

## Catechism on the Liturgy: VI, 12

The Gospel is sung facing the north. The north stands for the cold, in the attempt of the devil to freeze and dry up the godly qualities of the faithful by the coldness of infidelity. As Lucifer said of himself, "I will place my seat in the north, and I will be like the Most High." (Is. 14. 13-14) There is another reference to the north which explains this facing: "From the north shall an evil break forth upon all the inhabitants of the land. (Jer. 1.14) The deacon does not turn around to face the faithful, since Christ is the living Word, and He is right in front of the deacon. Besides, the singing or reading of the Gospel during the Mass is not just another instruction or a class. It is the worship of God.

The deacon then prays for the faithful that the Lord might be with them in the Gift of the Holy Ghost they most need, and they respond in the prayer that He might be with the deacon. The people then rise up to stand for the Gospel as Pope Anastasias explained, to show that they are willing to stand up for Christ and defend Him, and even die for Him if necessary. This is also to show the old world shaking off the dust of the tomb (those who sit in the shadow of death, as we learned about being seated for the Epistle), and are raised to life by the word of Jesus Christ. It also represents the other miracles of His ministry; the sick healed and raised up and walking, the dead brought back to life and raised, the crowd leaving all to follow Him. We are like Lazarus in the tomb to whom Christ says, "Arise." (cf. 2 Esdras 8, 2 Esdras is also called Nehemias in the Douay Rheims, for the prefiguration of the Gospel proclamation.)

At the words "A continuation..." the deacon makes the Sign of the Cross with his thumb over the text of the Gospel, and a triple Sign is then made over the forehead, lips and heart. It is over the text, or the

actual words of the Gospel, since that signifies where the blessing comes from. The reason he says "a continuation" is because in the early Church a whole book of the Gospel was read straight through in daily portions. After the celebrant considered that a sufficient amount had been read that day, he would signal the Lector to stop. Hence, the Gospel is announced in our times as "A continuation of the Holy Gospel.."

The reason for the triple Sign is: Over the forehead, that our intellect might be blessed, and that we would understand what we hear. This is also to remind us of what St. Paul said, "God forbid that I should glory save in the cross of Jesus Christ." (Gal.5.14) Then it is made over the lips, that our power of speech would be blessed, and we would give this Good News to all we meet, and that we might confess Christ, for, "...with the mouth confession is made unto salvation." (Rom. 10.10) Finally it is made over the heart, since "...with the heart we believe unto justice." (Rom. 10.10)

Then taking the thurible from the MC, the deacon incenses the Gospel three times, which is called the triple perfume of St. Mary Magdalene. The Magdalene wished to honor Christ at the house of Simon the Pharisee, at the house of Simon the Leper, and at the Holy Sepulcher, with expensive perfumed oil. Christ said of her, "Wheresoever this gospel shall be preached in the whole world, that also which she hath done shall be told in memory of her." So the priest incenses the Evangelarium three times to remember the honor done to Him by the Magdalene.

The entirety of the Gospels is not found in the Missal, only extracts. It is always an invitation to the faithful to go deeper into the Gospel (same with the Epistles), so

that they might know the context of the reading better, and learn more of the mystery.

But it takes 40 readings before one begins to understand a single parable, according to St. Augustine. So the Church selects a number of these readings, and one will have heard them 40 times by about that age, and then it's time to start over. Repetition is the mother of all learning!

When the Gospel is finished, the acolyte answers for the people, *Laus tibi, Christe!* (Praise to Thee, O Christ!), and at the same time the deacon (or priest) kisses the initial words of the Gospel over which the Sign of the Cross had been made, and says the words "By the virtue of the words of the Gospel may our sins be blotted out." Thus the reading of the Gospel may be understood as a sacramental, effecting the remission of venial sins.

The kiss at the end is done to ask pardon for all the offenses we have made against the Word, and at the same time an act of thanksgiving, which expresses the burning in our hearts when we hear the Gospel. For after Christ on the road to Emmaus opened the meaning of the scripture to His apostles they said "Was not our heart burning within us whilst he spoke in the way and opened to us the scriptures?" (Lk. 24.32)

After the Gospel is completed, the priest then places his maniple on the altar, before he goes to the pulpit to preach. I say the altar, since the altar is used as a receptacle for a bishop's vestments; he always vests from an altar and not from a vesting table, which signifies that all his authority comes from the altar. Some priests lay the maniple on the missal, which is a custom well established and therefore legitimate, but I think the better custom is to put it on the altar, since the missal is not intended to be a receptacle

for vestments.

The reason the maniple is taken off, is because it is a sign to the faithful that the Mass is to be interrupted. The maniple is used only for the Mass. For example, you may have noticed that the maniple is not used for the Asperges, since that rite is not a part of the Mass, and the priest puts on the maniple only after he has divested himself of the cope.

The basis for the sermon may be found in the Gospel according to St. Luke, 4.16-21. "And He came to Nazareth, where he was brought up: and he went into the synagogue, according to his custom, on the sabbath day: and he rose up to read. And the book of Isaias the prophet was delivered unto him. And as he unfolded the book, he found the place where it was written: The spirit of the Lord is upon me. Wherefore he hath anointed me to preach the gospel to the poor: he hath sent me to heal the contrite of heart, to preach deliverance to the captives and sight to the blind, to set at liberty them that are bruised, to preach the acceptable year of the Lord and the day of reward. And when he had folded the book, he restored it to the minister and sat down. And the eyes of all in

the synagogue were fixed on him. And he began to say to them: This day is fulfilled this scripture in your ears." Most of the faithful fix their eyes on the preacher, which is a real act of charity to him.

The priest may give a sermon, a homily or a *ferverino*. A sermon is preaching on a particular subject, a homily is an explanation of a text of scripture, and a *ferverino* a passionate encouragement to some virtue or to stir up the faithful on some point of devotion. We preach sermons mostly at OLMC, and only occasionally do we preach homilies.