

# *From the Bishop - Synod Implementation*

## **3. THE LITURGY OF THE WORD**

The Liturgy of the Word celebrates the presence of Christ ‘who speak to us’ through the scriptures. <sup>1</sup> He enlightens, strengthens, wills and sets hearts on fire with the love of God. <sup>2</sup>

Jesus taught much about God and how to live. He answered people’s life questions, offered solutions, affirmed, and guided. He showed his words to be powerful also through miracles.

Jesus’ followers realised him to be what the Old Testament referred to as the Word. The first reference to him in the Gospel of John is ‘In the beginning was the Word’. <sup>3</sup>

### *Celebrating how the Risen Jesus who frees and saves*

Liturgies of the Word celebrate the presence of the Risen Jesus as the Word of God today. All four gospels celebrate ‘good news’ of how the Risen Jesus offers to help all with his divine power.

They share how he can ‘redeem’ or free from the consequences of the Fall of our first parents. They celebrate how he ‘saves’ or shares his divine life to empower to live all his teachings.

### *The Last Supper*

The Last Supper was a ritual Passover or Paschal sacrificial meal. It celebrated the God who freed the children of Abraham from slavery in Egypt and instituted a ‘covenant’ (or relationship commitment) with them. Its ritual included scripture which recalled the presence of their redeeming God. <sup>4</sup>

Liturgies of the Word proclaim the Risen Jesus who redeems and saves *today*. <sup>5</sup> As we bring the life questions, problems and issues we pray about daily, we find the Risen Jesus guiding us through the Spirit.

### *It is Christ who speaks to us*

The Liturgy of the Word celebrates the presence of Christ ‘who speak to us’ through the scriptures, as mentioned already. <sup>6</sup> The Eucharistic Sacrifice celebrates the presence of Christ, body and blood, human and divine, under the appearances of bread and wine. <sup>7</sup>

We ‘listen’ to Jesus every time that we try genuinely to meditate on the meaning of each reading and what it calls for in daily life. <sup>8</sup> This is easier for those who have read and reflected on the readings before the Mass.

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<sup>1</sup> Homiletic Directory 4#3

<sup>2</sup> Vatican II: Dogmatic Constitution on Divine Revelation 23.

<sup>3</sup> John 1:1-2

<sup>4</sup> Exodus 12:26-27

<sup>5</sup> Homiletic Directory 12-15

<sup>6</sup> Homiletic Directory 4#3

<sup>7</sup> Homiletic Directory 4#3

<sup>8</sup> eg Mark 4:13-20

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### *The Ritual: a meditative dialogue*

Liturgies of the Word need a *meditative* atmosphere to help all to 'listen' to the scripture readings.<sup>9</sup> Ideally, there will be a brief silence after the Collect to help all prepare to listen to the Word. Then there will be brief silences after each reading. Its ritual comprises

- scripture readings in dialogue with a responsorial psalm and an acclamation welcoming the Gospel
- a homily, which is brief;<sup>10</sup> and draws from the scriptures to proclaim *how* Christ empowers to live his teachings and the basis of the Christian life<sup>11</sup> and relates these to hearers' lives<sup>12</sup> so that 'Christ can reveal his very heart'.<sup>13</sup>
- the Creed, which professes faith in Christ's basic teachings
- the Prayer of the Faithful.

*Questions: What life questions and issues am I seeking enlightenment from Christ in this Mass? Have I read the scriptures beforehand?*

Next week: The Eucharistic Sacrifice

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<sup>9</sup> General Instruction of the Roman Missal 56

<sup>10</sup> Homiletic Directory 6

<sup>11</sup> Vatican II: Constitution on the Second Liturgy 52

<sup>12</sup> Homiletic Directory 33; 11; 14

<sup>13</sup> Homiletic Directory 18