

## The Gospel (Part 1)

All right, so once we've looked at the First Reading, the Responsorial Psalm, and the Second Reading, we now come to the high point of the Liturgy of the Word, and that is the reading of the Gospel. So, in fact, if you take the Roman Missal and you look in the General Instruction of the Roman Missal and you turn to paragraph 60, it explicitly says this about the role of the Gospel in the overall Liturgy of the Word. The Church teaches:

The reading of the Gospel constitutes the high point of the Liturgy of the Word. The Liturgy itself teaches the great reverence that is to be shown to this reading by setting it off from the other readings with special marks of honor, by the fact of which minister is appointed to proclaim it and by the blessing or prayer with which he prepares himself; and also by the fact that through their acclamations the faithful acknowledge and confess that Christ is present and is speaking to them and stand as they listen to the reading; and by the mere fact of the marks of reverence that are given to the Book of the Gospels.<sup>1</sup>

So in short, what the General Instruction is teaching us here is that in a sense, if you want to think of the words of institution and consecration as the high point of the Liturgy of the Eucharist in the second half of the mass, the reading of the Gospel is the high point in the Liturgy of the Word, the first half of the Mass. And so, in order to properly understand the reading of the Gospel, we need to look at all of the signs and symbols, gestures and actions, prayers and acts of reverence that accompany this reading. Because in the liturgy, the Church doesn't just say, "All right, here's the Gospel." We have a number of things that are meant to mark it and to set it apart from the other readings as the high point of all of the readings in the Liturgy of the Word.

So in order to do that, we're going to have to actually break up our analysis of the Gospel into two videos. So what we are going to look at in this first video is just four things. First, the Alleluia, or Gospel Proclamation. Very important. Second,

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<sup>1</sup> *General Instruction of the Roman Missal*, Third Edition. USCCB, 2011.

we'll look at the special blessing that the Deacon gives, who is often the ordinary reader of the Gospel. Third, we'll look at the secret prayer that the priest will read, because sometimes he will read the Gospel if there's no Deacon present. And then fourth, we'll look at some of the elements of the procession with the Book of the Gospels, which is a kind of solemn way of expressing reverence for this reading in particular, above all the readings in the Liturgy of the Word.

So with that in mind, we'll look at what the actual missal says about this first part of the Gospel, and then we'll come back to some of the other elements of the Gospel reading in a subsequent video. If we turn to the Order of the Mass in the Liturgy of the Word, the Gospel reading is described as follows. This is in paragraph 13 and following. So I'm just going to read this because you might not have heard all these words and you might not be familiar with exactly what's happening. So this is what the Roman Missal says is to happen. After the Second Reading:

*There follows the Alleluia or another chant laid down by the rubrics, as the liturgical time requires. Meanwhile, if incense is used, the Priest puts some into the thurible.*

After this, the Deacon who is to proclaim the Gospel, bowing profoundly before the Priest, asks for the blessing, saying in a low voice: *Your blessing, Father.*

So you can't ever hear what the Deacon is saying, but that's what he's saying. He's asking for a blessing.

The Priest says in a low voice: *May the Lord be in your heart and on your lips, that you may proclaim his Gospel worthily and well, in the name of the Father, and of the Son, † and of the Holy Spirit.* The Deacon signs himself with *the Sign of the Cross* and replies: Amen.

If, however, a Deacon is not present, the Priest, bowing before the altar, says quietly: *Cleanse my heart and my lips, almighty God, that I may worthily proclaim your holy Gospel.*

Now I want you to notice something here. These prayers by the deacon and priest, it says they are said, in the original Latin, *submissa voce*. In other words, in a low voice. But when it says the priest says quietly, "Cleanse my heart and my lips, almighty God," the Latin expression there is *secreto dicit*. Meaning in secret. So this is where we'll get the language of the secret prayers. We're going to see this as we move through the liturgy, that some prayers are said in secret by the priest. They're said in a low voice where really no one can hear them, just himself can hear them. And these are called the secret prayers. And they're really fascinating because they're going to frequently give you an insight into the private spirituality of the priest as he's saying the Mass. They're meant to foster his own devotion. They're not for the people, per se. They're for the priest to say so that he might enter into the mysteries of the liturgy with devotion and piety and attention. And they're often very beautiful prayers. So we'll look at the secret prayer here of the priest as well. And then finally, in paragraph 15, it says:

