



Archdiocese of New York + 2011

SCRIPTURE, SEASONS AND THE READINGS AT MASS

The Lord encountered in the Scriptures Pope John Paul II wrote: *In every Eucharistic celebration . . . the table of the Word offers the same understanding of the history of salvation and especially of the paschal mystery which the risen Jesus himself gave to his disciples.* [*Dies Domini*, n.39] The Scriptures proclaimed in the Mass, because they are the word of God, proclaimed by God, have a special power that helps us to put them into practice in our own lives. Over time, as we listen, year after year, to the word of God, our understanding of the meaning of that word grows. We may not even be aware of it, it often happens imperceptibly, but if we are making an effort to be attentive, if we truly want to know God, through the power of the Holy Spirit we do grow and the word becomes living and effective in our lives!

Our Calling to Imitate Christ: As followers of Christ, baptized into his Mystical Body the Church, we are called to be like him, to make him present to the world through our own words and actions. Christ came to earth in human form to redeem us, but also to show us how to live as God's children. He was like us in every aspect of our humanity: he felt joy and pain, sickness and frustration, hunger and thirst - *like us in all things but sin*. He is our model, *the way, the truth and the life*.. But if we are to mirror Christ in our own lives we must first know Christ and it is through the liturgy, *the primary and indispensable source from which the faithful are to derive the true Christian spirit* (CSL n.14), that we are able to do this.

The Seasons of the Lord: The word of God is not presented to us by the Church in a haphazard manner. Carefully and thoroughly, through the readings and prayers of the seasons and feasts of the Liturgical Year and particularly in her Sunday celebrations, she sets the life of Christ before us. In one sense Christ's life is a single great Mystery. However, that mystery is so rich, so filled with meaning for us, that we need to examine its many facets one by one in order both to appreciate, to savor the message each facet holds, and ultimately to translate its message into action in our lives. The Church sets these facets before us in the Seasons of the Lord throughout the Liturgical Year. At the heart of these seasons lies the Sacred Triduum of the Lord's Passion, Death, and Resurrection, our celebration of the Paschal Mystery that won our salvation. The seasons of Advent, Christmas, and Epiphany plunge us both into the world waiting for its Savior and our expectation of his coming again at the end of time. They present to us the Mystery of God made man, coming among us in all the weakness of a human infant, shown first to his own people, the Jews, and then in the persons of the Magi, to the gentiles. In Ordinary Time (whose name derives not from something that is ho-hum, but rather from the ordinal numbers by which each week is known) we are immersed in the public life of the Lord as he spread his message, healed the sick and formed his apostles and disciples. Each facet of these seasons reveals to us an aspect of the fathomless riches to be found in Christ. As we participate in the liturgies of these days, the Scripture readings and the prayers of the day unfold for us the meaning of the Paschal Mystery that won our redemption and the lessons that Christ's life holds for us..