



SUNDAY REFLECTION

There is a tendency to think of the readings at Mass as a kind of necessary evil. The readings at today's Mass, however, invite us to deepen our appreciation of a vital part of our worship. Firstly, they make us aware of how long and venerable a tradition we are part of when we listen to the word of God. The First Reading describes a Liturgy of the Word in Jerusalem some five centuries before Christ. The reading was from the first five books of the Bible – books which regularly feature in our Sunday readings. In the Gospel we hear of a Liturgy of the Word in Nazareth, where Christ Himself was both reader and preacher. He read a passage of Isaiah, which might have been read five centuries previously, and which likewise, we still read at Mass today the continuity is all this is amazing. We should be very proud to belong to such an extraordinary tradition.

We should also remember that this is very much our tradition. The Bible is the definitive record of who we are as Christians. In the First Reading we saw the Jews sweeping when they heard the word of God after many years in exile. They had lost sight of their history and traditions, and being reminded of them cut them to the quick. We too can easily drift away from a solid Christian identity. Listening regularly to God's word will keep us right.

But why the Old Testament? Is it not sufficient for Christians to hear the Gospels? This objection dissolves rapidly when we see that in today's Gospel it is a passage from the Old Testament which Jesus reads. Furthermore, He defines Himself in the terms of that reading.

Jesus is the fulfilment of the prophecies: the New Testament is the fulfilment of the Old. It is only by hearing the message of the Old Testament that we come to appreciate its fulfilment in the New, and to value the New Testament for what it really is.

But are the readings at Mass not hopelessly obscure? It is true that the readings generally need an explanation, and that should be the purpose of the homily. We saw that even in Ezra's time it was necessary to explain what had been read, so we shouldn't be surprised that twenty-five centuries later we might need some direction. The Scriptures are the record of God's dealing with His people over a very long time, and in very varied circumstances. They are complicated, but their complexity is true to the nature of human existence. People are not easily understood. We must give a lot of time, and effort, and patience, and indeed love, if we are to enter into the life of another person. The Scriptures offer us a unique encounter with the Lord. They are worth any trouble.

A final objection: Why this public reading, and preaching, in church? Now that people can read, and texts and commentaries are so freely available, is the tradition of reading aloud not obsolete? By no means. Words can indeed be written down, but their natural element is the living voice. In print they are imprisoned, and they long to be set free in speech. Jesus Himself never wrote anything down. He spoke and people listened. There was always human contact with His audience. The liturgy guarantees that we too will have this experience. His voice is alive, and has power to touch lives, through the poor voices we lend Him as ministers of His word.

It is vital that we listen. When Ezra read from the Torah from morning to noon, 'all the people listened attentively'. When Jesus sat down to preach, 'all eyes in the synagogue were fixed on Him'. We must make every effort to pay attention during the Liturgy of the Word. Readers must do their best to read clearly, and with understanding; and preachers should remember that the model sermon, preached by Jesus at Nazareth, consisted of only one line!

STEWARDSHIP: The U.S. bishops' pastoral on stewardship reinforces today's reading from 1 Corinthians: "Because its individual members do collectively make up the Body of Christ, that body's health and well-being are the responsibility of the members – the personal responsibility of each one of us. We all are stewards of the Church."

READINGS FOURTH SUNDAY

30 JAN '22

Jer. 1:4-5, 17-19: Jeremiah is called directly by God to be a prophet. Although this vocation will cause him much distress, God promises to stand by him as his helper.

1 Cor. 12:31-13:13: To the Corinthians, who have shown themselves competitive about the gifts of God, Paul insists that self-sacrificing love is the greatest gift of all.

Lk. 4:21-30: When Jesus points to lessons from Jewish history that the benefits of salvation will be offered to non-Jewish people, He is rejected by His Nazareth neighbors.