The Deacon, or the Priest, then proceeds to the ambo, accompanied, if appropriate, by ministers *with incense and candles*.<sup>2</sup>

Okay, so pause here. Those elements, the Alleluia Proclamation, the blessing of the deacon, the secret prayer of the priest, and the Gospel procession, all of these things are happening, like often, at the same time. The chant is taking place, the prayers are being said, the blessing is being given, and then the procession begins to move to the Ambo where the Gospel is going to be read. And all these things together work to show that this is no ordinary scriptural reading. This is the apex, the climax, the summit, the high point of the Liturgy of the Word. So the question is, before we get to the Gospel reading itself, where's all this come from, right? What does the Alleluia proclamation...where is that in Scripture? What about this blessing of the deacon? Why is the deacon blessed? What about the secret prayer of the priest? Why do we have secret prayers in the Mass? Where does that come from? And then the idea of proceeding with the Book of the Gospels, isn't that a little bit of an overkill. You know, it's just a book, right? Why do we elevate it and carry it along in procession, sometimes with candles, even with incense can be

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<sup>2</sup> Roman Missal, *The Order of Mass*, nos. 13-14.

used to incense the Book of the Gospels. What are we doing here? Is this bibliolatry? Are we worshipping the Bible? What's going on here? So let's just answer those questions. Where does it come from? And then also, what are we as the laity supposed to be doing at this part in the Mass? What's happening mystically? We'll take a few minutes to unpack that and answer those questions.

Okay, so let's begin with the Alleluia, or the Gospel proclamation. Very important to understand that unlike the other readings, when the Gospel is read, we sing the song, we sing the hymn, the Alleluia hymn, and there's often a verse of scripture that is chanted with the Alleluia as well. So in order to understand why we do this, it's important to understand first what the word alleluia means, right? Alleluia is a great example of how the sacred language of Hebrew is preserved in the Roman liturgy. So even though the Roman liturgy is originally, in the text, in Latin, and it gets translated into the vernacular, "Alleluia" is one of the words that is not in Latin, but in Hebrew, and stays in Hebrew and isn't translated into English. We preserve that Hebrew word, that sacred word, which means "praise the Lord." OK, *Hallel* is the word for praise. *U* is the second person plural. In other words, "you plural" or as we say in the South, "y'all," right? So "praise y'all." And then the final syllable, *yah*, is an abbreviation for the sacred name of God, YHWH, the holy name, the Tetragrammaton, in Hebrew, which some scholars think was pronounced "Yahweh," although we don't know for sure exactly how it was pronounced. So "Hallel u yah" is "praise you all the Lord." That's what it means. So this is an ancient Hebrew chant that would have been used in the Book of Psalms. You'll see the Hallel Psalms be used. The Hallel Psalms would have been sung at the Last Supper. And not only is it used in Jewish liturgy, but in the New Testament, it's actually described in the Book of Revelation as being sung in heaven. So if you look, Revelation 19:6-7 says this. This is St. John speaking:

Then I heard what seemed to be the voice of a great multitude, like the sound of many waters and like the sound of mighty thunderpeals, crying, "*Hallelujah!* [=Hebrew, "Praise the LORD!"]

That's preserved, even though Revelation's written in Greek it preserves it. Transliterates it from Hebrew, "Hallelujah." "Praise the Lord":

For the Lord our God the Almighty reigns. *Let us rejoice and exult and give him the glory, for the marriage of the Lamb has come, and his Bride has made herself ready...*<sup>3</sup>

So pause there. Notice would Book of Revelation saying. It's describing the heavenly liturgy. It's describing the heavenly marriage Supper of the Lamb. What song does he hear them singing in heaven? "Hallelujah." They sing the Hebrew chant, "Praise the Lord." So in the Alleluia, in singing the Hallelujahm, in chanting the Alleluia, we in the Church on earth are uniting ourselves to the song of the Church triumphant in heaven. That's the mystagogy of this moment in the Mass. That's the biblical roots of it, the meaning of the word, "praise the Lord." But there's also a mystical element that's tied to the Book of Revelation, and we're going to see the Book of Revelation appear over and over again in descriptions of the early Christian liturgy. So that's the first point, the Alleluia Proclamation, the chanting of the Alleluia is a union of the earthly Church with the Church in heaven that sings this eternal song. "Praise the Lord", Hallelujah.

