

BREAD FOR THE JOURNEY



We thank you for using the previous bulletin information blurbs from January – May 2011. These are available on [Life and Liturgy. org](http://LifeandLiturgy.org), the blog for the Archdiocese of Dubuque. As with our previous blurbs, these are designed to assist our catechesis for the upcoming revision of the Roman Missal, by giving background information on the revision as well as to renew and deepen our understanding of the Mass.

In preparing these for publication, we would ask to:

- begin using these with your **July 10, 2011** bulletin and use these weekly through January 2012. The focus of these is on the Liturgy of the Eucharist.
- print the graphic and the title “Bread for the Journey” and the text number for each one;
- use the copyright reference which is given for each text.

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Thanks for your assistance with this catechesis for the revised Roman Missal.

BREAD FOR THE JOURNEY #18



PRESENTATION OF THE GIFTS

As Pope Benedict XVI reminds us, “In the bread and wine that we bring to the altar, all creation is taken up by Christ the Redeemer to be transformed and presented to the Father” (*Sacramentum caritatis*, #47). The bread and wine—and our gifts for the ministry of the Church and care of the poor—symbolize who we are, all we have done in the previous week (our “work”), and all of creation. Even the “pain and suffering of the world” is taken up in order to be transformed. In other words, everything has value in the eyes of God. There is a powerful dynamic at work here. God has given us the gift of creation and of human work. We offer back to God the “fruit of the earth and work of human hands,” which are transformed, for our sake and for the sake of the world, into the very Presence of Christ. Praying the Eucharistic Prayer, and receiving such a gift in Holy Communion, we are transformed—and make to God the return-gift of a life lived in accord with the gospel.

Catholic Messenger Series—Liturgy of the Eucharist: Preparation of the Gifts by Deacon Frank Agnoli, Davenport, IA.. Permission granted for reprinting.



BREAD FOR THE JOURNEY #19

PREPARATION OF THE GIFTS

In *Introduction to the Order of Mass*, #105, the US Bishops noted:

The procession with the gifts is a powerful expression of the participation of all present in the Eucharist and in the social mission of the Church. It is an expression of the humble and contrite heart, the dispossession of self that is necessary for making the true offering, which the Lord Jesus gave his people to make with him. The procession with the gifts expresses also our eagerness to enter into the “holy exchange” with God....

But such a “divine exchange of gifts” is impossible to see if we routinely use only part of the wine that is presented or commune members of the assembly from the tabernacle. The symbols of bread and wine offered and transformed and returned, are powerful if we let them speak. This is one of the key differences between Eucharist and communion services.

After the priest invites us to prayer, we stand and then reply: “May the Lord accept the sacrifice at your hands....” He then offers the Prayer over the Gifts, which asks not only for the transformation of our gifts but for our transformation as well. Perhaps the next time that we are at Mass we can listen for the petition—the change that the prayer is calling us to—and make it our own.

<i>Suscipiat Dominus</i>	May the Lord accept the sacrifice at your hands for the praise and glory of his name, for our good, and the good of all his Church.	May the Lord accept the sacrifice at your hands for the praise and glory of his name, for our good and the good of all his holy Church.
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BREAD FOR THE JOURNEY #20:

A NOTE ON EUCHARISTIC PRAYERS

While the words of the institution narrative are the same in each one, we have 10 different Eucharistic Prayers in the new Missal. Eucharistic Prayer I (the Roman Canon) has its earliest roots in the 4th Century (as testified to by St. Ambrose), and is a slight revision of the only Eucharistic Prayer that we used for the roughly 400 years preceding the Second Vatican Council. Because it developed over roughly 1000 years, it has a form all its own. Eucharistic Prayer II is adapted from the *Apostolic Tradition*, an early third century text traditionally attributed to Hippolytus of Rome. The pattern of prayer found here was used to craft the remaining Eucharistic Prayers. This prayer has its own optional preface. Eucharistic Prayer III, composed after Vatican II, picks up the themes of the first Eucharistic Prayer and renders them in the format of the second. Eucharistic Prayer IV is adapted from Eastern Christian prayers dating back to the fourth century and is marked by having its own required preface. The two Eucharistic Prayers for Reconciliation were composed for the Holy Year 1975, and may be used in Masses in which the mystery of reconciliation is conveyed to the faithful in a special way (such as during Lent). Of Swiss origin and composed in 1995, the Eucharistic Prayer for Masses for Various Needs and Occasions is really four prayers in one; there is a fixed section and a section (including the proper preface) that varies—giving us four unique prayers.

