

New and Corrected Translation of the Mass – Part 9

The Liturgy of the Word

The first part of the Mass (after the Introductory rites) is the Liturgy of the Word. The reader introduces the reading with ‘A reading from the prophet/book/letter, etc.’ Do not say, ‘The first/second reading is’. There is no need for that. The reading ends with ‘The word of the Lord’. And we respond:

Thanks be to God.

Romans 7.25; 2 Corinthians 9.15

In between the first two readings, the responsorial psalm should (ideally) be sung. The reader/cantor should not introduce the psalm with words like, ‘The responsorial psalm. Your response is...’ but simply begin by singing or declaiming the response, and permitting the congregation to repeat it. Here we need concentration from the people, and clear enunciation from the cantor for us to grasp what the actual response is, to be able to repeat it prayerfully after each stanza of the psalm, without prompting and gesticulation.

At the *Alleluia* we stand. *We always stand for the Gospel.* In the Divine Office, at Lauds, Vespers and Compline, we stand for the hymns taken from the Gospel: the *Benedictus*, *Magnificat* and *Nunc Dimittis*. It is one of the earliest practices of Christians to stand for the Gospel, because this is the only genuine good news ever to come into the world.

At Holy Mass, as the deacon greets us, we turn and orient ourselves physically (not just swivelling the head, but turning the whole body as well) to wherever the Gospel is proclaimed from. On Candlemas (Feb 2) and Palm Sunday, for example, the Gospel is proclaimed from different parts of the church. We turn and face in that direction, wherever it is, for example, the pulpit in the body of the church. After the deacon says, ‘A reading from the Holy Gospel according to...’ we say:

Glory to you, O Lord.

Isaiah 24.15; 42.12

As we say this, with the thumb of our right hand, we trace three small crosses: on our forehead, over our lips, and on our chest. The symbolism is explained by the pious prayer people say as they make this gesture: ‘May the Holy Gospel be in my mind, on my lips, and in my heart’ (cf. *Philippians 4.7; Hebrews 10.16; Deuteronomy 30.14; Romans 10.8-10; Psalm 119.11; Ezekiel 3.10; Luke 2.19*). At the end of the Gospel, we respond:

Praise to you, Lord Jesus Christ.

Rev 4.11; 5.12

Before the Gospel we give *glory* to God, anticipating His wonders; after the Gospel, we give Him *praise*, because we have received His grace. It is a Dominican custom to make the Sign of the Cross (a big one: forehead, chest, right shoulder, left shoulder) to bless ourselves at the end of the Gospel, when we say the response given above.