

THEOLOGIA PRIMA

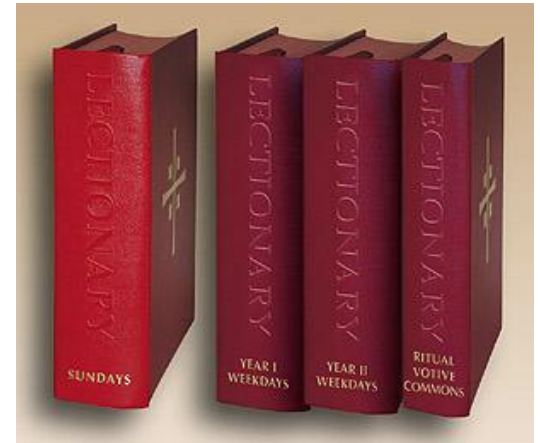
by Timothy Johnston, Director of the Office of Liturgy, Diocese of Salt Lake City

#14 THE GOOD NEWS PART II

In the last column I introduced the Liturgy of the Word. Since it is a pillar of our Sunday gathering and an encounter with the risen Lord, I thought it would be good to continue the discussion about the proclamation of Scriptures in this article.

What is the Lectionary?

A lectionary is a book that contains the Scripture readings for each day. It is not a Bible. Our current lectionary consists of a three-year Sunday cycle and a two-year weekday cycle. Before the Second Vatican Council very little Scripture was proclaimed at Eucharist. The previous lectionary had only a one-year cycle. It only included 1% of the Old Testament, almost all of which was read at the Easter Vigil.



What do you mean by three-year and two-year cycles?

Each cycle is based on the primary gospel assigned to it. Cycle A is Matthew and Cycle B is Mark. Currently, in 2010, we are using Cycle C and you will notice that the gospel proclaimed is Luke. The Gospel of John is scattered through all three cycles, often on particularly solemn days. Each of the three Evangelists emphasizes a different aspect of Jesus' teaching and revelation of the Father.

The readings for the weekday liturgies are on a two-year cycle.

Does the Psalm have to be sung?

The Psalms, attributed to King David, were written to be sung, so each parish should strive to sing the psalm each week (*GIRM* 61). The psalm can be led by either cantor or choir. The psalm should be proclaimed from the ambo, like all of the other readings. The psalm provides a bridge between the first and second a reading and provides the assembly a moment to meditate on God (*GIRM* 61).

Why does the priest or deacon process with the Lectionary?

Actually, the lectionary is never carried in procession: the Book of the Gospels is carried in the entrance procession. During the Liturgy of the Word, the deacon or priest carries the Book of the Gospels from the altar to the ambo. This procession is an ancient custom in both eastern and western Christianity. The procession is a way to show reverence and to honor God's Word, and draws attention to the central proclamation of the gospel.

Does the priest have to preach on the Scriptures?

No. The priest is encouraged to break open the word of God and connect it to the assembly's lived experience of the paschal mystery, but the homily is not primarily to teach Biblical Studies, but to enlighten us and challenge us to become more faithful disciples. The priest can choose to preach on other parts of the liturgy, like the Collect or a passage from the Eucharistic Prayer.

If you have more questions about the Liturgy of the Word, please contact my office. Next time we will explore the changes in the Profession of Faith (Creed).