

## Introduction to the Teaching Mass

The 2003 General Instruction of the Roman Missal quoted from the *Ecumenical Council of Trent* to highlight the importance of teaching at Mass: “Lest Christ’s flock go hungry . . . the Holy Synod commands pastors and all others having the care of souls to give frequent instructions during the celebration of Mass, either personally or through others [commentator], concerning what is read at Mass; among other things, they should include some explanation of the mystery of this most holy Sacrifice, especially on Sundays and Holy Days, #11.” In response to this command, five week- ends of teaching Masses were developed. These teaching Masses have been reviewed and approved by Most Rev. Robert Francis Vasa of the Diocese of Baker, Oregon.

The teaching Masses include a Handout that can be passed out before Mass each of the five weekends. The repetition worked well in helping the faithful prepare for the teachings, especially for those who may have not been present the previous weekend. The teaching Masses themselves were typed up in a way so that the corresponding teaching was copied and inserted each weekend into the church bulletin. This could then be taken home and studied further. Then a special copy was provided for the commentator to read during Mass, specifying when each commentary would be read.

The General Instruction of the Roman Missal clearly defines the liturgical function of a commentator: “The commentator, who provides the faithful, when appropriate, with brief explanations and commentaries with the purpose of introducing them to the celebration and preparing them to understand it better. The commentator’s remarks must be meticulously prepared and clear, though brief. In performing this function the commentator stands in an appropriate place facing the faithful, but not at the ambo, #105.”

The teaching was kept brief so as to not distract from the sacred character of the Mass by spreading it over five weekends. The teaching Masses were very successful and Bishop Vasa and I received lots of positive feedback. I hope many more will benefit from a greater appreciation and understanding of the Mass which these teachings can provide.

Rev. James A. Radloff  
Promoter of Vocations

## ***Enter God's House in Quiet Thanksgiving.***

Place your finger in the Holy Water Font and make the *Sign of the Cross*. This reminds us of the cleansing affects of the waters of our baptism which took away our sins. This gesture also recommits us to the promises made at that time.

Genuflect to the Tabernacle before you enter your row to sit down, acknowledging Christ's substantial and continuous presence.

Quiet yourself in prayer, getting on your knees if possible. Then "Ask, and you will receive" (John 16:24).

Read over the scripture for the day, praying, "Speak, Lord, for your servant is listening" (1 Samuel 3:9). This is why silence is so important before Mass, so that we can hear the Lord speaking like "a tiny whispering sound" (1 Kings 19:12).

Say some prayers to yourself: your favorites, those in prayer books, those found in our missal, or the one printed on the back of this handout.

## **Prayer Before Mass**

Almighty and ever-living God, I approach the sacrament of Your only-begotten Son, Our Lord, Jesus Christ. I come sick to the doctor of life, unclean to the fountain of mercy, blind to the radiance of eternal light, and poor and needy to the Lord of heaven and earth. Lord, in your great generosity, heal my sickness, wash away my defilement, enlighten my blindness, enrich my poverty, and clothe my nakedness. May I receive the bread of angels, the King of kings and Lord of lords, with humble reverence, with purity and faith, the repentance and love, and the determined purpose that will help to bring me to salvation. May I receive the sacrament of the Lord's Body and Blood, and its reality and power. Kind God, may I receive the Body of your only-begotten Son, our Lord Jesus Christ, born from the womb of the Virgin Mary, and so be received into His mystical body and numbered among His members. Loving Father, as on my earthly pilgrimage I now receive Your beloved Son under the veil of a sacrament, may I one day see Him face to face in glory, who lives and reigns with You forever. Amen.

*By St. Thomas Aquinas (1225-1274)*

# Signs and Symbols

## First Week of Teaching Masses

The 2003 General Instruction of the Roman Missal quoted from the *Ecumenical Council of Trent* to highlight the importance of teaching at Mass: “Lest Christ’s flock go hungry . . . the Holy Synod commands pastors and all others having the care of souls to give frequent instructions during the celebration of Mass, either personally or through others, concerning what is read at Mass; among other things, they should include some explanation of the mystery of this most holy Sacrifice, especially on Sundays and holy days, #11.” In response to this command, we begin today with a series of teaching Masses. This weekend we will focus on **Signs and Symbols**.

According to the General Instruction of the Roman Missal; “For the celebration of the Eucharist, the people of God normally are gathered in a church . . . worthy of so great a mystery. Churches, therefore . . . should be suitable for carrying out the sacred action and for ensuring the active participation of the faithful. Sacred buildings and requisites for divine worship should, moreover, be truly worthy and beautiful and be *Signs and Symbols* of heavenly realities, #288.”

