

## NEW ROMAN MISSAL (3<sup>rd</sup> Edition) 2011

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Talk #6

November 13, 2011

### GOING TO COMMUNION – A REFRESHER!

- Preparation for communion begins with FASTING from eating for an hour before Mass (this fast does not apply to the elderly and the infirmed).
- Prepare yourself mentally especially during the Consecration for the reception of the Eucharist. The Consecration is the moment when the bread and wine are transformed into the Body and Blood of Christ. Be thankful for the gift you are about to receive.
- Once in the communion line and you reach the communion minister to receive Holy Communion, you should make a gesture of reverence. The customary gesture is to bow or to make the sign of the cross.
- When the minister then says: The Body of Christ/The Blood of Christ ... The communicant is to respond: **Amen!** Receive Holy Communion on the tongue or (since 1973) by hand. If you are receiving it on the tongue, tilt your head back slightly and extend your tongue far enough so there is no danger of the Host falling. If you receive it in your hand, YOUR HANDS ARE TO BE COMPLETELY FREE ... place one hand on top of the other, palms up, and receive the Host with one hand step to the side and immediately place it in your mouth with the other. INTINCTION (dipping the host into the communion chalice) is NOT permitted in our Diocese.
- Prayerfully return to your seat and kneel in prayer or meditation to show your respect to Christ. This is NOT the time to leave Church!

### The Concluding Rites

Endings are very important. When we watch a movie or see a play or attend a concert, we hope to leave with a sense of closure, inspired by what we have seen or heard. The ending of the Catholic Mass is no less important. In fact, the ending of the liturgy is so important that it has given us the word we use to describe the entire celebration. The word *Mass* comes from the Latin word *missa* (meaning *sent* or *dismissed*), a word that is spoken by the deacon or priest as the assembly is dismissed: “Ite! Missa est!” (“Go! You are dismissed!”) It is to this ending of the Mass that we now turn our attention as we explore some seemingly small but significant changes in the words that are used to send us forth.

### The Roman Missal changes the end of the Mass

The importance of this final act of the Mass cannot be overlooked. It is not a “dismissal” as we might normally think of that word: “Okay, you may go now.” Nor is it a punitive act as when one is “dismissed” (i.e., fired) from a job or when one is “kicked out” of a group. No, this dismissal is very different.

In a real sense, the new Roman Missal changes the tone of the concluding rite. There is an urgency in the words. It is less “you may go now” and more “you *must* go now . . . to proclaim what God has done for us here!” More colloquially, it might be “Go! What are you still standing here for? Go and take what God has given us here (i.e., the *Eucharist*), and take it out to your workplaces, to your neighborhoods, to your families!”

### **The Roman Missal Changes Emphasize a Call to Action**

Picture the Ascension of Christ as recorded in Acts. Christ assures the apostles, “You are to be my witnesses in Jerusalem . . . yes, even to the ends of the earth.” Then, after he is taken up to heaven, the Apostles stand there, almost gawking, until two angels appear and stir them: “Why do you stand here, looking up at the skies?” (cf. Acts 1:8, 10). Similarly, the new Roman Missal changes the dismissal at Mass to stir us—to *send us out* as Christ’s witnesses!

This will be very obvious in the Roman Missal changes to the English translation of the 3rd edition of the Roman Missal. There will be four options for the deacon or priest to use. One is the simple “*Go in peace*” that is familiar to us. There is also “*Go forth, the Mass is ended.*” Hear how the “Go forth” conveys much of that sense of *being sent*. This sense is also obvious in the two remaining options, included at the behest of Pope Benedict XVI. The first of these is “*Go and announce the Gospel of the Lord.*” Do you hear it? It cannot be more explicit! We are sent out on *mission*—to announce the Gospel, to be Christ’s witnesses, to work for the coming kingdom.

The remaining option for the dismissal is just as beautiful: “*Go in peace, glorifying the Lord by your life.*” Through what God has just done for us, and through what God has done to us in this Eucharist, go, and by our lives—by how we live and act and treat others and make decisions—by all of that, give glory to the Lord!

Thus, we have come to the end of the Mass and have explored many of the most significant changes that we will experience in the celebration of the Mass when we begin using the new translation of the 3rd Edition of the Roman Missal this Advent 2011. Although moving into a new living space is exciting, it can also be a challenge as we try to recall where things are now compared with our previous space. As we move toward the implementation of the Roman Missal translation in Advent 2011, we will no doubt experience the same excitement and challenge that comes with any change. It will only be a matter of time before we adjust and once again feel at home with the words we use to worship our good and gracious God.