*Catholic Messenger Series-- Liturgy of the Eucharist: Eucharistic Prayer (Part 2) by Deacon Frank Agnoli, Davenport, IA..
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BREAD FOR THE JOURNEY #21:

EUCCHARISTIC PRAYER DIALOGUES

In this first section—the Preface and Holy, Holy—we recall the past (God’s gift of self) with gratitude as we focus on the historical and glorified Body of Christ.

The Preface begins with a dialogue between the priest and people. Dialogues are an important element of the Roman liturgy. They are sacramental: they both express and help to bring about the communion between priest and people. Dialogues require the participation of both parties; one can’t go on without the consent of the other. This particular exchange ends with the priest calling us to give thanks to God, to which we respond: “It is right and just.” The priest then begins the Preface with those very words: “It is truly right and just....” In a sense, we hand the priest the words that he is going to use to give voice to our prayer. While it doesn’t seem like a big deal, this is a small example of the way that the liturgy reminds us that the Eucharist is the prayer of the entire community. While we might have different ministries at Mass, we are all one Body.

Preface Dialogue	Priest: The Lord be with you. People: And also with you. Priest: Lift up your hearts. People: We lift them up to the Lord. Priest: Let us give thanks to the Lord our God. People: It is right to give him thanks and praise.	Priest: The Lord be with you. People: And with your spirit. Priest: Lift up your hearts. People: We lift them up to the Lord. Priest: Let us give thanks to the Lord our God. People: It is right and just.
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BREAD FOR THE JOURNEY #22:



PREFACE

While the Preface differs according to the season, the feast, or the rite being celebrated, its purpose remains the same: to highlight the particular reasons for our gratitude. So one way that we can enter more intentionally into the prayer (instead of zoning out) is to offer a silent “thank you” after each of the sentences or phrases in the Preface that mention a cause for thanksgiving.

Let’s take a look at the Preface that goes with Eucharistic Prayer II:

- It is truly right and just, our duty and salvation, always and everywhere to give you thanks, Father most holy, *through your beloved Son, Jesus Christ, your Word through whom you made all things*, (Thank you – for the gift of Creation)
- *whom you sent as our Savior and Redeemer*, (Thank you – for the gift of our salvation)
- *incarnate by the Holy Spirit and born of the Virgin*. (Thank you – for the mystery of the Incarnation, of a God willing to take on human flesh)
- *Fulfilling your will and gaining for you a holy people*, (Thank you – for calling us into the Church)
- *he stretched out his hands as he endured his Passion*, (Thank you – for Christ’s willingness to suffer on our behalf)
- *so as to break the bonds of death and manifest the resurrection*. (Thank you – for transforming death into life)
- *And so, with the Angels and all the Saints...*

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BREAD FOR THE JOURNEY #23:

PREFACE CONTINUED...

The preface begins with the greeting between the priest and the people; but in response to, “The Lord be with you,” we will now say, “And with your spirit.” Most language groups, like Spanish, already use this response, which might help build a deeper sense of unity in multicultural parishes.

This dialogue is used whenever an ordained minister is about to do something significant in the Mass—begin the liturgy, proclaim the gospel, pray the Eucharistic Prayer, bless and dismiss the assembly. The priest prays that God’s spirit be with us to do what we are called to do: celebrate the liturgy. In response, we acknowledge that this person has been ordained to lead us in sacramental worship, praying that the particular spiritual gift given to him at ordination would enable him to fulfill his vocation in the church.

In response to “Let us give thanks to the Lord our God,” we will now respond, “It is right and just.” This reminds us that it is not only good to give thanks to God, but that it is our baptismal duty as well. In addition to being more inclusive, this phrase will lead directly into the next part of the preface, which will now begin, “It is truly right and just...” In a sense, the people will hand the priest the words with which to open the Eucharistic Prayer, the prayer he will pray out loud on their behalf, and to which the people (not the priest) at its conclusion will respond, “Amen!”

