



But the Liturgy of the Word is not about the past.

The Church never celebrates the Eucharist without first opening the Scriptures, the revealed Word of God. On most Sundays, the readings take us through the unfolding of God's plan, from its promise in the Old Testament, through its fulfillment in the New Testament. Through the Old Testament narratives and prophetic writings, we see God's love and care for humanity as he prepares the way for the coming of Christ. The Psalms are the prayer book of the Hebrew people, and they are our prayer book as well. The Second Reading, from the New Testament, tells of the struggles of the early Church to proclaim the saving work of Jesus. And the Gospel reading is "the high point of the Liturgy of the Word," for in the Gospel Christ himself speaks, and the Church hears in the Gospel "the very voice of her Bridegroom."

But the Liturgy of the Word is not about the past. It is about the present. When the Scriptures are proclaimed in the Church, "God speaks to his people, opening up to them the mystery of redemption and salvation, and offering spiritual nourishment; and Christ himself is present through his word in the midst of the faithful." When we allow ourselves to listen, really listen, to what the Scriptures are saying to us in our own lives and to the reality we are living in, extraordinary things can happen. When we honestly reflect on our lives and the challenges we face as a society in light of the Scriptures, we open ourselves up to God's transforming power.

Archbishop Paul D. Etienne

The Work of Redemption: Eucharistic Belief and Practice in the Archdiocese of Seattle

Read the whole pastoral letter at NWCatholic.org

The Saints and the Eucharist

On Sundays there is an assembly of all who live in towns or in the country, and the memoirs of the apostles or the writings of the prophets are read for as long as time allows.

Then the reading is brought to an end, and the presider delivers an address in which he admonishes and encourages us to imitate in our own lives the beautiful lessons we have heard read.

Then we all stand up together and pray.



St. Justin Martyr
(c. 100-165)

For Reflection

What Scripture passages do I treasure most? How have they made a difference in my life?

What is my relationship with Scripture? Do I read, study, and pray with the Bible on my own?