

In preparing to hear the Gospel proclaimed, the highpoint of the Liturgy of the Word, Christ's faithful people trace the sign of the Cross on their forehead, lips and heart.

The three-fold focus of that preparation is also a useful summary of the preparation a reader should make during the week before proclaiming the word.

- **Understand the reading.** Considering what the writer is trying to say; what it means to me and my community; how it relates to the other readings and prayers at Mass; considering what God is saying in this word today.
- **Practising the proclamation of the reading.** Speaking the words out loud, to see what challenges the work of proclaiming has in store; considering how to speak it so as to give fresh and authentic voice to God's living word.
- **Spending time in prayer.** Expressing one's love for God, and learning to trust in God's love for us. Praying for the community one is called to serve, that together, and through God's word, all might come to live in unity with God and with each other?

*For as the rain and the snow
come down from heaven,
and do not return there
until they have watered the earth,
making it bring forth and sprout,
giving seed to the sower and bread to the eater,
so shall my word be
that goes out from my mouth;
it shall not return to me empty,
but it shall accomplish that which I purpose,
and succeed in the thing for which I sent it.*

Isaiah 55:10-11

Lord,
be on my lips and in my heart,
that I may worthily proclaim
your holy word.

Lord Jesus Christ,
most merciful redeemer,
friend and brother,
may we know you more clearly,
love you more dearly,
and follow you more nearly;
for your own sake.
Amen.

P. 1 Jerusalem Bible, edited.
P 6 NRSV

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Giving thanks and praise

Readers and their ministry at Mass

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FROM LITURGY
OFFICE

The Lord has given me
a disciple's tongue.
He provides me with speech
so that I may know
how to reply to the wearied.
Each morning
he wakes me to hear,
to listen like a disciple.

ISAIAH 50.4-5

A revised edition of the Roman Missal

A 3rd edition of the Roman Missal was published by the Holy See in Latin in 2002. An English translation is presently in preparation.

The preparation of the translation is being carried out by ICEL, a commission of English-speaking Bishops' Conferences.

It is unlikely that the complete translation will be ready to be considered by the Bishops of England and Wales until at least 2005. When the Bishops have completed their careful consideration of the translation and made any amendments that they consider necessary, the translation, as is always the case with liturgical texts, will then be referred to the Holy See for confirmation.

In the meantime the Conference has approved an English translation of the *General Instruction of the Roman Missal*, and to assist in the implementation of its teaching, prepared a publication of its own – *Celebrating the Mass*, which it hoped will be accessible to all.

What the Church says about...

The liturgy of the word

In the readings... God is speaking to his people, opening up to them the mystery of redemption and salvation, and nourishing their spirit; and Christ himself is present in the midst of the faithful through his word. By their silence and singing the people make God's word their own... Finally, having been nourished by this word, they pour out their petitions in the Prayer of the Faithful... for the needs of the entire Church and for the salvation of the whole world.

Silence

The liturgy of the word must be celebrated in such a way as to promote meditation. For this reason, any sort of haste that hinders recollection must be clearly avoided. During the liturgy of the word, it is also appropriate to include brief periods of silence, accommodated to the assembly gathered together, in which, by the encouragement of the Holy Spirit, the word of God may be grasped by the heart and a response may be prepared through prayer. Such periods of silence may appropriately be observed for example, before the liturgy of the word itself begins, after the first and second reading and after the homily.

General Instruction of the Roman Missal GIRM 55–56

And about...

The ministry of proclaiming the word

In proclaiming the word of God, readers exercise their responsibility in mediating the presence of Christ. God speaks to the assembly through them, and the impact of God's message will depend significantly on their conviction, their preparation, and their delivery

Celebrating the Mass 41

Lay people may be commissioned to proclaim the readings from Sacred Scripture. They should be truly qualified and carefully prepared to perform this role, so that the faithful will develop in their hearts a warm and lively love for Sacred Scripture by listening to the readings from the sacred texts.

(Readers)... proclaim the readings from Sacred Scripture, with the exception of the Gospel. They may also announce the intentions for the Prayer of the Faithful (general intercessions) and, in the absence of the psalmist, proclaim the psalm between the readings.

The psalmist is to sing the psalm or other biblical canticle that comes between the readings. To fulfil this role correctly, it is necessary that the psalmist have the talent for singing and an ability for correct pronunciation and diction.

GIRM 99, 101, 102