The only change in the Sanctus (Holy, Holy) is in the opening line, which will now more accurately reflect the ancient prayer of the church, based on Isaiah 6:3, by referring to “Lord God of hosts” (as in “Silent Night” and the angelic beings which surround God, not Communion hosts).

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BREAD FOR THE JOURNEY #24:

SANCTUS

The word Sanctus is Latin for “holy.” Hence, the name of this acclamation comes from the first three words of the text. Here is the revised text of the Sanctus:

Holy, Holy, Holy **Lord God of hosts**. Heaven and earth are full of your glory.
Hosanna in the highest. Blessed is he who comes in the name of the Lord.
Hosanna in the highest.

The text of the Sanctus in The Roman Missal has only one change. The change is in the first line. We once sang, “Holy, Holy, Holy Lord God of power and might.” Now, as we see above, the translation is rendered, “God of hosts.” While the word hosts is a literal translation of the official Latin edition of The Roman Missal, it also opens up the interpretation beyond God being only for those who are mighty and powerful to a God who is of the hosts: God of heaven and earth. God’s dominion, reign, or kingdom stretches beyond our worldly understandings of power and might to a God who is God of all. Indeed, God is holy.

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BREAD FOR THE JOURNEY #25:

INSTITUTION NARRATIVE



In the middle section of the Eucharistic Prayer, we focus on the present—on what Christ is doing here and now, his perpetual sacrifice of self to the Father, and on our joining of ourselves to his great act of love. In other words, our focus becomes the Eucharistic Body of Christ.

We then pray the Institution Narrative:

At the time he was betrayed and entered willingly into his Passion, he took bread and, giving thanks, broke it, and gave it to his disciples, saying: TAKE THIS, ALL OF YOU, AND EAT OF IT: FOR THIS IS MY BODY WHICH WILL BE GIVEN UP FOR YOU.

In a similar way, when supper was ended, he took the chalice and, once more giving thanks, he gave it to his disciples, saying: TAKE THIS, ALL OF YOU, AND DRINK FROM IT: FOR THIS IS THE CHALICE OF MY BLOOD, THE BLOOD OF THE NEW AND ETERNAL COVENANT, WHICH WILL BE Poured OUT FOR YOU AND FOR MANY FOR THE FORGIVENESS OF SINS. DO THIS IN MEMORY OF ME

The point of the Institution Narrative is not play-acting; it is not about mimicking what Jesus did 2000 years ago. That's why the priest does not break the bread at this time; and why he is directed to bow and look at the host and chalice while speaking the words of institution, not at the people as if he were pretending to be Christ at the Last Supper.

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BREAD FOR THE JOURNEY #26



ANAMNESIS

By obeying Christ's command to "do this" in his memory, we experience in its fullness here and now what he did at the Last Supper and on the Cross. It is about remembering, a special kind of remembering—or making memorial—that we call *anamnesis*.

The Catechism (#1363) puts it this way: "In the sense of Sacred Scripture, the memorial is not merely the recollection of past events but the proclamation of the mighty works wrought by God for [humanity]. In the liturgical celebration of these events, they become in a certain way present and real."

The next section, known as the *anamnesis*, names what it is that we are doing in the Eucharistic Prayer as a whole. *Anamnesis* is an interesting Greek word. If you look closely, you may see a familiar English word: amnesia, or "not remembering." An-amnesia, therefore, is "not-not-remembering." It is more than just recalling what has happened before; it is, in the words of Dom Gregory Dix: "the past made present by its effects."

Therefore, as we celebrate the memorial of his Death and Resurrection, we offer you, Lord, the Bread of life and the Chalice of salvation, giving thanks that you have held us worthy to be in your presence and minister to you. This section returns us to the reason we've raised our voices in prayer in the first place: giving thanks.