**Sacred Images** - “In the earthly Liturgy, the Church participates, by foretaste, in that heavenly Liturgy which is celebrated in the holy city of Jerusalem toward which she journeys as a pilgrim, and where Christ is sitting at the right hand of God; and by venerating the memory of the Saints, she hopes one day to have some part and fellowship with them. Thus, images of the Lord, the Blessed Virgin Mary, and the Saints, in accordance with the Church’s most ancient tradition, should be displayed for veneration by the faithful in sacred buildings and should be arranged so as to usher the faithful toward the mysteries of faith celebrated there, #318.”

**The Cross** - “There is to be a cross, with the figure of Christ crucified (crucifix) upon it, either on the altar or near it, where it is clearly visible to the assembled congregation. It is appropriate that such a cross, which calls to mind for the faithful the saving Passion of the Lord, remain near the altar even outside liturgical celebrations.” (Servant of the Sacred Liturgy – Liturgical Regulations for the Diocese of Baker, page 17)

**Candles** - “Candles, which are required at every liturgical service, symbolize, with both reverence and festiveness, the light of Christ.” (Servant of the Sacred Liturgy – Liturgical Regulations for the Diocese of Baker, page 11)

**The Tabernacle** - “In accordance with the structure of each church and legitimate local customs, the Most Blessed Sacrament should be reserved in a tabernacle in a part of the church that is truly noble, prominent, readily visible, beautifully decorated, and suitable

for prayer, #314.” “In accordance with traditional custom, near the tabernacle a special lamp, fueled by oil or wax, should be kept alight to indicate and honor the presence of Christ, #316.”

**The Chair** - “The chair for the priest celebrant must signify his office of presiding over the gathering and of directing the prayer, #310.”

**Sacred Vestments** - “In the Church, which is the Body of Christ, not all members have the same office. This variety of offices in the celebration of the Eucharist is shown outwardly by the diversity of sacred vestments, which should therefore be a sign of the office proper to each minister. At the same time, however, the sacred vestments should also contribute to the beauty of the sacred action itself. The purpose of a variety in the color of the sacred vestments is to give effective expression even outwardly to the specific character of the mysteries of faith being celebrated and to a sense of the Christian life’s passage through the course of the liturgical year.” (Servant of the Sacred Liturgy – Liturgical Regulations for the Diocese of Baker, page 54)

**The Ambo** - “The dignity of the word of God requires that the church have a place that is suitable for the proclamation of the word and toward which the attention of the whole congregation of the faithful naturally turns during the Liturgy of the Word, #309.” “In the celebration of the Mass with a congregation, the readings are always proclaimed from the ambo, #58.” “It is from the ambo that the Sacred Scriptures are proclaimed, the homily is given and the intentions of the faithful are prayed. It should be afforded a degree of honor and not be used for lesser purposes.” (Servant of the Sacred Liturgy – Liturgical Regulations for the Diocese of Baker, page 6)

**The Book of the Gospels** - “In a special way, care must be taken that the liturgical books, particularly the *Book of the Gospels* and the Lectionary, which are intended for the proclamation of the word of God and hence enjoy special veneration, really serve in a liturgical action as signs and symbols of heavenly realities and hence are truly worthy, dignified, and beautiful, #349.” “It is a praiseworthy practice that the *Book of the Gospels* be placed upon the altar, #122.”

**The Altar** - “The altar on which the Sacrifice of the Cross is made present under sacramental signs is also the table of the Lord to which the People of God is called together to participate in the Mass, as well as the center of the thanksgiving that is accomplished through the Eucharist, #296.”

**Sacred Vessels** - “Among the requisites for the celebration of Mass, the sacred vessels are held in special honor, especially the chalice and paten, in which the bread and wine are offered and consecrated, and from which they are consumed, #327.” “Sacred

vessels are to be made from precious metal.” (Servant of the Sacred Liturgy – Liturgical Regulations for the Diocese of Baker, page 5

**Bells** - “A little before the consecration, when appropriate, a server rings a bell as a signal to the faithful. According to local custom, the server also rings the bell as the priest shows the host and then the chalice, #150.”

# Signs and Symbols

Commentator's Copy - First Week of Teaching Masses

Commentator is to read the introduction and #1 through #4 right before Mass starts, before the opening Hymn is announced.

The 2003 General Instruction of the Roman Missal quoted from the *Ecumenical Council of Trent* to highlight the importance of teaching at Mass: “Lest Christ’s flock go hungry . . . the Holy Synod commands pastors and all others having the care of souls to give frequent instructions during the celebration of Mass, either personally or through others, concerning what is read at Mass; among other things, they should include some explanation of the mystery of this most holy Sacrifice, especially on Sundays and holy days, #11.” In response to this command, we begin today a series of teaching Masses. This weekend we will focus on **Signs and Symbols**. According to the General Instruction of the Roman Missal; “For the celebration of the Eucharist, the people of God normally are gathered in a church . . . worthy of so great a mystery. Churches, therefore . . . should be suitable for carrying out the sacred action and for ensuring the active participation of the faithful. Sacred buildings and requisites for divine worship should, moreover, be truly worthy and beautiful and be *Signs and Symbols* of heavenly realities.”

