

## **Goodbye, *Liturgy of the Word* – HELLO! Liturgy of the Eucharist!**

It is always good to pause and reflect once in a while on what we have covered so far and where we are headed from this point. After we have reflected on the beginning of each Catholic Mass with the greeting, with asking God for mercy, with glorifying Him and gathering all our prayers into one united prayer to the Father through Jesus (which we call all these parts the *Introductory Rites* of the Mass), we have just finished reflecting on the second part of the Mass in *the Liturgy of the Word*. This is not only understanding a little more about the readings from the Bible and why there is an Old Testament reading, a Psalm, a New Testament Reading, and then a Gospel Reading, but also how the Priest tries his best to bring the meaning of those most Sacred Words into our hearts and applying to our lives here today during his homily. After the Creed and the Universal Prayer (the Prayer of the Faithful), now we are ready to sit down in our pews, and bring up the gifts of bread and wine during the offertory part of the Mass. This begins the second main part of the Mass after the Liturgy of the Word, which is *the Liturgy of the Eucharist*. By the way, the word **LITURGY** simply means a public work or an active work that is being done. In our case, the work is being done by God. He is using us as instruments to help each other encounter His grace and His very Divine Life in the Scriptures, in the Prayers, in the movements, and in holy communion as well!

One last encouragement to see the ancient structure of this movement from the Liturgy of the Word to the Liturgy of the Eucharist is to look at the early, early Church and what Jesus did after He rose from the dead (see Luke 24:13-32). Two disciples are walking away from the city of the Jerusalem after Jesus' death and burial, but they have heard murmurs of Him being alive (...they are still doubtful/confused/dismayed...). As they are walking on the road to the town of Emmaus, Jesus, who is risen from the dead, appears to them, but they are hidden from recognizing him. He first encourages them by opening their minds to the Scriptures (i.e. the Liturgy of the Word), and then stays with them for dinner. However, before eating, he begins acting just like the last supper, by taking the bread, blessing it, breaking it, and giving it to them. Suddenly, Jesus disappears and all that is left is the bread to see. Jesus starts with the Word in Scripture, and then ends with the Word in the Bread of Life, in Holy Communion! He gives us Himself in both of these ways, and we literally consume Him and unite ourselves to Him in Holy Communion towards the end of the Liturgy of the Eucharist. May God prepare our hearts for this every week, and may we be thankful for the gift of the Word, Jesus. First in the Bible, and then in the bread and the wine at every single Catholic Mass!