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BREAD FOR THE JOURNEY #27

MYSTERY OF FAITH



One significant change in the new Roman Missal is that the familiar acclamation *“Christ has died. Christ is risen. Christ will come again”* will no longer be used as an acclamation to the Mystery of Faith. The reason for this is that the three options given for the acclamation are all addressed to the Lord (e.g., *“We proclaim your Death, O Lord...”*). They all note *our* relationship to Christ’s Paschal Mystery (*“When we eat this Bread and drink this Cup, we proclaim your death, O Lord...”*). The acclamation *“Christ has died...”* does not follow this form; thus it was not included in the options. Likewise, instead of directing us to give the acclamation (*“Let us proclaim...”*), the priest will simply announce, *“The Mystery of Faith,”* acknowledging the reality that our acclamation is something that wells up, unsolicited.

Taken from The Roman Missal Changes: Article 8 Give It To me Straight (Part 3) by Joe Paprocki & D. Todd Williamson, <http://www.loyolapress.com/the-roman-missal-changes-give-it-to-me-straight-part-three.htm>.

BREAD FOR THE JOURNEY #28:



EUCCHARISTIC PRAYER—ESCHATOLOGICAL TENSION

Finally, we turn to the future. Our liturgy reflects what we can call an “eschatological tension.” The Greek word, *eschaton*, refers to the end, to our final goal, to the destination of our journey, which is eternal life with God. In the meantime, we live in tension, we live with the reality that the Reign of God is and is-not-yet. We are straining towards a future of God’s making but have not yet arrived. This part of the Eucharistic Prayer shifts attention to the ecclesial Body of Christ—to us, the Church, we who live in this betwixt-and-between time.

This section begins with a second invocation of the Spirit, or *epiclesis*. We pray that the Spirit—the same Spirit which transformed the gifts—will now transform (or, better, continue to transform) us:

*Humbly we pray that, partaking of the Body and Blood of Christ,
we may be gathered into one by the Holy Spirit.*

While it is true that, through baptism, we are already the Body of Christ, we are also a sinful people. We turn our backs on our identity as Christ’s Body, the Church. Rather than the unity of the Body, we put ourselves, and our agendas, first. So, here, we plead for a fresh outpouring of the Spirit to deepen our oneness in Christ.

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BREAD FOR THE JOURNEY#29: EUCCHARISTIC PRAYER—AN OFFERING

Sister Joyce Ann Zimmerman, a noted liturgist, points out the Eucharistic prayer has a double epiclesis and double offering. As Christ offers himself to the Father, we, too, offer ourselves. Having been brought together by the Holy Spirit, and baptized into Christ's priesthood, we are joined to Christ's own self offering to the Father. As Christ prays for the whole Church, we, too, intercede for the living and for the dead:

Remember, Lord, your Church, spread throughout the world, and bring her to the fullness of charity, together with N. our Pope and N. our Bishop and all the clergy. Remember also our brothers and sisters who have fallen asleep in the hope of the resurrection and all who have died in your mercy: welcome them into the light of your face.

Have mercy on us all, we pray, that with the blessed Virgin Mary, Mother of God, with the blessed Apostles, and all the Saints who have pleased you throughout the ages, we may merit to be co-heirs to eternal life, and may praise and glorify you through your Son, Jesus Christ.

Note that the prayer ends on an eschatological note; we still await the fullness of that Reign of which the Eucharist is only a foretaste. More importantly, the offering of ourselves in the liturgy does not occur in isolation. The sacrifice of praise celebrated in the liturgy must reflect lives of sacrifice—of loving service to God and neighbor—outside the liturgy (remember, intercessions are also about reminding ourselves of what our faith calls us to do). The two go hand in hand. We proclaim the story; we celebrate the memorial of Christ; and, changed, we are sent to live Eucharistic lives. As Father Louis Marie Chauvet has noted, the Christian life must include the three dimensions of scripture, sacrament, and ethics.

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BREAD FOR THE JOURNEY #30:

CONCLUDING DOXOLOGY

The priest then raises the paten and chalice (if a deacon is present, he raises the chalice) and says:

*Through him, and with him, and in him, O God, almighty Father,
in the unity of the Holy Spirit, all glory and honor is yours, for ever and ever.*

Just as at the beginning of the prayer, with the preface dialogue, the Eucharistic Prayer ends with a communal exchange: we (*not* the priest) respond: Amen! Having knelt after the Holy, Holy, we now stand.