## 1. Sacred Images

“In the earthly Liturgy, the Church participates, by foretaste, in that heavenly Liturgy which is celebrated in the holy city of Jerusalem toward which she journeys as a pilgrim, and where Christ is sitting at the right hand of God; and by venerating the memory of the Saints, she hopes one day to have some part and fellowship with them. Thus, images of the Lord, the Blessed Virgin Mary, and the Saints, in accordance with the Church’s most ancient tradition, should be displayed for veneration by the faithful in sacred buildings and should be arranged so as to usher the faithful toward the mysteries of faith celebrated there.”

## 2. The Cross

“There is to be a cross, with the figure of Christ crucified (crucifix) upon it, either on the altar or near it, where it is clearly visible to the assembled congregation. It is appropriate that such a cross, which calls to mind for the faithful the saving Passion of the Lord, remain near the altar even outside liturgical celebrations.”

### **3. Candles**

“Candles, which are required at every liturgical service, symbolize, with both reverence and festiveness, the light of Christ.”

### **4. The Tabernacle**

“In accordance with the structure of each church and legitimate local customs, the Most Blessed Sacrament should be reserved in a tabernacle in a part of the church that is truly noble, prominent, readily visible, beautifully decorated, and suitable for prayer.”

“In accordance with traditional custom, near the tabernacle a special lamp, fueled by oil or wax, should be kept alight to indicate and honor the presence of Christ.”

Commentator reads #5 and #6 after the priest arrives at his chair and the opening hymn is finished, before the priest begins the sign of the cross.

### **5. The Chair**

“The chair for the priest celebrant must signify his office of presiding over the gathering and of directing the prayer.”

### **6. Sacred Vestments**

“In the Church, which is the Body of Christ, not all members have the same office. This variety of offices in the celebration of the Eucharist is shown outwardly by the diversity of sacred vestments, which should therefore be a sign of the office proper to each minister. At the same time, however, the sacred vestments should also contribute to the beauty of the sacred action itself. The purpose of a variety in the color of the sacred vestments is to give effective expression even outwardly to the specific character of the mysteries of faith being celebrated and to a sense of the Christian life’s passage through the course of the liturgical year.”

The commentator reads #7 after the opening prayer and before the lector begins the first reading.

### **7. The Ambo**

“The dignity of the word of God requires that the church have a place that is suitable for the proclamation of the word and toward which the attention of the whole congregation of the faithful naturally turns during the Liturgy of the Word.” “In the

celebration of the Mass with a congregation, the readings are always proclaimed from the ambo.” “It is from the ambo that the Sacred Scriptures are proclaimed, the homily is given and the intentions of the faithful are prayed. It should be afforded a degree of honor and not be used for lesser purposes.”

The commentator reads #8 after the lector is finished with the second reading and before the Alleluia is sung.

## **8. The Book of the Gospels**

“In a special way, care must be taken that the liturgical books, particularly the *Book of the Gospels* and the Lectionary, which are intended for the proclamation of the word of God and hence enjoy special veneration, really serve in a liturgical action as signs and symbols of heavenly realities and hence are truly worthy, dignified, and beautiful.”

“It is a praiseworthy practice that the *Book of the Gospels* be placed upon the altar.”

The commentator reads #9, #10 and #11 after the prayers of the faithful and before the offertory hymn is announced and sung.

## **9. The Altar**

“The altar on which the Sacrifice of the Cross is made present under sacramental signs is also the table of the Lord to which the People of God is called together to participate in the Mass, as well as the center of the thanksgiving that is accomplished through the Eucharist.”

## **10. Sacred Vessels**

“Among the requisites for the celebration of Mass, the sacred vessels are held in special honor, especially the chalice and paten, in which the bread and wine are offered and consecrated, and from which they are consumed.” “Sacred vessels are to be made from precious metal.”

## **11. Bells**

“A little before the consecration, when appropriate, a server rings a bell as a signal to the faithful. According to local custom, the server also rings the bell as the priest shows the host and then the chalice.”

# Gathering Rite

## Second Week of Teaching Masses

The 2003 General Instruction of the Roman Missal quoted from the *Ecumenical Council of Trent* to highlight the importance of teaching at Mass: “Lest Christ’s flock go hungry . . . the Holy Synod commands pastors and all others having the care of souls to give frequent instructions during the celebration of Mass, either personally or through others, concerning what is read at Mass; among other things, they should include some explanation of the mystery of this most holy Sacrifice, especially on Sundays and holy days, #11.” In response to this command, we continue today with a series of teaching Masses. This weekend we will focus on the **Gathering Rite**. The **Gathering Rite** consists of *Your Preparations at Home before Coming to Church*, your *Gathering at the Church before Mass*, the *Opening Hymn*, the *Sign of the Cross*, the *Greeting*, the *Penitential Rite*, the *Gloria*, and the *Opening Prayer*.

