

Homily. 5th Sunday in Ordinary Time. Year. C. 8/9 February 2025.

The genius of our liturgy, commonly known as 'the Mass' lies in its simplicity. It consists of 4 main parts; A gathering in as Christ's people and body and a sending out to live what were heard and received. In between these 2 bookends resides the Liturgy of the Word and the Eucharist.

Without any surprise to us, the Liturgy of the Word is about the reading of words, listening to them and praying, whereas the Liturgy of the Eucharist is about action and transformation and one great prayer of thanks to God. Both of these Liturgies take place at sacred tables; this one here, the Table of the Word and on my left, the Table of the Eucharist, differing in function but equal in their purpose and dignity.

This weekend we focus on the Word which is first of all and above all the person of Jesus Christ. Here in our Catholic Liturgy he is made manifest in the community of faith, in the presence, actions and words of the Priest as Presider, in the readings of Sacred Scripture and through the homily that follows and also then in the prayer and gift of his body and blood, his intimate presence within us in the Eucharist, our Communion with God and with each other in the Lord.

As for the Word, the scriptures, it's a fact that unless they are read, heard, explained and understood then our conversion and the renewal and deepening of our faith, the whole point of being here, doesn't happen. This is the crucial reason why our ministers of the Word, our readers as we call them, have such a key role in our celebration. I sincerely thank

them for their service to us all. The proclamation of the scriptures, climaxing in the Gospel, followed by the homily then moves us on to the Creed wherein we express our shared faith. This brings us next to the Intercessions, our communities prayers in Christ for the Church, the world, for current and topical needs and for each other.

But the mystery doesn't stop here! As I hinted earlier, what we've listened to and understood in the words and creed and prayers calls for action; first of all as it always is, God's action for us and then ours for others. This shifts our focus to that other table, our altar. There what we've heard and prayed about becomes tangible, able to be seen, touched, consumed and sacramentally taken into ourselves. We process, offer, receive and by grace become what the words proclaimed, namely Christ himself, Christ alive today in us for the salvation of the world.

Like Simon Peter, James and John, in fact like all disciples and apostles, we're far from perfect, but still we're called for God chooses the weak and sinful so that God's strength might be manifested .Our mission, like that of the apostles, is to catch people up into the net of God's truth, mercy, love and Spirit; to promote and further the Reign of God in world any way that we can by making the Word we've heard and come alive in our daily lives.

This weekend I think that the Prayer offered after Communion says all of this best; O God, who have willed that we be partakers in the one Bread and the one Chalice, grant us so to live that, made one in Christ, we may live in such a way as to joyfully bear fruit for the salvation of the world.