Second. With the Alleluia chant there's also often going to be a verse of scripture that will be chanted by the Cantor in between the initial Alleluia and the final Alleluia. And if you have a copy of, for example, like the Daily Roman Missal or a copy of the Lectionary, you can turn to any one of the masses, any Sunday Mass, and you'll see that Alleluia is often accompanied by a verse of scripture. So I've just picked one randomly here. This is the First Sunday of Advent for Year A. And before the Gospel is read you have "Alleluia. Alleluia." And then it says "Show Us, Lord, Your Love; and Grant Us Your Salvation. Alleluia. Alleluia." And that verse in between is from Psalm 85:8, right? So one of the things that Church does here is that as we're chanting the scriptural word, Alleluia, it will also give us an inspired passage from Scripture that is often going to be tied thematically to the Gospel that you're about to hear. So the verse from Scripture that's part of the Alleluia Acclamation, prepares us, so to speak, for what is going to be read in the Scriptures, right? And in the Gospel, I should say in the Gospel in particular, right?

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<sup>3</sup> Unless otherwise indicated, all Bible citations/quotations herein are from *The Holy Bible: Revised Standard Version, Catholic Edition*. New York: National Council of Churches of Christ in the USA, 1994.

So that verse is not something arbitrary. It's actually from the word of God, to prepare us for the word of God, given to us in the Gospel. So the Gospel Acclamation is an extremely important part of the liturgy. In fact, *The General Instruction on the Roman Missal* at the beginning of the Missal says that it is a liturgical right unto itself. In other words, the reading of the Gospel is prepared for by this previous rite of the Alleluia Proclamation. This is a very important moment in the movement of the Liturgy. Now that's where the Alleluia comes from in Sacred Scripture. What about the other elements of preparing us for the Gospel reading? Where do they come from in the tradition?

Well, a couple of things we could highlight here. First and foremost, what needs to be said is St. Justin Martyr in his 1 *Apology*, Paragraph 65 to 66, as we've read in other videos, tells us very explicitly that part of the Roman liturgy in the 2nd century AD was the reading of the memoirs of the Apostles. That is Justin Martyr's way of referring to the Gospels, right? Because the Gospels are memoirs, especially with Matthew and John, the memory, so to speak, of what Jesus did and what Jesus said, right? So the reading of the Gospels is something that's just part and parcel of the Christian liturgy in Rome from the earliest witnesses that we have to the Roman liturgy. However, the significance of that Gospel reading fairly quickly began to be accompanied by signs of reverence and actions and gestures to point up the significance of reading the Gospel. Because what is the Gospel reading? Well, it's the words and deeds of Jesus Christ, the Son of God? So, for example, by the 4th century, St. Jerome tells us that the custom had developed of accompanying the reading of the Gospel with lighted candles. So St. Jerome says this:

Throughout all the churches of the East when the gospel is read, candles are lighted even when the light of dawn reddens the sky; surely this is done not to dispel the darkness but as a sign of joy.<sup>4</sup>

So Jerome bears witness to the fact that originally the custom of accompanying the Gospel reading with lighted candles was an Eastern custom. But it gradually makes its way over into Rome, as often happens. And he says, this isn't just a practical measure to bring some light into the room, but it is a sign of the joy that we

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<sup>4</sup> Jerome, *Against Vigilantius* 7. In Johnson, *Worship in the Early Church*, 3:354.

experience of the light of Christ coming into the world through the Gospel. So to this day, in the Roman Rite, we will often, especially in a Solemn Mass, accompany the reading of the Gospel and its procession with lighted candles, right. You can think of all kinds of symbolism for that. Christ says, "I'm the light of the world," right? That's recognized or symbolized in the candles.

Another custom that developed in the Roman Rite to express reverence for the liturgy is to stand when the Gospel is acclaimed and to stand when the Gospel is read. So for example, according to one ancient Roman tradition, Pope Anastasius, who was Pope in the late 4th, early 5th century, introduced the custom of standing and bowing during the Gospel reading in order to honor it, in order to give reverence to the words of Jesus. So it says this:

Anastasius (399-401), born in Rome, [...] decreed that as often as the holy Gospels are read, priests are not to be seated but are to stand and bow.<sup>5</sup>

This is interesting. Notice this. The posture of standing is often seen as a posture of reverence in the ancient Church, right? Whereas sitting would be more receptive, standing is more at attention and seen as an act of reverence to the Gospel. Also, bowing is a sign of reverence that would be done during the Gospel reading in the ancient Roman Church. So we see signs of veneration being given to the Gospel reading in a unique way among all the readings of the Liturgy of the Word, because, again, it is the words of Christ himself.