**Your Preparations at Home Before Coming to Church** - Before we come to Mass there should be a general preparation of desire to enter into the great sacrifice of Jesus on the Cross. Going to Mass is a sacrifice and takes time and effort. But this sacrifice is nothing compared to the sacrifice of Jesus on the Cross. Jesus loved us so much that he was willing to die for us. We make the effort to go to Mass as an obligatory response to that love. Because we love Jesus we want to spend time with Him at Mass. Preparation begins when we wake up. Begin the day with a prayer, such as “Lord, by Your Holy Cross You have redeemed the world.” Please remember that part of our preparation includes fasting at least one hour before Mass.

**Gathering at the Church before Mass** - When you enter the church, do not forget that Jesus is there! As stated in the General Instruction of the Roman Missal, #27, “Christ is really present in the very liturgical assembly gathered in his name...” For Jesus said, “Where two or three are gathered in my name, there am I in their midst” (Matthew, chapter 18, verse 20). Christ is also present . . . “in the person of the minister, in His Word [Sacred Scripture], and indeed substantially and continuously under the Eucharistic species.” So acknowledge Christ’s presence in those gathered. But please be respectful in how you do this. Those already in the church are preparing for Mass by spending time in silent prayer. The General Instruction of the Roman Missal, #45, makes very clear the importance of silence before Mass. “Before the celebration itself, it is commendable that silence be observed in the church, in the sacristy, in the vesting room, and in adjacent areas, so that all may dispose themselves to carry out the sacred action in a devout and fitting manner.”

Respect the Lord's presence in the people gathered by allowing them time to pray before Mass. There is plenty of time to visit after Mass. Acknowledge the Lord's presence in the priest by not talking business or trying to schedule appointments with him before Mass. Appreciate the Lord's presence in His Word by spending time reading over the scripture for the day. Honor the Lord's Real Presence in the Eucharist by genuflecting to the Tabernacle before entering your row to sit down. Then genuflect to the Tabernacle every time you pass in front of it, and genuflect to the Tabernacle when you exit your row to leave.

**Opening Hymn** - According to the General Instruction of the Roman Missal, #47, "The purpose of this chant is to open the celebration, foster the unity of those who have been gathered, introduce their thoughts to the mystery of the liturgical season or festivity, and accompany the procession of the priest and ministers."

**The Sign of the Cross** - The *Sign of the Cross* is a prayer which honors the Blessed Trinity; God the Creator, Jesus the Redeemer, and the Holy Spirit the Sanctifier. Catholics begin their public worship and private prayers with the *Sign of the Cross*. This gesture forms a cross, a reminder of the manner in which Christ died. The Mass celebrates Christ's death on the cross.

**The Greeting** - The General Instruction of the Roman Missal, #50, explains that the priest "signifies the presence of the Lord to the community gathered by means of *The Greeting*. By this *Greeting* and the people's response, the mystery of the Church gathered together is made manifest."

**The Penitential Rite** - During this time the priest reminds us that we must express sorrow for our sins before we continue the rest of the celebration. We spend this time asking the Lord for forgiveness and mercy.

**The Gloria** - The General Instruction of the Roman Missal, #53, reminds us that "The *Gloria* is a very ancient and venerable hymn in which the Church, gathered together in the Holy Spirit, glorifies and entreats God the Father and the Lamb."

**The Opening Prayer** - The General Instruction of the Roman Missal, #54, directs that "the priest invites the people to pray. All, together with the priest, observe a brief silence so that they may be conscious of the fact that they are in God's presence and may formulate their petitions mentally. Then the priest says the prayer which is customarily known as the collect and through which the character of the celebration is expressed. . . the people, uniting themselves to this entreaty, make the prayer their own with the acclamation, *Amen*."

# Gathering Rite

Commentator's Copy – Second Week of Teaching Masses

*Commentator: Read Introduction and Paragraphs #1 and #2 at the very beginning of Mass before the opening Hymn is announced.*

The 2003 General Instruction of the Roman Missal quoted from the *Ecumenical Council of Trent* to highlight the importance of teaching at Mass: “Lest Christ’s flock go hungry . . . the Holy Synod commands pastors and all others having the care of souls to give frequent instructions during the celebration of Mass, either personally or through others, concerning what is read at Mass; among other things, they should include some explanation of the mystery of this most holy Sacrifice, especially on Sundays and holy days, #11.” In response to this command, we continue today with a series of teaching Masses. This weekend we will focus on the **Gathering Rite**. The **Gathering Rite** consists of *Your Preparations at Home before Coming to Church*, your *Gathering at the Church before Mass*, the *Opening Hymn*, the *Sign of the Cross*, the *Greeting*, the *Penitential Rite*, the *Gloria*, and the *Opening Prayer*.

