

Liturgy of the Word – (Part II)

In order to allow us to listen to the Word of God with both our minds and hearts, the Church calls for a reverent pace and periods of silence during the Liturgy of the Word so that we might have some time to reflect on what we have heard. “The Liturgy of the Word is to be celebrated in such a way as to promote meditation, and so any sort of haste that hinders recollection must be clearly avoided. During the Liturgy of the Word, it is also appropriate to include brief periods of silence, accommodated to the gathered assembly, in which, at the prompting of the Holy Spirit, the Word of God may be grasped by the heart and a response through prayer may be prepared” (GIRM #56).

Two ways in which the liturgy provides us with a prayer response to the Word of God is through the praying of the Responsorial Psalm and the Prayer of the Faithful.

The Responsorial Psalm, taken from the Old Testament scriptures, allows the assembly to respond through meditation on the Word of God. “It is preferable that the Responsorial Psalm be sung...” (GIRM #61). The singing of the psalm, engages not only our minds, but also our spirits in prayer. When we sing, “This is the day the Lord

has made, let us rejoice and be glad!” or “My soul is thirsting for you, O Lord my God” we lift up our whole being in prayer. “After the first reading comes the responsorial Psalm, which is an integral part of the Liturgy of the Word and holds great liturgical and pastoral importance, because it fosters meditation on the word of God” (GIRM #61).

Another way in which the liturgy provides us with an opportunity for a prayer response to God’s Word is through the Prayer of the Faithful. Here the community composes its own prayers for the needs of the Church, the world, the oppressed, the sick, the dying, and other needs particular to the parish community. These prayers grow out of the day’s scriptures and the needs of the community and world. When we pray, “Lord, hear our prayer,” we ask for that which will transform us and our world into people who listen to God’s Word and live it out in our daily lives.