And how can we not shout AMEN at the end of this great recital—this great story, this awesome remembering—of all God’s mighty deeds accomplished for our salvation, of the transformation of the bread and wine into the Body and Blood of Christ, at the transformation of ourselves into being more unified and holy members of the Body of Christ. Yes, definitely, AMEN! So be it!

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BREAD FOR THE JOURNEY #31:

THE LORD'S PRAYER



The Preparation for Communion can be divided into three parts: the Lord's Prayer, the Sign of Peace, and the Fraction (accompanied by the Lamb of God). This part of the rite begins with the priest inviting us to pray the Lord's Prayer with these provocative words: *At the Savior's command and formed by divine teaching, we dare to say.* And, together, we all pray: *Our Father...*

"Dare to say..." That certainly fits if we really take to heart what Jesus is asking of us in this prayer: that God be above all else in our lives, that God's will and not our own be done, that we be forgiven only to the degree that we forgive others. Easy words to say; much harder to live!

After we pray the familiar part of the Lord's Prayer, the priest adds what is called the embolism: *'Deliver us, Lord, we pray, from every evil, graciously grant peace in our days, that, by the help of your mercy, we may be always free from sin and safe from all distress, as we await the blessed hope and the coming of our Savior, Jesus Christ.'*

We (and not the priest) then finish the prayer with the doxology: *"For the kingdom, the power and the glory are yours now and for ever."*

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BREAD FOR THE JOURNEY #32:

THE SIGN OF PEACE/FRACTION RITE

The Sign of Peace is then shared with those around us. Far more than simply a social nicety, the Sign of Peace is a reminder: what we do in here ought to be reflected in what we do out there. In other words, do we share Christ's peace with all those we encounter beyond the four walls of the church?

Finally, the Eucharistic Bread is broken. This is the high point of the preparation for communion. The priest waits to begin the action of breaking the bread until the Lamb of God begins, and the people have turned their attention from the Sign of Peace back to the altar. As we pray to Christ (the Lamb of God), rather than to the Father (the Person of the Trinity that we usually address in the liturgy), we are reminded that Christ was broken for us. And we are reminded that, as those who claim to be Christ's disciples, we must be broken, too, in order to feed the world with our very selves.

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BREAD FOR THE JOURNEY #33:

A WORD ON HOLDING HANDS



The preparation for communion is put together in such a way that it leads us from ourselves to deeper communion not only with those around us but with God and with all of creation, through Jesus Christ. Each element (Lord's Prayer, Sign of Peace, and Communion) builds on the one before it and leads to the next one. If we make the Lord's Prayer the high point of expressing our unity by holding hands, and then make the Sign of Peace only about greeting those next to us (and not extending that same peace to the world), and then reduce communion to just something between me and Jesus, then we have gotten things backwards.

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BREAD FOR THE JOURNEY #34:

POSTURE



As Catholics, we pray with our bodies—and what we do with our bodies affects how we pray. So there are times during Mass when we sit, a posture of relaxed attention. There are times when we stand, a posture of heightened attention and respect. There are times when we kneel, which can be a posture of penitence or a posture of adoration. In the United States, it has become the familiar practice to kneel after the Lamb of God (for the invitation to communion) and remain kneeling through the rest of the Communion Rite except when making one's way to and receiving communion.

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BREAD FOR THE JOURNEY #35

INVITATION

The priest invites us to communion with these words: *“Behold the Lamb of God, behold him who takes away the sins of the world. Blessed are those called to the supper of the Lamb.”* And we respond: *“Lord, I am not worthy that you should enter under my roof, but only say the word and my soul shall be healed,”*

This exchange is filled with references to the scriptures: the Lamb of God (John 1:29), the supper of the Lamb (Revelation 19:9), the words of the centurion (Matthew 8:8, Luke 7:6). More importantly, this exchange reminds us that we are *blessed* (not just happy) to be *called* to the Lamb’s Supper—of which the Eucharist is a foretaste. We come because we are invited, not because we are *worthy*; the Eucharist is not earned or merited, but is pure gift.