## 1.

Before we come to Mass there should be a general preparation of desire to enter into the great sacrifice of Jesus on the Cross. Going to Mass is a sacrifice and takes time and effort. But this sacrifice is nothing compared to the sacrifice of Jesus on the Cross. Jesus loved us so much that he was willing to die for us. We make the effort to go to Mass as an obligatory response to that love. Because we love Jesus we want to spend time with Him at Mass. Preparation begins when we wake up. Begin the day with a prayer, such as “Lord, by Your Holy Cross You have redeemed the world.” Please remember that part of our preparation includes fasting at least one hour before Mass.

## 2.

When you enter the church, do not forget that Jesus is there! As stated in the General Instruction of the Roman Missal, “Christ is really present in the very liturgical assembly gathered in his name . . .” For Jesus said, “Where two or three are gathered in my name, there am I in their midst” (Matthew, chapter 18, verse 20). Christ is also present . . . “in the person of the minister, in His Word [Sacred Scripture], and indeed substantially and continuously under the Eucharistic species.” So acknowledge Christ’s presence in those gathered. But please be respectful in how you do this. Those already in the church are preparing for Mass by spending time in silent prayer.

The General Instruction of the Roman Missal makes very clear the importance of silence before Mass. “Before the celebration itself, it is commendable that silence be observed in the church, in the sacristy, in the vesting room, and in adjacent areas, so that all may dispose themselves to carry out the sacred action in a devout and fitting manner.” Respect the Lord’s presence in the people gathered by allowing them time to pray before Mass. There is plenty of time to visit after Mass. Acknowledge the Lord’s presence in the priest by not talking business or trying to schedule appointments with him before Mass. Appreciate the Lord’s presence in His Word by spending time reading over the scripture for the day. Honor the Lord’s Real Presence in the Eucharist by genuflecting to the Tabernacle before entering your row to sit down. Then genuflect to the Tabernacle every time you pass in front of it, and genuflect to the Tabernacle when you exit your row to leave.

*Read #3 after Opening Hymn is **announced**, giving congregation time to find the page.*

3. According to the General Instruction of the Roman Missal, “The purpose of this chant is to open the celebration, foster the unity of those who have been gathered, introduce their thoughts to the mystery of the liturgical season or festivity, and accompany the procession of the priest and ministers.”

*Read #4 after the priest does the Sign of the Cross.*

4.

The *Sign of the Cross* is a prayer which honors the Blessed Trinity; God the Creator, Jesus the Redeemer, and the Holy Spirit the Sanctifier. Catholics begin their public worship and private prayers with the *Sign of the Cross*. This gesture forms a cross, a reminder of the manner in which Christ died. The Mass celebrates Christ’s death on the cross.

*Read #5 after the priest greets the people and they respond “And also with you.”*

5.

The General Instruction of the Roman Missal, explains that the priest “signifies the presence of the Lord to the community gathered by means of *The Greeting*. By this *Greeting* and the people’s response, the mystery of the Church gathered together is made manifest.”

*Read #6 after the priest invites the people to reflect on their sins.*

**6.**

During this time the priest reminds us that we must express sorrow for our sins before we continue the rest of the celebration. We spend this time asking the Lord for forgiveness and mercy.

*Read #7 after Penitential Rite absolution and before the Gloria.*

**7.**

The General Instruction of the Roman Missal reminds us that “The *Gloria* is a very ancient and venerable hymn in which the Church, gathered together in the Holy Spirit, glorifies and entreats God the Father and the Lamb.”

*Read #8 after the priest says, “Let us pray”.*

**8.**

The General Instruction of the Roman Missal directs that “the priest invites the people to pray. All, together with the priest, observe a brief silence so that they may be conscious of the fact that they are in God’s presence and may formulate their petitions mentally. Then the priest says the prayer which is customarily known as the collect and through which the character of the celebration is expressed. . . the people, uniting themselves to this entreaty, make the prayer their own with the acclamation, *Amen.*”

# Liturgy of the Word

## Third Week of Teaching Masses

The 2003 General Instruction of the Roman Missal quoted from the *Ecumenical Council of Trent* to highlight the importance of teaching at Mass: “Lest Christ’s flock go hungry . . . the Holy Synod commands pastors and all others having the care of souls to give frequent instructions during the celebration of Mass, either personally or through others, concerning what is read at Mass; among other things, they should include some explanation of the mystery of this most holy Sacrifice, especially on Sundays and holy days, #11.” In response to this command, we continue today with a series of teaching Masses. This weekend we will focus on the **Liturgy of the Word**. According to the General Instruction of the Roman Missal; “The main part of the Liturgy of the Word is made up of the readings from Sacred Scripture together with the chants occurring between them. The homily, Profession of Faith, and Prayer of the Faithful, however, develop and conclude this part of the Mass. For in the readings, as explained by the homily, God speaks to his people, opening up to them the mystery of redemption and salvation, and offering them spiritual nourishment; and Christ himself is present in the midst of the faithful through his word. By their silence and singing the people make God’s word their own, and they also affirm their adherence to it by means of the Profession of Faith. Finally, having been nourished by it, they pour out their petitions in the Prayer of the Faithful for the needs of the entire Church and for the salvation of the whole world, #55.”