LUKE THE EVANGELIST SYMBOL A WINGED OX

As stated last week, we are in the Cycle C readings on the weekends of this liturgical year which means that we will be reading primarily from the Gospel of St. Luke. In Christian art each of the evangelists has a particular symbol and St Luke's is an ox (or a calf). This symbolism has its origins in two biblical texts. In Ezekiel 1:4-11 the prophet has a vision of four living creatures which are in human form, but with wings. Their faces have four aspects, a man on the front, a lion on the right, an ox on the left, and an eagle on the back. This symbolism appears also in the Book of Revelation where four winged creatures surround Christ on his throne (Revelation 4:6-8). The first creature is like a lion. The second is like an ox. The third has the face of a man. The fourth is like a flying eagle. St Irenaeus (130 -202 AD) interpreted these texts as representing the individual evangelists. St Matthew was represented by a man, St Mark by an eagle, St Luke by an ox and St John by a lion. Later St Jerome (c.347 -420 AD) assigned the ox to St Luke and the man to St Matthew, but he differed from St Irenaeus in giving the lion to St Mark and the eagle to St John. It is St Jerome's symbolic scheme which has prevailed in later manuscripts and in Western Art. The Book of Durrow is unusual in that it follows the earlier symbolic scheme of St Irenaeus and not that of St Jerome.

The choice of the ox for Luke is thought to relate to the sacrifices offered in the Temple. St Luke's Gospel begins and ends in the Temple. Only St Luke has the child Jesus presented in the Temple and later found there among the doctors. It may be that the symbolism of the ox draws on the link between the Temple sacrifices, Jesus' once and for all sacrifice on the

cross and the presence of Jesus in the Temple in such Lucan scenes. The page shown above opens the Gospel of Luke in the Book of Durrow. It is almost as if the animal is moving to the right where the gospel text will begin. Although very simple and naturalistic, this ox is given a whole page, which also has a highly decorated border, so that we are left in no doubt about its importance. Is this St Luke shown in symbolic form and about to begin telling his story? The pattern of red dots can be found in a very similar ox in Echternach Gospels (Lindisfarne (?) c.690). It is thought that both may draw on Greek and Roman metal work which used stippling to suggest fur. What makes the Book of Durrow so precious is not so much the quality of the artistic work, but the fact that it is the oldest such manuscript to have survived. The symbols of the Evangelists and in particular this one of St Luke, remind us of how in each generation the word of God is embraced and treasured in all its richness and color.

MASS Cont.

The Creed

Every Sunday at Mass, we stand as a congregation after the homily and recite the words of the Creed. "I believe in one God, the Father almighty..."

What exactly is the Creed? Where did it come from? What are we saying when we recite it? The truth is, the Creed is a huge topic, and many lines in the Creed were the product of tremendous debate and contention. You could take a whole graduate-level class on the contents of the Creed!

What the Creed is NOT.

First things first, let's dispel some misguided ideas about the Creed. It is not a single, solitary summary of the entirety of the Catholic faith. In fact, it's not even single. We use two Creeds regularly in the Catholic Church: the Apostle's Creed and the Nicene Creed. These two Creeds aren't contradictory, but they include different wording, and the Nicene Creed has more content.

Even the longer of the two, the Nicene Creed, doesn't include a complete summary of the Catholic faith. For example, the Eucharist is never mentioned. And while the stanza on Jesus talks about His birth and Passion, it gives no mention to His teaching or miracles. What about Mary and the apostles? Barely mentioned. Yet those are all things that "We believe." So, we can't say that the Creed is a complete summary of the Catholic faith.

In fact, we also can't say that the Creed is exclusively Catholic. A variety of Christian churches use the Creed: Lutherans, Anglicans, Methodists, Presbyterians, and more. When we profess belief in the "holy catholic Church" in the Creed, it's important to note that the word catholic has a lower-case c. It means "universal," not Roman Catholic. There's even disagreement over what the word "catholic"/universal means in the context of the Creed, but it does point beyond a local church to belonging to something greater.

