



Saint Clare of Assisi

CATHOLIC CHURCH

THE SHAPE OF OUR LITURGY WEEK TWO: THE LITURGY OF THE WORD

The Word of God

As we see it in scripture

Genesis 1.3ff

"Then God said...and there was..."

Isaiah 55.10-11

"For as the rain and the snow come down from heaven, and do not return there until they have watered the earth making it bring forth and sprout, giving seed to the sower and bread to the eater, so shall my word be that goes out from my mouth; it shall not return to me empty, but it shall accomplish that which I purpose, and succeed in the thing for which I sent it."

John 1.1-5

"In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God. Hew was in the beginning with God. All things came into being through him, and without him not one thing came into being. What has come into being in him was life, and the life was the light of all people. The light shines in the darkness, and the darkness did not overcome it."

Hebrews 1.1-3

"Long ago God spoke to our ancestors in many and various ways by the prophets, but in these last days he has spoken to us by a Son, whom he appointed heir of all things, though whom he also created the worlds. He is the reflection of God's glory and the exact imprint of God's very being, and he sustains all things by his powerful word."

As we see it in the mass

Hahn, Scott. W. "Introducing Letter & Spirit." *Letter and Spirit*, 1 (2005): 6-10.

Hahn, Scott. W. "Worship in the Word: Toward a Liturgical Hermeneutic." *Letter and Spirit*, 1 (2005): 101-136.

...we read the Bible from the heart of the Church. That means we read the Bible as the Church hands it on—as *Scripture*, as a divine Word spoken by God to a faith community that acknowledges this Word as authoritative and normative for its life and worship. We read,

then, from within a tradition that for more than two millennia has listened to and contemplated God's Word—preaching, praying, and interpreting that Word in liturgy, doctrines, and devotions, and applying its wisdom in countless pastoral settings.

The Bible is an ecclesial and liturgical document. ...The Bible exists because the apostolic Church composed, collected, and preserved this Word, even to the shedding of blood by its martyrs. The Church continues to proffer this Word as essential in making disciples of the God revealed in its pages and for worshipping that God, revealed finally and fully by Jesus Christ (John 20:31; 1 Thess. 2:13).

The Word of God was proclaimed before it was written, heard before it was read. The site of this proclamation and hearing, since the first Easter night, has been the divine liturgy of the Church (Luke 24:13-49). The earliest Scriptures were composed to be read and interpreted in the Eucharistic assembly. And Scripture from the start has always been proclaimed and interpreted in order to anticipate a liturgical act—baptism or the Eucharist, for instance—by which the hearer of the Word is granted entry into the salvation promised in the Scripture. There would be no Bible without the liturgy, and there could be no liturgy without the Bible.

The culture of the Church that gives us the Bible is a biblical culture. The words of Scripture quite literally form the basis for the Church's confessions of faith. Its art, its music, and architecture are expressed in words and images drawn from the sacred pages. The Church's dogmas and doctrines are expressed in scriptural language and are themselves authoritative interpretations of the Scriptures. The "mysteries" of the faith, the Church's sacraments, are celebrated through biblical signs of water, oil, bread, and wine. As God addresses the Church in the human language of Scripture, in its liturgy the Church responds to his Word in prayers, songs, and vows drawn from those very same Scriptures. (Hahn 2005, 6-7)

...the most significant achievement of historical and literary scholarship [is] namely, the recovery of the liturgical sense of sacred Scripture. By this I mean the living relationship between *Scripture*, the inclusive canon of the apostolic churches, east and west, and *liturgy*, the ritual public worship of God's covenant people, especially the eucharistic and sacramental liturgies of the Church.

...The recovery of Scripture's liturgical sense is the product of two critical findings of modern biblical scholarship: First, the recognition of the final canonical shape of Scripture is essential for determining the meaning and purpose of individual passages and books of Scripture [God's creative and redemptive purpose and activity]; and secondly, the identification of the covenant as Scripture's keynote narrative theme. Together, these findings have helped us to see a unity between Scripture and liturgy that may be described as both formal and material. Their unity is *formal* in that Scripture was canonized for the sake of the liturgy, and the canon itself derived from liturgical tradition. Their unity is *material* in that the content of Scripture is heavily liturgical.