A third element from tradition that developed is the singing of the Alleluia itself. Okay, so the Alleluia was sung to kind of praise God for the gift of Christ and the gift of his words that's coming to us through the Gospel. And according to St. Augustine, already by the 5th century this had become a custom to sing the Alleluia. This is what St. Augustine says about it:

*It is customary for us to sing [Alleluia] at a certain time in our solemnities, this being an ancient tradition of the Church. It is not without deep meaning that we sing it on selected days.*

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<sup>5</sup> *Liber Pontificalis* 41.1. In Johnson, *Worship in the Early Church*, 4:57. Latin in Jungmann, *The Mass of the Roman Rite*, 1:448 n. 41.

So they don't sing it every day, but certain days.

We indeed sing Alleluia on certain days, but we think it every day. Since the word means praise of God, even if it is not upon our physical mouth, it is certainly on the mouth of the heart...<sup>6</sup>

So according to Augustine, singing the Alleluia was something done at some liturgies, but not at every single liturgy. And it was an ancient tradition of the Church. And sure enough, we know that, yet again, this tradition which originated in the East is going to spread to the West, but there'll be some variety about when you can sing the Alleluia and when you can't sing the Alleluia, okay? At first it was very limited to just particular days, joyful days of celebration, think here of Easter or Pentecost. But eventually it's going to spread out beyond that, so that by the time we get to the 6th century, this is very interesting, Pope St. Gregory the Great, who was one of the major liturgical reformers of the Roman tradition, is going to actually get into some trouble with certain Catholics, especially in Sicily. Sorry, those of you who are Sicilians, but the Sicilians did give St. Gregory the Great a little bit of trouble because they didn't like how he had expanded the use of the Alleluia in the Roman liturgy, and they accused him of imitating Greek customs instead of sticking to Latin and the Latin customs. So I have one of the letters of St. Gregory the Great, a famous letter where he responded to these criticisms and this is what St. Gregory the Great wrote in response about the Alleluia. So just listen to this for a minute:

A person coming here from Sicily has told me that some friends of his, whether Greek or Latin speakers I know not, as if moved by zeal for the holy Roman Church, *were complaining about my arrangements...*

Meaning his liturgical arrangements.

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<sup>6</sup> Augustine, *Exposition of the Psalms* 106.1. In Johnson, *Worship in the Early Church*, 3:30. Notice here that Augustine clearly identifies the singing of the Alleluia as something done by the congregation, not just by the priest.



...saying, “How does he manage to restrain the church of Constantinople, if he follows its customs in every way?” When I asked him: “Which of its customs do we follow?” He replied: “Because you have had ‘alleluia’ said at Mass, outside the season of Pentecost...

So pause there. So Originally, apparently the Alleluia was just sung during the season of Pentecost, but Gregory has expanded it to say it on other Sundays, not during the season of Pentecost. He's done something novel. He's done an innovation. He's begun singing the Alleluia outside of Pentecost, so people aren't happy about this change, this novelty. So, they keep going:

...and you have decided that sub- deacons should approach the altar disrobed, and that the ‘Kyrie eleison’ should be said, and that the Lord’s Prayer be said directly after the canon.’

Now, we can't go into all these liturgical changes right now. We'll deal with those in other relevant videos. But the basic point is Gregory has changed a number of things in liturgy from the way they were before, and people aren't happy about it. So Gregory replies:

I replied to him that we had followed no other church in any of these matters. *For, as for the fact that ‘alleluia’ should not be said here, this practice is said to have been derived from the church of Jerusalem, by the tradition of Saint Jerome, in the time of Pope Damasus of blessed memory.* And for that reason, in this matter we have limited more this custom that was handed down here from the Greeks...<sup>7</sup>

Okay, so pause there. Basically, what Gregory is saying is I'm not following anybody else. I'm actually following St. Jerome, who at the time of Pope Damascus, who's like the 4th century, said that this was how the Church in

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<sup>7</sup> Gregory the Great, *Letters* 9.26 (October 598 AD). In John R. C. Martyn, *The Letters of Gregory the Great* (3 vols.; Medieval Sources in Translation 40; Toronto, Ont.: Pontifical Institute of Mediaeval Studies, 2004), 2:561-563. (2) In defense of saying the Alleluia, Gregory appeals to both the custom of “the church of Jerusalem” and to “the tradition of Saint Jerome, in the time of Pope Damasus.”

