

## Understanding the Mass: The Gospel

The proclamation of the Gospel is the high point within the Liturgy of the Word. As we have learned; the Gospel message of Jesus comes to us from the actual witnesses to Jesus' words and deeds that he proclaimed and performed when He was with his disciples. In their *Dogmatic Constitution on Divine Revelation; Dei Verbum*, The council fathers write,

*It is common knowledge that among all the Scriptures, even those of the New Testament, the Gospels have a special preeminence, and rightly so, for they are the principal witness for the life and teaching of the incarnate Word, our Savior. The Church has always and everywhere held and*

*Gospels are of apostolic preached in fulfillment afterwards they*



*continues to hold that the four origin. For what the Apostles of the commission of Christ, themselves and apostolic men, under the inspiration of the divine Spirit, handed on to us in writing: the foundation of faith, namely, the fourfold Gospel, according to Matthew, Mark, Luke, and John.*<sup>1</sup>

Therefore, much emphasis is placed on the proclamation of the Gospel. First, the acclamation is proclaimed in song. Then, as the General Instruction of the Roman Missal states,

*During the singing of the Alleluia or other chant, if incense is being used, the priest puts some into the thurible and blesses it. Then, with hands joined, he bows profoundly before the altar and quietly says the prayer **Munda cor meum (Cleanse my heart and my lips, almighty God, that I may worthily proclaim your holy Gospel)**. If the Book of the Gospels is on the altar, the priest then takes it and approaches the ambo, carrying the Book of the Gospels slightly elevated. He is preceded by the lay ministers, who may carry the thurible and the candles. Those present turn towards the ambo as a sign of special reverence for the gospel of Christ. At the ambo, the priest opens the book and, with hands joined, says, **The***

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<sup>1</sup> Dei Verbum Para 18

*Lord be with you, to which the people reply, **And with your spirit.** Then he says, **A reading from the holy Gospel,** making the Sign of the cross with his thumb on the book and on his forehead, mouth, and breast, which everyone else does as well. The people acclaim, **Glory to you, O Lord.** The priest incenses the book, if incense is being used (cf. nos. 276-277). Then he proclaims the gospel and at the end pronounces the acclamation, **The Gospel of the Lord,** to which all reply, **Praise to you, Lord Jesus Christ.** The priest kisses the book, saying quietly the formula *Per evangelica dicta* (**Through the words of the Gospel may our sins be wiped away**).*

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When there is a Deacon assisting the Priest or Bishop the General instruction of the Roman Missal reads;

*During the singing of the Alleluia or other chant, if incense is being used, the Deacon ministers to the priest as he puts incense into the thurible. Then, bowing profoundly before the priest, he asks for the blessing, saying in a low voice, **your blessing, Father.** The priest blesses him, saying, **May the Lord be in your heart.**(**May the Lord be in your heart, and on your lips that you may proclaim the Gospel worthily and well, in the name of the Father, and the Son, + and the Holy Spirit**) The Deacon signs himself with the Sign of the cross and replies,*

*Amen. Having taken up the Book of on it and proceeds book slightly thurifer carrying a*



*ministers with lighted candles. At the ambo the Deacon greets the people, with hands joined, saying, **The Lord be with you.** After this, at the words a reading from the holy Gospel, he signs with his thumb the book and then himself on his forehead, mouth, and breast. He incenses the book and proclaims the gospel*

*bowed to the altar, he then the Gospels which was placed to the ambo, carrying the elevated. He is preceded by a smoking thurible and by*

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<sup>2</sup> GIRM 132-134

reading. When this is done, he acclaims, ***The Gospel of the Lord***, and all reply, ***Praise to you, Lord Jesus Christ***.

He then venerates the book with a kiss, saying quietly the formula *Per evangelica dicta* (***Through the words of the Gospel may our sins be wiped away***), and returns to the priest's side. When the Deacon is assisting the bishop, he carries the book to him to be kissed, or else kisses it himself, saying quietly the formula *Per evangelica dicta* (***Through the words of the Gospel may our sins be wiped away***). In more solemn celebrations, if appropriate, the bishop may impart a blessing to the people with the Book of the Gospels. Lastly, the Deacon may carry the Book of the Gospels to the credence table or to another suitable and dignified place.<sup>3</sup>

Hence, there is much liturgical significance placed on the presentation, proclamation, and placing of the Gospel within the Liturgy. Remember, the *Constitution on the Sacred Liturgy; Sacrosanctum Concilium* states, that Christ “*is present in His word, since it is He Himself who speaks when the holy scriptures are read in the Church.*”<sup>4</sup>

In his book, “A Biblical Walk through the Mass; Understanding What We Say and Do in the Liturgy,” Edward Sri explains the Gospel narrative this way. He writes, “*These Gospel accounts are not simply stories from the past, a distant record of memories about Jesus. Since*

*gospels consist of God’s proclamation of the Gospel, to us in a profound way.*”<sup>5</sup>



*Scripture is inspired by God, the own words about Christ’s life...the therefore, makes Jesus’ life present*

In his book, “What Happens at Mass,” Fr. Jeremy Driscoll O.S.B believes that the Gospels central theme is the Paschal Mystery of Christ. He writes, “*The Gospel is always about the Death and Resurrection of Jesus. Whatever else it tells has the purpose of placing the mystery of his Passion in its fuller context.*”<sup>6</sup> Moreover, Fr. Driscoll agrees with Dr. Edward Sri and the Church that

<sup>3</sup> GIRM Par. 175

<sup>4</sup> Sacrosanctum Concilium Par. 7

<sup>5</sup> A Biblical Walk through the Mass; Understanding What We Say And Do In The Liturgy, Sri Edward, Ascension Press 2011 Pg. 67

<sup>6</sup> What Happens at Mass, Driscoll, Jeremy LTP 2011, Pg. 46

the Gospel is apostolic and does not remain an event that is trapped in the past. Rather, Fr. Driscoll insists that the Gospel event travels “*from the past to our present. What Jesus once said and did becomes present in our midst as the Gospel is read....The event of Christ becomes the event of this particular community here and now. Christ comes and is received as an actual communication of salvation to the particular assembly that here and now hears this Word. And thus the Word addresses us in the concrete circumstances in which we find ourselves. It says something about our moment in history, the moment in our particular lives. It is a saving word for us, full of power, and new because of this particular community hearing this Gospel event in these circumstances has never existed before.*”<sup>7</sup> Ultimately, it is up to the believer to engage in the reality of the Gospel message being made present in the proclamation of the Gospel. In his book “Introduction to Christianity, Joseph Cardinal Ratzinger (Pope Benedict XVI), stresses that faith “means opting for the view that what cannot be seen is more real than what can be seen.”<sup>8</sup> Hence, there is a proper disposition of the heart needed when hearing the Gospel. The openness of heart will lead to a transformation of the heart, which will move the believer to experience the presence of God in His Word. The community of believers has been granted the ultimate gift of access to and union with God though the proclamation of the Gospel in the context of the Mass. True Disciples of Jesus appreciate this gift with all their hearts.




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<sup>7</sup> Ibid Pg. 49

<sup>8</sup> Introduction to Christianity, Ratzinger, Ignatius, 2004, PG 74



## Photo Sources

### Pope Francis with Gospel Pg. 1

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### Procession Pg. 2

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### Pieta Pg. 3

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