

The Liturgy of the Word

After the priest has prayed the **Collect**, which means that he collects all the prayers we have prayed quietly in our hearts and sums them up in the Church's prayer to God our Father, we sit down to **listen** to the Readings of the Mass.



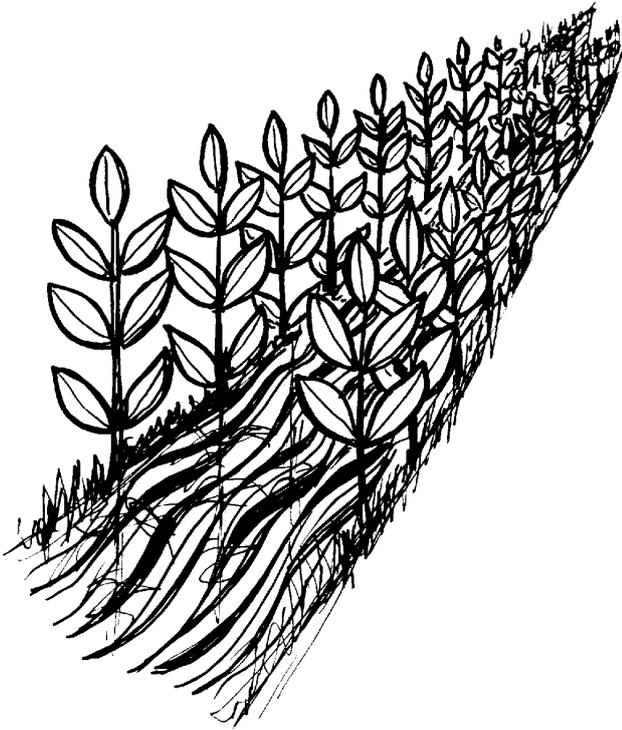
On a Sunday there are three Readings and a Psalm. That's a lot for us to hear and to have to pay attention all the time! But we believe that it is God who is speaking to us; that he is present in his Word as it is proclaimed and so we do try to take a message from the readings to help us to live out our lives in a better way, more like the way Jesus lived and wants us to try and live.

Jesus told us another parable to show us how important it is to listen to the Word of God and to take it to heart. It is called the **Parable of the Sower**.

Listen carefully to the story, as a family, while it is read and then talk about it together.

"Jesus said: Listen! Imagine a sower going out to sow seeds. As he sowed, some fell on the edge of the path and the birds of the air came and ate them up. Others fell on rocky ground, but when the seeds tried to put their little roots down among the stones they could not push their way into the ground. When the sun came out it scorched the seeds and they died. Some seeds fell among thorns, but as the seeds pushed their little roots down part of the way in, the thorns choked them and they died too. Some of the seeds fell into good, rich soil, so when they pushed their little roots into the soil they went all the way down and grew and grew until they were ripe for harvest and what a great harvest they produced! Listen anyone who has ears to hear!"





After the story, perhaps you can ask some questions like:

- *What do you think the story is about?*
- *Who could the sower be?*
- *What might the seed be?*
- *What do you think the birds could be?*
- *What could the rocky ground and stones be?*
- *Any ideas about what the thorns might be?*
- *Where is the good, rich soil?*

It is important to value the ideas your child may have. Some possible suggestions might be that the seed is the Word of God which can fall on deaf ears! The worries and concerns of life can distract us from hearing God's Word and sometimes we can lose our initial enthusiasm and turn away from God. When we try to live our life as God wants we can grow closer to God and to one another through our good deeds and acts of kindness.

Can you see the link that Jesus is making here about the Word of God with this part of the Mass for us?



When we listen to the Word of God in Church it is as though Jesus is saying to us, as he said in the story of the sower:

"Listen, anyone who has ears to hear!"

We then need to listen very carefully to try to understand, with the help of others and the priest in his homily, what God is speaking to us to help us in our daily lives.

If there is a separate Children's Liturgy of the Word in your Church, encourage your child/children to go to it, as it will help in their understanding of what Jesus is saying to them.

Gospel Acclamation

We sing or say this to greet the Good News of the Gospel

Gospel Reading

- *Remember the change to the response we make to the priest's greeting?*

'The Lord be with you' 'And with your spirit'

- *Remember the sign of the cross we made on coming into church? We now make another one, but this time we use the thumb of our right hand to trace the sign- on our forehead to show we believe God's Word;*

on our lips to show we try to speak God's Word to others;

on our hearts to show we love God's Word and try to live a good life

The reading is taken from one of the four Gospels of Matthew, Mark, Luke or John.

The Readings now end with the words: **"The Word of the Lord"** and **"The Gospel of the Lord"** to make them enthusiastic acclamations rather than statements of fact such as 'this is the Word of the Lord'.

Our responses to them have not changed, but should be filled with appreciation, praise and thanksgiving for God speaking to us in his Word.

