

What Are We Doing and Why?

The Liturgy of the Word: A conversation with God

My first reflections on the scriptures proclaimed at Mass had to do with *how* the different readings are chosen and arranged from Sunday to Sunday, and during the special seasons of the Liturgical Year. Here we look at the much bigger and important matter of just *what* those readings are, and *why* we have them. The words of Scripture are nothing less than God's own word to us, and even more, the very presence of Christ. We are all familiar with the idea of the Bible as God's word to us, but the Second Vatican Council's Decree on the Sacred Liturgy states the even greater truth that Christ himself is present and speaking to us in the proclamation of the scriptures at Mass: *Christ is present in his word, since it is he himself who speaks when the holy scriptures are read in the Church.* Not just words *about* God in Christ, but Christ the very living and active Word of God speaks to us in the first person in the readings at Mass. As such, when the Scriptures are proclaimed and we listen, a real communication or conversation between God and us takes place. In this, the Word of God has all the qualities of true communication between persons, which in the Bible itself is called a *covenant dialogue*, in which God and each of us speak to one another as members of the same family. So, rather than first wondering what the readings *mean*, or what they are telling us *about* God, our first questions during the Liturgy of the Word can really be *What is God saying to me in these readings?* and *How will I respond to this word of God to me?*

Please let us know what else about our faith tradition you'd like to find out more about.

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