

## **LET'S TALK LITURGY! – Liturgy of the Word: Overview**

*Prepared for the Liturgy Committee by Charlette Buescher (published originally in the January 2016 edition of QAC Spirit)*

Our discussion of the Eucharistic Liturgy continues this month with the 2<sup>nd</sup> movement of our symphony of prayer together: Story-telling or, officially, the Liturgy of the Word.

Having been formed as a prayerful community through the Gathering Rites, we are now prepared to hear the Word of God. As with all of the elements of a Eucharistic Liturgy, there is a structure within the Liturgy of the Word. This includes:

- First Reading
- Psalm Response
- Second Reading
- Gospel Acclamation
- Gospel
- Homily
- Silence
- Dismissal of Catechumens
- Profession of Faith
- Universal Intercessions
- Sign of Peace (at QAC)

Did you know there really is some reasoning behind the choice of Scripture passages which are read each Sunday? When Vatican II opened the door for the laity to read the Bible, those who were tasked with the reform of the Liturgy took that to heart. They gave us a rich selection of passages for our celebrations.

There is a 3 year cycle (Cycles A, B and C) for the Sunday readings which gives a broad exposure to the various books of the Bible. Generally speaking, we will hear a somewhat continuous reading from several of the Epistles (the Second Reading) throughout a particular Church Year. Likewise, the Gospel from week to week usually picks up where we left off the previous week (although not all passages are read). During Cycle A the Gospel of Matthew is featured. In Cycle B the Gospel of Mark is read. And in Cycle C we hear from the Gospel of Luke. The Gospel of John is threaded throughout all 3 cycles especially during the Easter season.

The First Reading is handled a bit differently. That reading is usually from the Old Testament and is chosen to complement the Gospel reading. So, you should detect a thematic link between the First Reading and the Gospel while the Second Reading often stands alone. The Psalm Response is a bridge between the First Reading and the Gospel. So, if you can't quite see the link between those readings, the Psalm may be able to enlighten you.

The discussion of the Liturgy of the Word will continue in the March Spirit. Until then, take time to read the Sunday readings in advance of the Liturgy. You can find them easily at [usccb.org](http://usccb.org). Look for the relationships discussed above and see if you find your experience of our prayer together to be richer!