



# **The Liturgy of the Word**

# History and Theology of the Eucharist

**Session**

**4**

**Younis Francis**

**The  
Liturgy  
of  
the Word**



**First  
Reading**



**Responsorial  
Psalm**



**Second  
Reading**



**Gospel  
Acclamation**



**Gospel  
Reading**

# Liturgy of the Word

- ▶ The Liturgy of the Word is based on Jewish worship in the synagogue that included readings from the Hebrew Scriptures, including the psalms, along with communal prayers, hymns and reflections (Sermon).
- ▶ To these readings and songs early Christians added writings that would later constitute the New Testament, especially the Gospels.
- ▶ In the beginning, Jewish Christians would attend this form of the synagogue service on Saturday and then gather together on Sunday for the “breaking of the bread,” or Eucharist.
- ▶ When the disciples of Jesus were expelled from the synagogue, they simply combined these two services into one liturgical celebration.

# The Liturgy of the Word

- ▶ In the Liturgy of the Word we journey through the story of ancient Israel to the birth of the Church, which is the new Israel.
- ▶ The Lectionary containing the readings consists of a three-year cycle (A, B and C) for Sundays and solemnities.
- ▶ two-year cycle (1 and 2) for weekdays.

# The First Reading - OT

- ▶ The first reading is usually taken from the Old Testament.
- ▶ There is often a connection between the 1<sup>st</sup> reading and the Gospel, in which the Old Testament is brought to fulfilment.

# The Responsorial Psalm

- ▶ Next comes a reading from the Psalms.
- ▶ The Psalms were sung antiphonally, with a cantor singing a series of lines and the congregation responding with a repeated line.
- ▶ The is usually thematically linked to the First Reading.

# New Testament Reading

- ▶ Usually from Acts, Epistles or Revelation

# Gospel

- ▶ Gospel reminds us of the presence of Christ. It has been a historical custom to stand in attentive reverence for the Gospel reading.
- ▶ The priest again greet the congregation with “The Lord be with you.” He then introduces the Gospel reading while marking a small cross on his forehead, lips and heart while praying silently that God cleans his mind and his heart so that his lips may worthily proclaim the Gospel.
- ▶ In many places, the congregation performs this ritual action along with the priest. The Gospel reading concludes with the ritual formula “The Gospel of the Lord” and we respond, “Praise to you, Lord Jesus Christ,” - proclaiming our faith in the presence of Christ in the word.

# Gospel Reading

- ▶ By the reading of the Gospel Christ is really and truly present to his people.
- ▶ This encounter with Christ in his Scriptures has, since the days of the apostles, occupied a central place in the liturgy –
- ▶ the Gospel often echoes themes from the earlier readings, demonstrating the Church's ancient understanding that the NT & OT are only fully understood in light of each other.

# The Homily

- ▶ Homily - Greek word for - meaning "dialogue", "conversation".
- ▶ Sermon Latin word for – a public religious discourse/discussion
- ▶ The practice of following the reading of Scriptures with a “homily” wasn’t something new for the Christians.
- ▶ It is an ancient Jewish custom that readings from Scripture in the synagogue were followed by explanation and exhortation.
- ▶ This custom was followed by the early Church and has continued throughout the history of the Church.

# Homily/Sermon

- ▶ It is the moment when God speaks to us through his Word.
- ▶ The interpretation should be:
- ▶ Rooted in the Biblical and liturgical texts
- ▶ It should be theological, moral or catechetical for application to our Christian life.
- ▶ A good homily is one that makes you reflect from within.
- ▶ The Church regards the homily/Sermon as an integral part of the Mass.
- ▶ The role of the homilist is not simply intellectual, but pastoral and spiritual, enabling the assembly to concretely live the word of God that has just been proclaimed.

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# The Creed

- ▶ The Creed is a summation of Christian belief.
- ▶ Each word is weighted with meaning and was the subject of much theological wrestling in the first three centuries after Christ.
- ▶ The most commonly recited Creed today is the Nicene Creed (Nicaea 325 & Constantinople (381)).
- ▶ When we proclaim the Creed, we do so as a testimony to our personal faith, as well as to the unity of the Faith across space and time.

# The Creed

- ▶ The creed is more than a list of things which we believe.
- ▶ It is a statement of our faith in the word we have heard proclaimed in the Scripture and the Sermon/homily.
- ▶ The Apostles Creed
- ▶ The Nicene Creed
- ▶ The Athanasian Creed

# The Apostles' Creed

**I believe in God, the Father almighty, creator of heaven and earth.**

**I believe in Jesus Christ, his only Son, our Lord,  
who was conceived by the Holy Spirit, born of the Virgin Mary,  
suffered under Pontius Pilate,  
was crucified, died, and was buried; he descended to the dead.  
On the third day he rose again; he ascended into heaven,  
he is seated at the right hand of the Father, and he will come to judge the living and the dead.**

**I believe in the Holy Spirit,  
the holy catholic Church,  
the communion of saints,  
the forgiveness of sins,  
the resurrection of the body,  
and the life everlasting. Amen.**

# The Nicene Creed

- ▶ The Nicene Creed was adopted to resolve the Arian controversy/heresy
- ▶ Emperor Constantine called the Council at Nicaea to resolve the dispute in the church which resulted from the widespread adoption of Arius' teachings, which threatened to destabilize the entire empire.

# Arianism: How *divine* was Jesus?

- ▶ The debate revolved around one *iota* (i): *homoousia* vs. *homoiousia*.
- ▶ They roughly translate from the Greek: “of the *same* stuff” vs. “of *like* stuff.”
- ▶ Arius said that there once was when the Son was not. So, before creation, God the Father created God the Son because before then “the Son was not” yet in existence.
- ▶ In other words, Arius denied the full divinity of Jesus.

