

# Understanding Our Liturgy Class for Monday January 31<sup>st</sup>, 2011

## General Overview:

- first reading, responsorial psalm, second reading, gospel, homily, creed, bidding prayers
  - public reading of the Scriptures rooted in Jewish practice (cf. 1 Tim 4:13)
  - See also 1 Tim 2:1ff. (“First of all, then, I urge that supplications, prayers, intercessions...”)
  - The Liturgy of the Word disposes us for and is ordered towards the Liturgy of the Eucharist.
  - the responsorial psalm as a recovery of older practice and way to involve the people
  - second reading as an attempt to get more Scripture in the Liturgy
  - The homily should be rooted in the Scriptures just heard (or in the words of the Liturgy).
  - Bidding prayers or prayers of the faithful are another recovery (of sorts).
- possibility of encouragement towards chanting the readings in the future
  - more attention on the words and less on the person (theo-centric emphasis...sort of impersonal, yes, but the trick is to be active but not to make it all about *our* activity...the Liturgy is *Christ’s* Liturgy)

## Gospel:

- We stand for the gospel because thereby we signify that we are attentive to the words of Our Savior and ready to go and do whatever he commands (cf. 1 Kings 18:15; 22:21; Lk 17:7-10; Eph 6:13-17).
- Alleluia (cf. Ps 148, 149, 150; Rev 19:4-6): Christian tradition is Septuagintal and it is Septuagintal to transliterate the Hebrew “הללויה” straight into the Greek as αλληλουϊα. The Latin scriptural and liturgical tradition appropriated this LXX spirit. Our English should reflect this (cf. DR “Alleluia” vs. KJV and RSV “Praise the Lord”)
  - cf. “Sábaoth” in the *Sanctus* (cf. James 5:4, “Lord of sabaoth”)
  - cf. 1 Cor 16:22 in DR and KJV (the Greek word ‘anathema’ becomes a technical religious word)
- Deacon asks priest for blessing
  - “Iube, domne, benedicere.” (“Your blessing, Father.”—not a literal translation)
- Priest’s personal prayer alludes to Isaiah, the “prophet of the gospel” (prophets ordered towards gospel, in contrast to Jewish Liturgy where prophets ordered towards Torah).
  - It is the priest who reads Christ’s own words because it is he who stands “*in persona Christi*”.
- The triple crossing (forehead, lips, heart)
  - “May the word of the Lord be in my mind, on my lips, and in my heart.” One variant of this prayer is, “May the Gospel guard my mind, bless my lips, and stay in my heart.”
  - The Douay Catechism says, “They sign themselves on their foreheads, to signify they are not, nor will be ashamed to profess Christ crucified: on their mouths to signify they will be ready with their mouths to confess unto salvation: and on their breast to signify that with their hearts they believe unto justice.”
  - cf. Phil 4:7; Heb 10:16; Deut 30:14; Rom 10:8-10; Ps 119:11; Ez 3:10; Lk 2:19
- The incensing and candles has to do with the presence of Christ in the written word

## Creed:

- **NTD:** “I believe...”
  - The symbol that was actually drafted at Nicaea and the one used at Constantinople feature the first person plural. But Liturgical usage in the West (and in the East) features the singular. We are translating our Liturgy, not indulging in a false primitivism or “archaeologism”.
  - St. Thomas Aquinas taught that the “I” in the Creed is the Church, the Body of Christ. The use of the first person singular thus highlights personal responsibility as well as communal identity and oneness in belief.
- “...the Father almighty, Maker of Heaven and earth...”: Contra Gnostics, Marcionites, and Manicheans, the Father of Jesus Christ is the Old Testament creator God.
- **NTD:** “...of all things visible and invisible.”
  - not talking about things that can’t *in fact* be seen but things that can’t *possibly* be seen
  - reference to Col 1:16 is made more explicit
- **NTD:** “...the Only Begotten Son...”

- The “Only” of our current translation might be an attempt to circumvent Liturgical text (*unigenitum*) and shoot straight for the scriptural text (μονογενής). But we are not creating a new rite here (cf. “his people” of the Gloria).
- Might even be a bad translation of the Greek (at least very indicative of the limited time period in which it was translated).
- **NTD:** “...born of the Father before all ages.”
  - current translation good interpretative translation but not literal
- **NTD:** “...consubstantial with the Father...”
  - When we say the Son is “consubstantial” with the Father, we mean to say that the Son and the Father are one and the same concrete thing. The Divine Nature as communicated to the Son in the eternal generation is not specifically but numerically one with that of the Father and the Son.
  - “one in Being” is not a terrible translation of *consubstantialem* but someone could argue that this rendering might be interpreted more easily in a *generic* sense which would in fact falsify our understanding of the Son’s relationship to the Father.
  - If “one in Being” was chosen because it was thought to be closer to the Greek of the original Nicene-Constantinopolitan creed, this is again an attempt to circumvent the Liturgical text (archaeologism?).
  - You might translate *consubstantialem Patri* as “of the same substance with the Father” or “of one substance with the Father” or “of identical substance with the Father”. But the meaning of these translations, no less than “consubstantial with the Father”, will be opaque to most people. These phrases are still going to need explanation and study and meditation. This phrase has to do with the central mystery of our faith, the doctrine of the Trinity. We should expect it to be mysterious.
  - It is true that the average Catholic probably won’t know what “consubstantial” means. But the average Catholic probably does not know what “one in being” means, either. Using familiar words doesn’t make the mystery of the Son’s relationship to the Father any easier to understand. If anything, it might mislead people into thinking they understand something they really don’t.
  - In the end, it is best to retain the transliteration “consubstantial” as a technical religious/theological word that has been passed down and received into our tradition. Many English translations of the creed in the past have just brought the word into English (cf. *LA* no. 56).
  - “consubstantial” is a special word that we don’t use for anything else in our experience but it describes a very special thing—Jesus’ relationship to the Father, which is not like anything in our experience.
  - If it is said, “Wait, this is supposed to be a traditional word that has come into common usage? No one has ever heard of it.” But if most Catholics are unfamiliar with this word today, it’s because we didn’t include it in the English translation of the Liturgy back in 1969. We are trying to remedy that now so that we can join most Catholics of the totality of our history, not just of our contemporary history.
- **NTD:** “...and by the Holy Spirit was incarnate of the Virgin Mary...”
  - This section of the Creed is talking about the incarnation which took place at the conception and not the birth of Christ. The Son of God did not become man when he was born but at his conception.
  - Might also emphasize Jesus’ human flesh coming specifically from Mary (cf. “water through a pipe”)
- “Do the red” (bow until “and became man”): The Incarnation is the central moment for us.
- **NTD:** “...he suffered death...”
  - “death” added in
- **NTD:** “...in accordance...”
  - slightly more accurate translation