**Readings from the Sacred Scripture** - “In the readings, the table of God’s word is prepared for the faithful, and the riches of the Bible are opened to them, #57.” “In the sacred books, the Father who is in heaven comes lovingly to meet his children, and talks with them, (Catechism of the Catholic Church, 104). “For Sundays and solemnities, three readings are assigned: that is, from a Prophet, an Apostle, and a Gospel. By these the Christian people are brought to know the continuity of the work of salvation according to God’s wonderful plan, #357.” “If there are several readings, it is well to distribute them among a number of lectors, #109.”

**Silence** - “The Liturgy of the Word is to be celebrated in such a way as to promote meditation, and so any haste that hinders recollection must clearly be avoided. During the Liturgy of the Word, it is also appropriate to include brief periods of silence, accommodated to the gathered assembly, in which, at the prompting of the Holy Spirit, the word of God may be grasped by the heart and a response through prayer may be prepared. It may be appropriate to observe such periods of silence, for example, before

the Liturgy of the Word itself begins, after the first and second reading, and lastly at the conclusion of the homily, #56.”

**Psalm** - “After the first reading comes the responsorial Psalm, which is an integral part of the Liturgy of the Word and holds great liturgical and pastoral importance, because it fosters meditation on the word of God. It is preferable that the responsorial Psalm be sung, #61.”

**Alleluia** - “After the reading that immediately precedes the Gospel, the *Alleluia* or another chant indicated by the rubrics is sung, as required by the liturgical season. An acclamation of this kind constitutes a rite or act in itself, by which the assembly of the faithful welcomes and greets the Lord who is about to speak to it in the Gospel and professes its faith by means of the chant, #62.”

**Gospel** - “The reading of the Gospel is the high point of the Liturgy of the Word. The Liturgy itself teaches that great reverence is to be shown to it by setting it off from the other readings with special marks of honor: whether on the part of the minister appointed to proclaim it, who prepares himself by a blessing or prayer; or on the part of the faithful, who stand as they listen to it being read and through their acclamations acknowledge and confess Christ present and speaking to them; or by the very marks of reverence that are given to the *Book of the Gospels*, #60.” After the Gospel is announced, all use the thumb to make the sign of the cross on their forehead, mouth, and breast (see #134). A short prayer could be said like, “Lord, help me to understand Your Gospel with my mind, to proclaim it with my lips, and to believe it with all my heart.”

**Homily** - “The homily . . . is necessary for the nurturing of the Christian life, #65.” In the homily the homilist tries to relate the readings from Sacred Scripture to the lives of the people today through a short explanation of the Gospel message. “The homily is preached in order that a community of believers who have gathered to celebrate the liturgy may do so more deeply and more fully-more faithfully-and thus be formed for Christian witness in the world, (The Homily in the Sunday Assembly #43).”

**Profession of Faith** - “The purpose of the . . . Profession of Faith, or Creed, is that the whole gathered people may respond to the word of God proclaimed in the readings taken from Sacred Scripture and explained in the homily and that they may also call to mind and confess the great mysteries of the faith by reciting the rule of faith in a formula approved for liturgical use, before these mysteries are celebrated in the Eucharist, #67.” “At the words . . . by the power of the Holy Spirit . . . and became man, all make a profound bow, #137.”

**Prayers of the Faithful** - “In the Prayer of the Faithful, the people respond in a certain way to the word of God which they have welcomed in faith and, exercising the office of their baptismal priesthood, offer prayers to God for the salvation of all. It is fitting... that petitions be offered for the holy Church, for civil authorities, for those weighed down by various needs, for all men and women, and for the salvation of the whole world, #69.” “It is for the priest celebrant to direct this prayer from the chair. He himself begins it with a brief introduction, by which he invites the faithful to pray, and likewise concludes with a prayer. The intentions announced should be sober, be composed freely but prudently, and be succinct, and they should express the prayer of the entire community, #71.”

# Liturgy of the Word

Commentator's Copy – Third Week of Teaching Masses

The commentator will read the Introduction right before Mass begins, before the opening hymn is announced and sung.

The 2003 General Instruction of the Roman Missal quoted from the *Ecumenical Council of Trent* to highlight the importance of teaching at Mass: “Lest Christ’s flock go hungry . . . the Holy Synod commands pastors and all others having the care of souls to give frequent instructions during the celebration of Mass, either personally or through others, concerning what is read at Mass; among other things, they should include some explanation of the mystery of this most holy Sacrifice, especially on Sundays and holy days, #11.” In response to this command, we continue today with our series of teaching Masses. This weekend we will focus on the **Liturgy of the Word**. According to the General Instruction of the Roman Missal; “The main part of the *Liturgy of the Word* is made up of the readings from Sacred Scripture together with the chants occurring between them. The *homily*, *Profession of Faith*, and *Prayer of the Faithful*, however, develop and conclude this part of the Mass. For in the readings, as explained by the homily, God speaks to his people, opening up to them the mystery of redemption and salvation, and offering them spiritual nourishment; and Christ himself is present in the midst of the faithful through his word. By their silence and singing the people make God’s word their own, and they also affirm their adherence to it by means of the *Profession of Faith*. Finally, having been nourished by it, they pour out their petitions in the *Prayer of the Faithful* for the needs of the entire Church and for the salvation of the whole world.”

