

April 22, 2018

After the proclamation of the Gospel, we sit to listen to the homily which is presented by a priest or deacon. This is considered an important part of the Liturgy of the Word because it is here that the Word of God we have heard proclaimed to us is explained. The General Instruction of the Roman Missal tells us that the homily "...should be an explanation of some aspect of the readings from Sacred Scripture...and should take into account both the mystery being celebrated and the particular needs of the listeners" (GIRM #65).

The purpose of the homily is to break open the Word of God and apply it to our lives. In this way the Word that is proclaimed can come alive in our hearts and help us to live this Word in our daily lives. Pope Benedict explains the purpose this way: "...the homily closely relates the proclamation of the word of God to the sacramental celebration and the life of the community, so that the word of God truly becomes the church's vital nourishment and support" (Sacramentum Caritatis #46).

Pope Francis tells us: "The homily can actually be an intense and happy experience of the Spirit, a consoling encounter with God's word, a constant source of renewal and growth" (Evangelii Gaudium #135).

The homily can help us appreciate the great gift of the Word of God. Pope Francis tells us the homily should enable the Word of God to touch our hearts so that "...growing in hope from the joyful and practical exercise of the love which they have received, (they) will sense that each word of Scripture is a gift before it is a demand" (Evangelii Gaudium #142).

Pope Francis suggests that the homily should be positive pointing out what we can do to make the Word of God take root in our lives. He thinks of it as a dialogue between God and the assembly that has gathered together to listen to the Word of God. From this dialogue we can find ways to bring the message of Christ into the everyday world in which we live.

The homily is followed by a period of silence during which "...each one may choose how he or she will continue the conversation" (Evangelii Gaudium #143). Our reflection during this time of silence can then continue throughout the week as we apply the message to our lives.