



HOPE

IN THE FUTURE

LIVING THE SUNDAY EUCHARIST



9th February 2020

5th Sunday in Ordinary Time

After we have gathered for Sunday Mass, we sit and listen—actually more than that, we open our hearts to the living Word of God proclaimed in the Scriptures! You will know the phrase “I’m all ears!” which we use when about to hear some juicy gossip or important news. How much more should we be “all ears” for what our God has to say to us. In the Catholic Church we have a wonderful, rich selection of Scripture, Sunday by Sunday, Season by Season, which unfolds to us the amazing story of God’s love, especially in the person of Jesus when he speaks to us in the Gospel. How is this a living Word for us? *Please use this sheet for discussions in Church, parish meetings, or thoughts at home.*

2. MEETING JESUS IN OUR LISTENING

Bishop John writes ...

Our spoken words are an essential and vital part of our prayer in the Eucharistic celebration. We declare our Faith and give praise to God in the many familiar texts of the Mass, such as the Gloria, The Creed, the Our Father. We can also present our needs and concerns in the Prayers of the Faithful. But it is in listening to the readings from the Scriptures that we hear God Himself speaking to us.

The Letter to the Hebrews reminds us that “the Word of God is something alive and active” (Hebrews 4:12) which means that even the most familiar passages of the Scriptures can speak to us in different and new ways according to the circumstances of our lives, challenging and reassuring us, day by day. It is important that we continually investigate and pray with the Scriptures so that God can be made present in all our actions, choices and decisions. The project from the Bishops’ Conference which continues throughout this year, called “The God who speaks”, will help us in our discovery of the power of God’s Word. While our reception of the Eucharist is our “nourishment for our Journey”, it is in our listening that we can best know how to direct our actions as “missionary disciples”.



Let us ask the Holy Spirit to open our hearts and minds so that we can hear what God is saying to us today. ‘Speak Lord your servant is listening’ (1 Samuel 3:9). Today’s Gospel reminds us of our vital commission to be “salt to the earth” and “light to the world”. Our attentive listening to the Word of God, in the Scriptures, will help us to be all that God wants us to be in our mission.

“For in the readings God speaks with his people, opening up to them the mystery of redemption and salvation, and nourishing their spirit; Christ himself is present in the midst of the faithful through his Word. The Homily is an integral part of the liturgy to assist the assembly to hear the voice of the Lord in his word. By their silent listening and pondering, and by their singing and acclamation, the people make God’s word their own, and they also affirm their acceptance of it by the Profession of Faith.

In the celebration of Mass **the biblical readings** with their accompanying scriptural chants may not be omitted, shortened, or, worse still, replaced by nonbiblical readings. For it is from the Word of God handed down in writing that even now ‘God is speaking to his people, and it is from the continued use of Scripture that the people of God, docile to the Holy Spirit under the light of faith, receive the power to be Christ’s living witnesses before the world.



The **Responsorial Psalm** has great liturgical and pastoral significance because it is ‘an integral part of the liturgy of the Word.’ Accordingly, the people must be continually instructed on the way to perceive the word of God speaking in the psalms and to turn these psalms into the prayer of the Church.

The **Alleluia** or, as the liturgical season requires, the verse before the gospel, is also a ‘rite or act standing by itself.’ It serves as the assembled faithful’s greeting of welcome to the Lord who is about to speak to them and as an expression of their faith through song.

The reading of the **Gospel** is the high point of the liturgy of the Word, For this the other readings, in their established sequence from the Old to the New Testament, prepare the assembly.

The purpose of the **Homily** at Mass is that the spoken word of God and the liturgy of the eucharist may together become ‘a proclamation of God’s wonderful works in the history of salvation, the mystery of Christ.’ Through the readings and homily Christ’s paschal mystery is proclaimed; through the sacrifice of the Mass it becomes present. Moreover Christ himself is also always present and active in the preaching of his Church.

The **Creed** is our response to the Word we have heard; similarly the **Prayer of the Faithful** or General Intercessions flow from the Word of God proclaimed.

The liturgy of the Word must be celebrated in a way that fosters meditation; clearly, any sort of haste that hinders reflectiveness must be avoided. The dialogue between God and his people taking place through the Holy Spirit demands short intervals of silence, suited to the assembly, as an opportunity to take the word of God to heart and to prepare a response to it in prayer.

DISCUSSION AND REFLECTION QUESTIONS

Use these questions to guide your personal reflection, or any discussions either at Mass or in Parish groups

- ◆ How do I prepare to listen to God’s Word each Sunday?
- ◆ Do I ever look at the Scripture readings in the week before Mass?
- ◆ What aids help us listen attentively? Are ‘missalettes’ a distraction?
- ◆ Is there a real atmosphere of listening in the Liturgy of the Word?
- ◆ How effective is the Homily in “nurturing Christian life”?
- ◆ Is the Creed a powerful proclamation of faith or just words to be recited?

Practical Questions

- ◆ Do we have enough readers to give variety in voices?
- ◆ Would introductions to the readings help our understanding?
- ◆ Do we have cantors to sing the Psalm? If not, how can we make the Psalm a reflective prayer?
- ◆ Are our microphones and amplification system effective? Is there a working loop system?
- ◆ How could our celebration of the Liturgy of the Word give us a better awareness of the presence of Jesus?
- ◆ Who writes the intercessions? Are they prayerful and universal?

TRAINING SESSIONS: The Diocese is offering training for Musicians, Altar Servers, Eucharistic Ministers, Children’s Liturgy and Clergy taking place in 2020.

For information about upcoming Formation and Training events and for resources on the Liturgy please visit www.dioceseofsalford.org.uk/parishes