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BREAD FOR THE JOURNEY #36

ENTERING THE MYSTERY

To enter this sacred mystery and out of respect for the Body and Blood of Christ, we must prepare ourselves by asking some important questions:

- Do I approach the Sacrament with the proper disposition? For example if I am conscious of having committed any serious sins have I celebrated the Sacrament of Reconciliation?
- And if Church law requires that I not receive the Eucharist, do I abstain as a sign of my communion with the Church?
- Have I fasted for an hour before communion? Have I thrown out any gum I was chewing (before Mass even began, but certainly before receiving communion)?
- Do I receive communion in the forms of both Bread and Wine?
- When I approach the minister, do I wait for the person in front of me to step aside, make a simple bow in reverence of the Eucharist, and then wait for the minister’s words before responding, “Amen?”

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BREAD FOR THE JOURNEY #37

COMMUNION PROCESSION (PART 1)



Because the priest is part of the community, the procession and the music to accompany it begin as the priest communes. We go to communion together, and so the music accompanies the entire action and concludes only once all (including musicians) have communed. The music that we use at this point in the Mass should foster the unity (the communion) of those present—so that common action (procession, singing) and posture (standing) work together to express and bring about our unity as the Body of Christ. As a Body, we journey to the Table together (which is why standing as the common posture is preferred, as mentioned in our previous article. Liturgical processions remind us that, as Christians, we are a pilgrim people, journeying to God. Just as we travel up the aisle towards the altar, we spend our whole lives journeying to the Wedding Feast of the Lamb.

The words and actions of the priest, deacon, or lay minister of communion foster an encounter with Christ for the communicant. They wait for the communicant to bow and step forward, before speaking. They make eye contact, take their time, and do not treat the communion procession like a conveyor belt.

When we approach the minister for communion, we make a simple bow of the head, and then he or she says: *“The Body/Blood of Christ.”* Not, “this is...” The Body/Blood of Christ is so much more than the Eucharistic Bread and Wine held before us. So, then, what does our “Amen” mean? Yes, it means that we believe that Christ is truly, substantially present under the forms of Bread and Wine in the Eucharist. But it also means that we are willing to become what we receive; we are giving our consent to being transformed. In a sense, when we look at the host and the chalice, we are looking in a mirror. Yes, I am part of the Body of Christ. Yes, I want to be changed more and more into the Body of Christ.

In the words of St. Augustine (Sermon 272): If you are the body and members of Christ, then it is your sacrament that is placed on the table of the Lord; it is your sacrament that you receive. *To that which you are* you respond “Amen” (“yes, it is true!”) and by responding to it you assent to it. For you hear the words, “the Body of Christ” and respond, “Amen.” Be then a member of the Body of Christ that your Amen may be true.

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BREAD FOR THE JOURNEY #38

COMMUNION PROCESSION (PART II)



If you are the body and members of Christ, then it is your sacrament that is placed on the table of the Lord; it is your sacrament that you receive. *To that which you are* you respond “Amen” (“yes, it is true!”), and by responding to it you assent to it. For you hear the words, “*the Body of Christ*” and respond, “Amen.” Be then a member of the Body of Christ that your Amen may be true.

If we have a hymn of thanksgiving after communion, it should be sung by the entire assembly while standing (rather than as a “meditation” by the choir or cantor alone)—as directed by the liturgical books.

The communion procession has a purpose: to bring those who are to receive communion to the Table. While it has become common for those not receiving communion to join in the procession and receive a “blessing” instead, perhaps this is a good time to rethink this practice. While some argue that including everyone in the procession is an act of hospitality, it also ‘says’ something that is not true: that everyone can and may receive the Eucharist. It also changes the meaning of the rite, making the reception of communion and the reception of a blessing somehow equivalent.

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BREAD FOR THE JOURNEY #39

PRAYER AFTER COMMUNION

The Communion Rite ends with the Prayer after Communion. We close this part of the Mass by asking that the Sacrament which we have just received would have an effect in our lives here and now, as well as help bring us to the fullness of life with God at the end of time. Next time that we are at Mass, we may want to listen carefully to the words: In what way are we asking to be renewed? In what ways do I need the Eucharist's effects?

