

Photo credit: CNS/Bob Roller

On my mind, my lips, my heart.

During Mass before the proclamation of the Gospel, we make a small cross on our forehead, lips, and chest (heart). These outward gestures made with our bodies are pointing to an inward prayer in our hearts:

"May the Lord be in my mind, on my lips and in my heart."

The cross itself is a sign of redemption in and through Jesus Christ. When we make this sign of the cross, in any form, it's an outward act to profess our inward faith in the Trinity. This sign declares that, through our baptism, we belong to God.

The reason for making a cross at this time in the Mass highlights the importance of the Word of God we are about to hear and prayerfully inviting Christ to come to us in these ways as His sacred Word is proclaimed. ***The hearing of the Gospel must change our minds, it must be proclaimed by our lips, and it must affect our heart.*** By heart we especially mean our will, affections, emotions and passions.

The gesture is a direct imitation of what the deacon (or priest when a deacon is not present) does before he recites the words of the holy Gospel. 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."



Prior to that, 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.*

Similarly, 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.*

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.***



Sources: https://lifeteen.com/events/why-do-catholics-cross-their-head-lips-heart-mass/
https://mycatholic.life/catholic-question-and-answer/q-signing-head-lips-heart-at-gospel/
https://aleteia.org/2018/05/03/how-to-make-the-sign-of-the-cross-before-the-gospel-at-mass/