The commentator will read numbers #1 and #2 after the opening prayer and before the First Reading.

## 1. Readings from the Sacred Scripture

“In the readings, the table of God’s word is prepared for the faithful, and the riches of the Bible are opened to them.” “In the sacred books, the Father who is in heaven comes lovingly to meet his children, and talks with them. “For Sundays and solemnities, three readings are assigned: that is, from a Prophet, an Apostle, and a Gospel. By these the Christian people are brought to know the continuity of the work of salvation according to God’s wonderful plan.” “If there are several readings, it is well to distribute them among a number of lectors.”

## **2. Silence**

“The Liturgy of the Word is to be celebrated in such a way as to promote meditation, and so any haste that hinders recollection must clearly be avoided. During the Liturgy of the Word, it is also appropriate to include brief periods of silence, accommodated to the gathered assembly, in which, at the prompting of the Holy Spirit, the word of God may be grasped by the heart and a response through prayer may be prepared.

It may be appropriate to observe such periods of silence, for example, before the Liturgy of the Word itself begins, after the first and second reading, and lastly at the conclusion of the homily.”

The commentator will read #3 after the First Reading before the Psalm is sung.

## **3. Psalm**

“After the first reading comes the responsorial Psalm, which is an integral part of the Liturgy of the Word and holds great liturgical and pastoral importance, because it fosters meditation on the word of God. It is preferable that the responsorial Psalm be sung.”

The commentator will read #4 after the second reading and before the *Alleluia* is sung.

## **4. The Alleluia**

“After the reading that immediately precedes the Gospel, the *Alleluia* or another chant indicated by the rubrics is sung, as required by the liturgical season. An acclamation of this kind constitutes a rite or act in itself, by which the assembly of the faithful welcomes and greets the Lord who is about to speak to it in the Gospel and professes its faith by means of the chant.”

The commentator will read #5 after the *Alleluia* and before the Gospel is proclaimed.

## **5. Gospel**

“The reading of the Gospel is the high point of the Liturgy of the Word. The Liturgy itself teaches that great reverence is to be shown to it by setting it off from the other readings with special marks of honor: whether on the part of the minister appointed to

proclaim it, who prepares himself by a blessing or prayer; or on the part of the faithful, who stand as they listen to it being read and through their acclamations acknowledge and confess Christ present and speaking to them; or by the very marks of reverence that are given to the *Book of the Gospels*.” After the Gospel is announced, all use the thumb to make the sign of the cross on their forehead, mouth, and breast. A short prayer could be said like, “Lord, help me to understand Your Gospel with my mind, proclaim it with my lips, and believe it with all my heart.”

The commentator will read #6 after the Gospel and before the Homily.

## **6. Homily**

“The homily . . . is necessary for the nurturing of the Christian life.” In the homily the homilist tries to relate the readings from Sacred Scripture to the lives of the people today through a short explanation of the Gospel message. “The homily is preached in order that a community of believers who have gathered to celebrate the liturgy may do so more deeply and more fully-more faithfully-and thus be formed for Christian witness in the world.”

The commentator will read #7 after the Homily and before the Profession of Faith.

## **7. Profession of Faith**

“The purpose of the . . . Profession of Faith, or Creed, is that the whole gathered people may respond to the word of God proclaimed in the readings taken from Sacred Scripture and explained in the homily and that they may also call to mind and confess the great mysteries of the faith by reciting the rule of faith in a formula approved for liturgical use, before these mysteries are celebrated in the Eucharist.” “At the words. . . by the power of the Holy Spirit . . . and became man, all make a profound bow.”

The commentator will read #8 after the Profession of Faith and before the Prayers of the Faithful.

## **8. Prayers of the Faithful**

“In the Prayer of the Faithful, the people respond in a certain way to the word of God which they have welcomed in faith and, exercising the office of their baptismal priesthood, offer prayers to God for the salvation of all. It is fitting . . . that petitions be offered for the holy Church, for civil authorities, for those weighed down by various needs, for all men and women, and for the salvation of the whole world.” “It is for the priest celebrant to direct this prayer from the chair. He himself begins it with a brief introduction, by which he invites the faithful to pray, and likewise concludes with a prayer. The intentions announced should be sober, be composed freely but prudently, and be succinct, and they should express the prayer of the entire community.”