...there is general recognition that the motives for establishing the canon were largely liturgical and that liturgical use was an important factor in determining which Scriptures were to be included in the canon. Put simply, the canon was drawn up to establish which books would be read when the community gathered for worship, and the books included in the canon were those that were already being read in the Church's liturgy.

The scriptural canon, then, was enacted primarily as a "rule" for the liturgy... But textual analysis and form criticism have helped us see the profound shaping influence of liturgical use on the composition and final form of individual texts. In some cases—certain psalms, for instance—this is self-evident. And we know from internal evidence that many New Testament texts, especially the epistles and the Book of Revelation, were composed for the express purpose of being read in the eucharistic liturgy (see Rev. 1:3; 1 Tim. 4:13). But close literary analysis has also enabled us now to see that the final form of the gospels reflects their use in the eucharistic worship of the early community. Some have even argued that the gospels' final form was shaped by a kind of ongoing dialogue with the Jewish texts being read in the synagogue, especially for Israel's great feasts.

...Much of the Pentateuch is concerned with ritual and sacrificial regulations; significant portions of the wisdom, historical, and prophetic books take up questions of ritual and worship. The New Testament, too, is filled with material related to the sacramental liturgy. The Gospel of John, for instance, unfolds as a kind of "sacramentary" in the context of the Jewish lectionary calendar; the Letter to the Hebrews and the Book of Revelation contain sustained meditations on the meaning of Christian liturgy, and the letters of Paul and Peter are animated by liturgical and cultic concerns. From Genesis to Revelation, it can be argued, Scripture is, by and large, *about* liturgy—about the proper way to worship God and receive his blessings. Often it is liturgy, or the culpable elect of liturgy, that drives the biblical drama. Also, though this topic has not been well-studied, liturgy appears at the most significant junctures of the salvation history recorded in the canonical Scriptures.

Modern biblical scholarship, then, has helped us discover not only the *liturgical content* of the Bible but the *liturgical context* in which the Scriptures were first written, transmitted, and canonized. With the acknowledgment of this material and formal unity between Scripture and the liturgy, we are now in the position to take these advances in biblical scholarship to their next logical and even necessary conclusion—to begin to undertake a "liturgical reading" of the canon of Scripture. ...Insofar as the canon of Scripture was established for use in the liturgy, and inasmuch as its content is "about" liturgy, it follows that we must engage Scripture liturgically if we are to interpret these texts according to the original author's intentions and the life-situation of the believing community in which the texts were handed on. (Hahn 2005, 101-105)

The nature of the liturgy of the Word

Conversing with God

He speaks, we listen and we respond

God's word creates, acts, transforms

God tells his story, which is our story as well (we do not make up our own story)

God's speaks through

The word of scripture

The word proclaimed (homily)

We respond through

Psalm response (prayer)

Gospel acclamation

Creed

Prayer (intercession, petition)

Liturgy of the Word 27:25-40:22 (13 min)

Address from Bishop Barron to the Adoremus Eucharistic Congress and Pilgrimage in Liverpool. Saturday morning, 8 September 2018

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=DPR2u6NkZeU>

First reading (OT, sometimes Acts)

We are not Marcionite (we know Jesus as interpreted through the OT)

Responsorial psalm

We respond through the ancient prayer/song of God's people.

Response can be joyful, sorrowful, celebratory, lamenting, etc.

Second reading (Epistle)

Apostolic—a faith based on those who knew Christ directly.

Faith is concrete, not gnostic.

Gospel acclamation

Heightened solemnity, adoration, and attentiveness.

Gospel

The Word himself speaking.

Homily

The homily is meant to further explicate and apply the word of God.

The preacher also represents the members of the body of Christ—both the word spoken and our word spoken back.

Profession of faith (creed)

Creed is our great response to all we have heard.

One page summary of biblical revelation.

Our response: “Yes, I believe.”—an acceptance body and soul of all God says and does.

Universal prayer (intercessory)

Having heard the great story, we come back to God with confident request: “As you have done great things in the past, we now in the present are bold to ask...”