The last point to clarify is that the Creed is not lifted out of the pages of Scripture. In the Sermon on the Mount, Jesus didn't address the crowd and say, "Those who want to follow me must believe the following things..." It's not included among the letters of Paul nor the Acts of Apostles. We did not take the lines directly from any place in Scripture. Now, that's not to say that the Creed goes against the Scriptures. It is certainly rooted in the Scriptures. But the

composition of the Creed came centuries after the life of Jesus and the writing of the Scriptures.

UP-COMING EVENTS

Presentation of the Lord Feb 2

Feast of St. Blaise Feb 4

**Blessing of candles and of throats will take place at the weekend Masses on
5-6 February**

THIRD WEEK ORDINARY TIME

22 – 30 JANUARY 2022

Saturday 22 Jan Weekday 2

8:30 a.m. Mass For USA Eucharistic Prayer II

1:30 – 4:30 p.m. Confessions

5:00 p.m. Mass Vigil Third Sunday of Ordinary Time

Proper, Gloria, Creed, Preface III, Eucharistic Prayer III

(Intention:)

Sunday 23 Jan Third Sunday of Ordinary Time

7:00 a.m. Mass Proper, Gloria, Creed, Preface III, Eucharistic Prayer II

(Intention:)

8:30 a.m. Mass Proper, Gloria, Creed, Preface III, Eucharistic Prayer III

(Intention:)

11:30 a.m. Mass Proper, Gloria, Creed, Preface III, Eucharistic Prayer III

(Intention:)

2:00 p.m. Brig Mass

Monday 24 Jan Day Off

6:00 p.m. Meeting

Tuesday 25 Jan F The Conversion of St. Paul the Apostle

8:30 a.m. Mass Proper of the Feast, Gloria, Preface of Apostles I,

Eucharistic Prayer III

(Intention: Kathleen Meyer)

7:00 p.m. Parish Council

Wednesday 26 Jan M Saints Timothy & Titus Bishops

6:30 a.m. Mass Proper of the Day, Preface of Holy Pastors, Eucharistic Prayer III

7:00 – 8:30 a.m. Confessions

8:30 a.m. Mass Proper of the Day, Preface of Holy Pastors, Eucharistic Prayer III

(Intention: Margaret Jupina RIP)

Thursday 27 Jan Weekday 3 St. Angelia Merici Virgin

8:30 a.m. Mass Proper of the 13th Sun., Preface & Eucharistic Prayer IV

(Intention: Anna P. Brudeck RIP)

5:00 – 6:30 p.m. Confessions

6:30 p.m. Mass Proper of the 13th Sun., Preface & Eucharistic Prayer IV

Friday 28 Jan M St. Thomas Aquinas Priest, Doctor of the Church
 8:30 a.m. Mass Proper of Saint, Common of Doctors, Preface of Holy Pastors,
 Eucharistic Prayer III
 5:00 – 7:00 p.m. Confessions & Adoration

Saturday 29 Jan Weekday 3 BVM
 8:30 a.m. Mass BVM Pillar of Faith #35, Preface of Pillar of Faith,
 Eucharistic Prayer II
 1:30 – 4:30 p.m. Confessions
 5:00 p.m. Vigil Mass Fourth Sunday Ordinary Time
 Proper, Gloria, Preface Sunday IV, Eucharistic Prayer III
 (Intention: Theresa Jurkovich RIP)

Sunday 30 Jan Fourth Sunday Ordinary Time
 7:00 a.m. Mass Proper, Gloria, Preface Sunday IV, Eucharistic Prayer II
 (Intention: Parish of St. Stephen, Martyr)
 8:30 a.m. Mass Proper, Gloria, Preface Sunday IV, Eucharistic Prayer III
 (Intention: Kate McDonald RIP)
 11:30 a.m. Mass Proper, Gloria, Preface Sunday IV, Eucharistic Prayer III
 (Intention: Holy Souls in Purgatory)
 2:00 p.m. Mass Brig