# Docetism/How *human* was Jesus?

- ▶ Docetists abhorred the human body: lust, bloodshed, gluttony all originate in the human body. So, in order to protect divinity from such vile filth they compromised Jesus' humanity by saying it only "appeared" (*doce*) that he was human.
- ▶ Docetists claimed Jesus was really God and only seemed to be human.

# The Nicene Creed

- ▶ The original Nicene Creed was first adopted at the 1<sup>st</sup> Council of Nicaea in 325. It was amended at the First Council of Constantinople in 381.
- ▶ The amended form is also referred to as the Nicene Creed, or the Niceno-Constantinopolitan Creed.
- ▶ The Nicene Creed is the defining statement of belief of mainstream Christianity.

# Nicene Creed

**We believe in one God, the Father, the Almighty, maker of heaven and earth, of all that is, seen and unseen.**

**We believe in one Lord, Jesus Christ, the only Son of God, eternally begotten of the Father, God from God, Light from Light, true God from true God, begotten, not made, of one Being with the Father; through him all things were made.**

**For us and for our salvation he came down from heaven, was incarnate from the Holy Spirit and the Virgin Mary and was made man. For our sake he was crucified under Pontius Pilate; he suffered death and was buried. On the third day he rose again in accordance with the Scriptures; he ascended into heaven and is seated at the right hand of the Father. He will come again in glory to judge the living and the dead, and his kingdom will have no end.**

**We believe in the Holy Spirit, the Lord, the giver of life, who proceeds from the Father and the Son, who with the Father and the Son is worshipped and glorified, who has spoken through the prophets.**

**We believe in one holy catholic and apostolic Church.**

**We acknowledge one baptism for the forgiveness of sins.**

**We look for the resurrection of the dead, and the life of the world to come. Amen.**

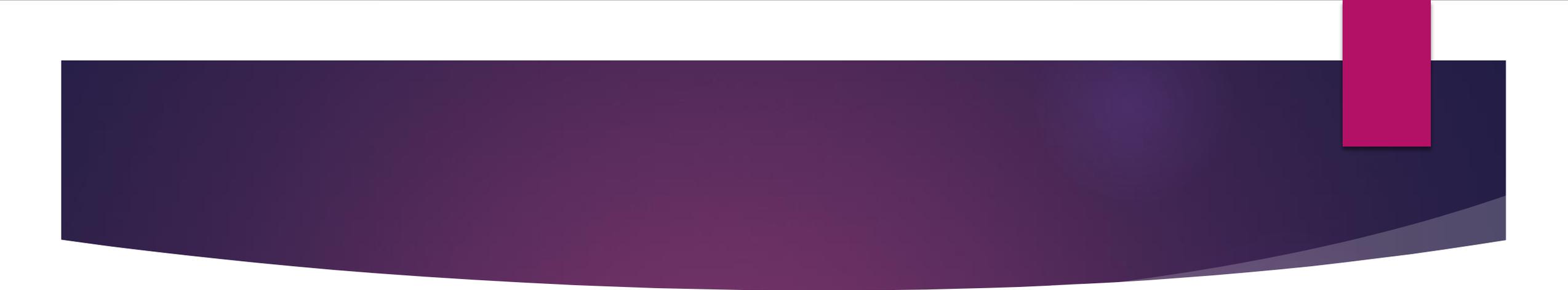
# Nicene Creed

- ▶ St. Thomas Aquinas stated that:
- ▶ the phrase *for us men, and for our salvation* was to refute the error of Origen, "who alleged that by the power of Christ's Passion even the devils were to be set free."
- ▶ the phrases stating Jesus was made *incarnate by the Holy Spirit* was to refute the Manicheans "so that we may believe that He assumed true flesh and not a phantastic body,"
- ▶ and *He came down from Heaven* was to refute the error of Photius, "who asserted that Christ was no more than a man."
- ▶ the phrase *and He was made man* was to "exclude the error of Nestorius, who said the Son of God ... would be said to dwell in man [rather] than to be man."

- ▶ At Constantinople, the council added to the Creed that the Spirit is “the Lord and giver of life, **who proceeds from the Father.**” You may notice that this differs from what the Creed states today: **that the Spirit proceeds from the Father “and the Son.”**
- ▶ **How did this addition come about?**
- ▶ The Greek fathers, such as St. Athanasius and the Cappadocian fathers (St. Basil the Great, St. Gregory Nazianzus, and St. Gregory of Nyssa), preferred to say **that the Spirit proceeds from the Father through the Son.**
- ▶ The Latin fathers (Tertullian and St. Augustine) tended to say **that the Spirit proceeded from the Father and the Son** (in Latin, *filioque*).
- ▶ In the West, the *filioque* was added to the Creed between the 8th and 11th centuries.
- ▶ The Eastern Churches were furious – they said that the Creed should not be changed without the approval of another ecumenical council.
- ▶ The issue remains a point of disagreement between the East and West.

# Intercessions

- ▶ The Liturgy of the Word (our “storytelling” part of the Mass) comes to an end with the intercessions.
- ▶ In obedience to St. Paul’s request in 1 Timothy 2:1-3, the Church offers “supplications, prayers, petitions, and thanksgiving for everyone,”
- ▶ Beginning with petitions for the needs of the Church, then public authorities and those oppressed by any need, and finally the local community.

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- ▶ *The prayers usually include these concerns and may follow this sequence:*
  - ▶ *The Church of Christ*
  - ▶ *Creation, human society, the Sovereign and those in authority*
  - ▶ *The local community*
  - ▶ *Those who suffer*
  - ▶ *The communion of saints*

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