

May 26, 2019

We've learned about how Mass begins, what comes next?

The introductory rites, those prayers at the beginning of Mass that call us to prepare ourselves to participate in the Holy Sacrifice of the Mass, conclude with the prayer called the "Collect". Different for each Mass, the collect prayer introduces the theme of the readings about to begin in the Liturgy of the Word. Every Mass is made up of two parts, the Liturgy of the Word and the Liturgy of the Eucharist.

The Liturgy of the Word includes the readings, the homily, the Creed and the Prayers of the Faithful. In the readings, God speaks to his people, "opening up to them the mystery of redemption and salvation, and offering spiritual nourishment."¹ Keeping in mind Christ is the Word of God, to listen to Sacred Scripture is a profound encounter with Jesus that should never be rushed. We are instructed that "The Liturgy of the Word is to be celebrated in such a way as to favor meditation, and so any kind of haste [that] hinders recollection is clearly to be avoided."²

After each reading there should be a period of silence allowing us to ponder the words we have heard. In this world of rushing, the slow, deliberate movements of Mass should be welcomed as refreshing and soothing. We should remove our watches and turn off our cell phones before Mass begins to allow ourselves to enter the timelessness of God. As we know from the prophet Elijah, God speaks to us in a "soft whisper of a voice." (1 Kings 19:12) He wants us to turn off the background noise of our lives and to truly come into His presence, ready to hear Him.

As Scripture can sometimes be difficult to understand, the homily should explain how to apply what we have heard in the readings to our daily lives. After the readings and homily, we profess the Creed acknowledging our belief and acceptance of all that we learn from Sacred Scripture and the teachings of the Church as explained in the homily. Finally, in our joy and desire that all people come to know God, we raise our voices in petition for our own needs and those of our community, the Church and the world.

¹ GIRM 55

² GIRM 56