*Catholic Messenger Series-- Liturgy of the Eucharist: The Communion Rite (Part 3) by Deacon Frank Agnoli, Davenport, IA..
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BREAD FOR THE JOURNEY #40

CONCLUDING RITES (PART I)

The Communion Rite ends with the Prayer after Communion. We close this of all the major sections or parts of the Mass (that is, the Introductory Rites, the Liturgy of the Word, and the Liturgy of the Eucharist), the Concluding Rites are the shortest. The Liturgy of the Eucharist ends with the Prayer after Communion, and the Concluding Rites begin with — though not required — announcements. Typically, these announcements are brief and impact the liturgical assembly. They may point to the activities of the parish. Some examples may include announcements for help with the parish's soup kitchen, the date for the World Youth Day fund-raiser, or a coming adult formation session. Since these announcements are not part of the Communion Rite, they are best not announced before the Prayer after Communion.

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BREAD FOR THE JOURNEY #41



CONCLUDING RITES (PART II)

The priest celebrant then greets the people with, “The Lord be with you.” He proclaims a blessing over the people. On major feasts and solemnities, there is a solemn blessing. This solemn blessing contains three parts. After each part, the liturgical assembly responds, “Amen.”

The deacon or priest then dismisses the people from liturgy. The original Latin for the dismissal is *Ite missa est*. The word *missa* is the root for Mass and thus gives the Mass its name. It has become quite common to hear people talk about the connection between *missa* and mission. As we know, the Mass should bear fruit in our lives. It means that the Triune God sanctifies us in liturgy. Put another way, through the liturgy the Holy Spirit comes to us to make us grow in holiness. Of course, we have to be open, receptive, and embracing of God’s coming to us through Christ and in the power of the Holy Spirit. If we are being called and sanctified by the Triune God, then we bear that mission in our families, workplaces and in our neighborhoods. Of course, we are imperfect human persons, and so each Sunday God continues to call us to grow in holiness by participating in the Sunday Eucharistic liturgy.

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BREAD FOR THE JOURNEY #42



CONCLUDING RITES (PART III)

This understanding of the missionary dimension of the Mass has been articulated by Pope Benedict XVI in his recent exhortation, *Sacramentum caritatis*. The Pope eloquently states, “The mystery of the Eucharist inspires and impels us to work courageously within our world to bring about that renewal of relationships which has its inexhaustible source in God’s gift In a particular way, the Christian laity, formed at the school of the Eucharist, are called to assume their specific political and social responsibilities” (91). For the Pope, the Eucharist “schools” us and sends us out for our responsibilities as social and political persons. Therefore, the social dimensions of the Mass extend beyond the walls of the Church to live the mission Christ gives to the Church.

What is this social mission that Christ gives to us? The Pope offers two ways we embody the social mission of Christ. The first is through “the sanctification of the world” (92). To sanctify is to grow in holiness. God sends us forth to work for holiness in the political and the social spheres of life. Pope Benedict XVI also alerts us to our mission of being good stewards of God’s creation. “The world is not something indifferent, raw material to be utilized simply as we see fit. Rather, it is part of God’s good plan (92). Therefore, as the Pope mentions, our second responsibility of the social mission of Christ is to work “responsibly for the protection of creation” (92). All of creation belongs to God alone. God entrusted to us this precious gift in order to take good care of it and all creatures.

BREAD FOR THE JOURNEY #43

CONCLUDING RITES (PART IV)



In this same exhortation, the Pope acknowledges a need for new dismissal options. In the revised edition of *The Roman Missal*, the priest or deacon may say, “Go forth, the Mass is ended,” “Go and announce the Gospel of the Lord,” “Go in peace, glorifying the Lord by your life,” or “Go in peace.” “Announce the Gospel” and “glorifying the Lord by your life” both convey the meaning of the Concluding Rites. Namely, we are called to take inside ourselves God’s Word, Body and Blood and allow God to change us in holiness and to live this change in everything we do.

After the proclamation of the actual dismissal, the priest venerates the altar-table with a kiss and then a bow. The Mass has ended. Although not required, a concluding song or hymn is common for the departure of the liturgical ministers from the liturgy. In some parishes, the organist will play a postlude during the recessional.

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