



## THE MASS

### I. INTRODUCTORY RITES

- Entrance
- Veneration of the Altar
- Greeting
- Penitential Rite
- "Lord, Have Mercy"
- "Glory to God in the Highest"
- Opening Prayer

### II. THE LITURGY OF THE WORD

Scripture Readings

#### HOMILY<

- Profession of Faith
- Prayers of the Faithful

### III. THE LITURGY OF THE EUCHARIST

- Preparation of the Gifts
- Prayer Over the Gifts
- Eucharistic Prayer
  1. Preface
  2. Acclamation Sanctus
  3. Epiclesis
  4. Consecration
  5. The Mystery of Faith
  6. Anamnesis
  7. Offering
  8. Intercessions
  9. Final Doxology & Amen

Communion Rite

1. Lord's Prayer
2. Rite of Peace
3. Breaking of Bread
4. Communion
5. Prayer After Communion

### IV. CONCLUDING RITES

- Announcements
- Blessing
- Dismissal
- Veneration of the Altar
- Personal Thanksgiving

## The Homily

In the synagogue, the Bible readings were always followed by an explanation of the sacred text. Our Lord took advantage of such instances to announce the kingdom of God (see Mk 1:21 and Lk 4:16). This custom was observed also in the primitive Church. The bishop himself, who normally celebrated the Mass on Sundays, spoke to the congregation. This was one of his main duties. We keep precious texts of homilies from St. John Chrysostom, St. Augustine, and even from popes like St. Leo the Great and St. Gregory the Great. They always took from the Scriptures the themes for the instruction of the faithful and made good use of scriptural passages in tackling points of dogma and morals.

Homily means "explanation" in Greek. Its purpose is to develop, explain, and teach the way of transforming into life what has been proclaimed. Accordingly, the homily is to be given by the priest or the deacon. No lay person is allowed to preside over this means of catechesis.

The homily usually dwells on some point of the readings or of another text from the Ordinary or from the Proper prayers of the Mass of the day, so that it becomes alive for us here and now. It takes into account the mystery being celebrated and the needs of the listeners. The mysteries of the faith and the guiding principles of Christian life are expounded during the course of the liturgical year.

In the first homily recorded in Scripture, Peter preaches to the crowds on the day of Pentecost and first responds to their contention that the disciples are drunk. He explains that they are not drunk, but describes their perception based on the Scriptures. He gives witness to the power of God working in their midst.

Ideally, this is what every homily does. It brings the Scriptures into the present moment. A great homily will make our "hearts burn" for Christ be enlightening us to the great need we have to be in communion with Him.

### PRAYING FOR THE PREACHER

The preacher has an awesome task. It is easy to see why the Church is so guarded in whom it allows to preach. We should always silently offer a prayer for the deacon, priest, or bishop who is preaching, asking God to send His Holy Spirit upon him so that through the homily, we will be moved to a deeper relationship with God.

Of course, a benefit that we will receive when we pray for the preacher is that we will listen with the expectation that God will answer our prayer and inspire the preacher to deliver a great homily.

If we prejudge the homilist and dismiss his ability because of the way we have perceived his abilities in the past, we ourselves will suffer.

### LISTENING TO A HOMILY

Listening to a homily is very much like listening to the Scriptures. It required our whole attention. If we really believe that God is going to speak to us, we will hang on every word the homilist speaks, expecting to receive a unique message that God intends for us.

In the early Church, certain holy men and women retired to the desert to devote themselves entirely to acts of asceticism and prayer. People, believing those souls to be close to God, would often trek out to the desert specifically to receive a "word" from the desert father or mother, and sometimes that is all they would receive. Listen to every homily at Mass expecting that God will speak a "word" to you. No matter how poor the presentation, or how long or how short it is, if we expect to hear a "word" from God, we will--and we will hear a great homily at every Mass!