The Priest (or Deacon) Signs Himself with the Cross at Mass







Just prior to the proclamation of the Gospel, the priest or deacon will sign himself.

> The *Roman Missal* states, "Then, with the thumb of his right hand, he makes the sign of the cross first on the book at the beginning of the Gospel to be read, and then on himself on the forehead, mouth, and breast."

When the priest is the one to proclaim the Gospel, he prays these words silently.

> *Cleanse my heart and my lips, almighty God,*
> *that I may worthily proclaim your holy Gospel.*

If a deacon is going to proclaim the Gospel, the priest will give him a blessing where he recites the following prayer.

> *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 laity and all others attending Mass, are invited to make a similar prayer and gesture before the Gospel is read. They are encouraged to say interiorly a brief prayer that prepares them to receive the Word of God.

> *May the Word of the Lord be on my mind, on my lips, and in my heart.*

Thus, when we make such a gesture at Mass, it is truly a profound prayer, opening ourselves up to the words of Jesus Christ. Every time we listen to the Gospel Jesus is knocking at the door of our heart, waiting to get in. We just have to open the door.



Source: Aleteia.com / Philip Kosloski