

On the Revised Translation of the Mass
Bulletin Insert 9
“The Liturgy of the Word”

The Liturgy of the Word is the part of the Mass where we listen to the Word of God contained in the Sacred Scriptures. The only change to this part of the Mass in the forthcoming revisions will be the response made to the greeting “the Lord be with you” before the Gospel.

The faith of the Church holds that when the Gospel is proclaimed it is Christ Himself who speaks. That is why only an ordained minister – Deacon, Priest, or Bishop – may proclaim it. This is also why we stand only for the proclamation of the Gospel and no other Readings.

“The Lord be with you” is a prayer that the Lord will be with each member in the assembly in an intimate way that enables them to enter more deeply into that part of the celebration. This greeting begins the Gospel because the priest or deacon is praying that the assembly will listen attentively and have the courage to put into action the truths and challenges contained in the Gospel call.

The assembly will reply will respond, “and with your spirit.” “Spirit” sounds strange, but it is a return-prayer that the priest or deacon who has called God’s presence down into the hearts of the people may themselves utilize the special graces God has given them by Ordination to speak the words of Christ.

The response, “and with your spirit” is controversial because it may sound as if it gives the minister some distinction that places him above everyone else. We all share in the gifts of the same Holy Spirit through the Sacraments. And yet not all of Christ’s disciples are empowered to act on behalf His people. This is the very essence of what being an ordained minister – priest, deacon, or bishop – is. Just as God used Moses in the desert, so now He uses mediators as the disciples of His Son wonder through the desert of life.