Jerusalem did it. Not the church in Constantinople, but the Church of Jerusalem, which obviously goes back to the Apostles. So this is really important. Notice here that Pope Gregory exercises authority over the liturgy. As the successor of St. Peter and Bishop of Rome, he can make changes to the liturgy. Second, though, when he does some of these things, he's also going to root it, in this instance, in the tradition that he links with the Church at Jerusalem, of singing the Alleluia not just during Pentecost, but on other Sundays of the year. And this happens. To this day, you may have noticed that when Lent comes around, we don't sing the Alleluia. There are certain seasons we sing it and certain seasons we don't sing it. Certain Sundays we'll do it, other Sundays we don't. Because in a penitential season, like that of Lent, it's fitting that we be more reserved and not have a hymn of praise like the Alleluia until we get to the celebration of the resurrection during Easter and then the weeks after Easter, especially in the season of Pentecost. So we see a little insight there into the joy that should be part of the chanting of the Alleluia.

All right, so that's some of the biblical and traditional roots of the Alleluia, the use of candles, standing for the Gospel. What about those blessings we noticed, like the priestly blessing of the deacon? Where does that come from in tradition? Here we want to look to a document that I've brought before, a witness to tradition. This is the *Ordo Romanus Primus*, the *First Roman Ordo*. It's a description of the Mass, Papal Mass from the 7th century. So if you're going to Mass in the 7th century and you're with the Pope in Rome, the idea of blessing the deacon and having the deacon read the Gospel is an ancient Roman tradition, right? And you might think, oh wait, that's kind of weird. If the Pope is at the Mass, shouldn't the Pope be the one who reads the Gospel? Actually, no. The Roman tradition was that the Pope would depute a deacon. He often had seven deacons, kind of his archdeacons for the Diocese of Rome, that would be his representatives. And so the deacon would read the Gospel, and listen to this description from the 7th century of the Gospel reading, the Gospel procession and see if this sounds similar to what we do today:

At the ending of the 'Alleluia' or the responsory, the deacons prepare to read the gospel. However, if a deacon is not present, a presbyter... prepares himself in the place where the gospel is to be read.... Then the deacon kisses the pope's feet and the pope says quietly to him, '*May the Lord be in your heart and on your lips*'. Then he comes before the altar, kisses the gospel

*book and takes it up in his hands. Two district subdeacons go in procession in front of him, they take the censer from the subdeacon in attendance and waft the incense smoke. They have two acolytes in front of them carrying the two candlesticks. When they reach the ambo, the acolytes step aside to allow the subdeacon and deacon to pass through... Then, slipping his finger into the page where is to begin reading, the deacon goes up to read. The two subdeacons return to stand in front of the steps to the ambo.*<sup>8</sup>

Okay, now there's a lot going on here in this description, but the main points I want to highlight for you are these. Number one, it is the ancient Roman tradition that the deacon has the task of reading the Gospel, and this is something we will do to this day. Now if there is no deacon, the priest will do it. But it is proper, in a special way to the deacon if he's present, to be the one who reads the Gospel. This is an ancient Roman tradition. Second, when he reads the Gospel, the deacon's going to get a special blessing from the Pope. And it's the same words we use to this day. "May the Lord be in your heart and on your lips," right? This is a solemn moment and he's going to read the very words of Christ. Third, notice that all the elements of a procession of the Gospel that we have today are present in this ancient Roman Mass, right? We have candles being used, the deacon kisses the book of the Gospels, gives a special act of veneration. The Book of the Gospel is put on the altar and then taken from the altar to the ambo.

Notice, he doesn't read the Gospel at the altar. He brings it to its own place of prominence in order to face the people and proclaim the Gospel to the people from the ambo, right? Third, notice, there are certain signs of reverence. Not just kissing the book, but the incensing of the Gospel that is meant to give veneration to the holy book because it contains the very words of Christ. And then finally, you might have noticed that there are acolytes carrying candles to accompany the Gospel reading. And to this day we will do this. You'll have altar servers, sometimes called acolytes, who will carry and accompany the procession of the Gospel book with two candles to show the light of the world has come into our midst through the reading of the words of Christ. So this whole procession of the Gospel book, the

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<sup>8</sup> *Ordo Romanum* I, nos. 58-59, 62. In *Ordo Romanus Primus: Latin Text and Translation* (ed. Alan Griffiths; Joint Liturgical Studies 73; Chippenham: Antony Rowe, 2012), 42-43.

reading of the book of the Gospel by the deacon, the use of the ambo as the proper place for the proclamation of the Gospel, all these acts have of veneration. You might wonder, why do we do all this stuff? And the answer is it's tradition. This is from the Roman tradition of honoring the Liturgy of the Word, in particular, honoring the high point of the Liturgy of the Word, the reading of the Gospel, with appropriate veneration of the Holy Book of the Gospels.

