excellency may learn how well founded the teaching is that you have received.

Jesus, with the power of the Spirit in him, returned to Galilee; and his reputation spread throughout the countryside. He taught in their synagogues and everyone praised him.

He came to Nazara, where he had been brought up, and went into the synagogue on the sabbath day as he usually did. He stood up to read and they handed him the scroll of the prophet Isaiah. Unrolling the scroll he found the place where it is written: *The spirit of the Lord has been given to me, for he has anointed me. He has sent me to bring the good news to the poor, to proclaim liberty to captives and to the blind new sight, to set the downtrodden free, to proclaim the Lord’s year of favour.*

He then rolled up the scroll, gave it back to the assistant and sat down. And all eyes in the synagogue were fixed on him. Then he began to speak to them, ‘This text is being fulfilled today even as you listen.’

The Apostles’ Creed

I believe in God, the Father almighty,
Creator of heaven and earth,
and in Jesus Christ, his only Son, our Lord,
who was conceived by the Holy Spirit,
born of the Virgin Mary,
suffered under Pontius Pilate,
was crucified, died and was buried;
he descended into hell;
on the third day he rose again from the dead;
he ascended into heaven,
and is seated at the right hand
of God the Father almighty;
from there he will come to judge the living and the dead.
I believe in the Holy Spirit,
the holy catholic Church,
the communion of saints, the forgiveness of sins,
the resurrection of the body, and life everlasting.
Amen.

The Prayer of the Faithful

The Liturgy of the Eucharist

Our next monthly collection for the Bethany Food Bank will be on 5th/6th February.

The Offertory

Be still and know I am with you,
be still I am the Lord.

I will not leave you orphans.
I leave with you my word, be one.

You fear the light may be fading,
you fear to lose your way.
Be still and know I am near you.
I’ll lead you to the day, and the sun.

Be glad the day you have sorrow,
be glad for then you love.
The stars shine only in darkness,
and in your need I give my peace.

The Eucharistic Prayer

Sanctus

Ho - ly, Ho - ly, Ho - ly
Lord God of hosts. Heav-en and earth are full of your
glo-ry. Ho - san-na in the high-est. Bless-ed is he who
comes in the name of the Lord. Ho - san-na, ho -
san-na, ho - san-na in the high - est.

Memorial Acclamation

When we eat this Bread and drink this Cup, we pro-
claim your Death, O Lord, un - til you come a -
gain, un - til you come a - gain.

THE COMMUNION RITE

The Lord’s Prayer

Song after Communion

Jesus, name above all names,
Beautiful Saviour, glorious Lord.
Emmanuel, God is with us.
Blessed Redeemer, Living word.

The Concluding Rites

Blessing and Dismissal

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