The last elements of this tradition that I want to highlight is that in the subsequent centuries, so that's like the 7th century, as you move through the Middle Ages, the special prayer said over the deacon and the secret prayer that I mentioned earlier of the priest, these are going to develop and they're going to be added to the liturgy as well. In the 11th century AD, in one of the additions of the Roman Mass called *Missa Illyrica*, it actually gives the exact words of the prayer we use to this day:

May the Lord be in your heart and on your lips in order so that you may worthily announce the Gospel of peace.<sup>9</sup>

So that's a medieval prayer that's expanded a little bit and which is replicated in the Mass today when the priest says to the deacon, "May the Lord be in your heart and on your lips, that you may proclaim his Gospel worthily and well," but what is added is "in the name of the Father, and of the Son, † and of the Holy Spirit." So a special sign of the cross and blessing is given to the deacon. Also, the secret prayer of the priest is not from the 11th century, that's actually from the 16th century. It's from the Missal of the Council of Trent. So in the Mass that was promulgated by Pope St. Pius the V, after the Council of Trent in the 16th century, we find these words in the Missal:

Cleanse and my heart and my lips, almighty God, that I may worthily proclaim your holy Gospel.<sup>10</sup>

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<sup>9</sup> *Missa Illyrica* 1, 4, IV (1030 A.D.). Cf. Jungman, *The Mass of the Roman Rite*, 1:454.

<sup>10</sup> Sodi and Triacca, eds., *Missale Romanum: Editio Princeps* [1570], p. 236; cf. *Missa Illyrica* 1.4.4. Cf. King, *The Liturgy of the Roman Church*, 260: The prayer... is not generally found in missals before 1570, though there are examples of something similar as early as the 12<sup>th</sup> century."

That prayer from the Tridentine Missal is the exact same prayer that the priest uses today in the Roman liturgy when he says, "Cleanse my heart and my lips, almighty God, that I may worthily proclaim your holy Gospel." So we see this secret prayer of the priest, which is said secretly or quietly, is preserved in the Roman tradition. And again, it's to prepare him, if he's going to be the one to read the Gospel, he needs to say a prayer first. So we can see whether it's the deacon saying the Gospel or the priest saying the Gospel. I shouldn't say saying, but reading the gospel, proclaiming the gospel, both of them see this as such a solemn act that it needs to be prepared for by a special prayer. So all of these signs, symbols, actions, gestures, and words are meant to bring us to the high point of the reading of the Gospel.

So we can conclude by asking, all right, well, what's happening here? What's taking place in the Gospel procession, the Gospel acclamation, and the Gospel reading? Well, here I'll quote from St. Isidore of Seville, once again, in his book on the liturgy in the 6th century. This is what he says:

*Lauds, that is, the Alleluia, has been sung since antiquity by the Hebrews. Its explanation consists in the translation of two words, that is, "God's praise." John reports its hidden meaning in the Apocalypse, the spirit revealing himself to him, that he had seen and "heard the voice" of a heavenly company of angels "like the sound of many waters and like the sound of mighty thunderpeals, crying out 'Hallelujah' [Rev 19:6]." From this no one should doubt that this mystery of praise, if celebrated with worthy faith and devotion, is joined to that of the angels. Alleluia, as also amen, is never translated from Hebrew into another language, not because they are less able to be translated, but, as the teachers say, antiquity is preserved in them because of their more sacred authority.<sup>11</sup>*

So in other words, what St. Isidore is saying here is that at the moment of the Gospel Acclamation and procession, what we are doing is honoring the Gospel and praising the Lord in the same way that the angels praise him in heaven. In a sense, this is a moment where the Church triumphant in heaven and the Church militant

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<sup>11</sup> Isidore of Seville, *On the Ecclesiastical Offices*, 13.1-2.

on earth are being united with one another in praise of the Lord and in preparation for the good news of Jesus Christ.