# Liturgy of the Eucharist

## Fourth Week of Teaching Masses

The 2003 General Instruction of the Roman Missal quoted from the *Ecumenical Council of Trent* to highlight the importance of teaching at Mass: “Lest Christ’s flock go hungry . . . the Holy Synod commands pastors and all others having the care of souls to give frequent instructions during the celebration of Mass, either personally or through others, concerning what is read at Mass; among other things, they should include some explanation of the mystery of this most holy Sacrifice, especially on Sundays and holy days, #11.” In response to this command, we continue today with a series of teaching Masses. This weekend we will focus on the **Liturgy of the Eucharist**. According to the General Instruction of the Roman Missal; “At the Last Supper Christ instituted the Paschal Sacrifice and banquet, by which the Sacrifice of the Cross is continuously made present in the Church whenever the priest, representing Christ the Lord, carries out what the Lord himself did and handed over to his disciples to be done in his memory. For Christ took the bread and the chalice and gave thanks; he broke the bread and gave it to his disciples, saying, ‘Take, eat, and drink: this is my Body; this is the cup of my Blood. Do this in memory of me.’ Accordingly, the Church has arranged the entire celebration of the **Liturgy of the Eucharist** in parts corresponding to precisely these words and actions of Christ, #72.”

**The Preparation of the Gifts** - “First, the altar, the Lord’s table, which is the center of the whole Liturgy of the Eucharist, is prepared by placing on it the corporal, purificator, Missal, and chalice, #73.” “At the Preparation of the Gifts, the bread and the wine with the water (which will become Christ’s Body and Blood, #73) are brought to the altar, the same elements that Christ took into his hands, #72.” “It is praiseworthy for the bread and wine to be presented by the faithful. . . . It is well also that money or other gifts for the poor or for the Church, brought by the faithful or collected in the church, should be received, #73.” “The bread and the wine are placed on the altar by the priest to the accompaniment of the prescribed formulas, #75.” “The priest then washes his hands at the side of the altar, a rite that is an expression of his desire for interior purification, #76.”

**The Prayer over the Offerings** - “. . . the invitation to pray with the priest and the prayer over the offering conclude the preparation of the gifts and prepare for the Eucharistic Prayer. . . . The people, uniting themselves to [the Prayer over the Offerings], make this prayer their own with the acclamation, *Amen*, #77.”

**The Eucharistic Prayer** - “Now the center and summit of the entire celebration begins: namely, the Eucharistic Prayer, that is, the prayer of thanksgiving and sanctification. The priest invites the people to lift up their hearts to the Lord in prayer and thanksgiving; he unites the congregation with himself in the prayer that he addresses in the name of the entire community to God the Father through Jesus Christ in the Holy Spirit.

Furthermore, the meaning of the Prayer is that the entire congregation of the faithful should join itself with Christ in confessing the great deeds of God and in the offering of Sacrifice. The Eucharistic Prayer demands that all listen to it with reverence and silence, #78.”

**The Lord’s Prayer** - “In the Lord’s Prayer a petition is made for daily food, which for Christians means preeminently the Eucharistic bread, and also for purification from sin, so that what is holy may, in fact, be given to those who are holy, #81.”

**The Rite of Peace** - “The Rite of Peace follows, by which the Church asks for peace and unity for herself and for the whole human family, and the faithful express to each other their ecclesial communion and mutual charity before communicating in the Sacrament. It is, however, appropriate that each person offer the sign of peace only to those who are nearest and in a sober manner, #82.” “The priest may give the sign of peace to the ministers but always remains within the sanctuary, so as not to disturb the celebration, #154.”

**The Fraction** - “Christ’s gesture of breaking bread at the Last Supper . . . signifies that the many faithful are made one body (1 Cor 10:17) by receiving Communion from the one Bread of Life which is Christ, who died and rose for the salvation of the world, #83.”

**The Communion Rite** - “Since the Eucharistic Celebration is the Paschal Banquet, it is desirable that in keeping with the Lord’s command, his Body and Blood should be received as spiritual food by the faithful who are properly disposed, #80.” “In order to be properly disposed to receive Communion, participants should not be conscious of grave sin and normally should have fasted for one hour. A person who is conscious of grave sin is not to receive the Body and Blood of the Lord without prior sacramental confession . . .” (Code of Canon Law, 916). “Because Catholics believe that the celebration of the Eucharist is a sign of the reality of the oneness of faith, life, and worship, members of those churches with whom we are not yet fully united are ordinarily not admitted to Holy Communion” (Code of Canon Law, 844). “When receiving Holy Communion, the communicant bows his or her head before the Sacrament as a gesture of reverence and receives the Body of the Lord from the minister. The consecrated host may be received either on the tongue or in the hand, at

the discretion of each communicant. When Holy Communion is received under both kinds, the sign of reverence is also made before receiving the Precious Blood, #160.” “Those who choose to genuflect are counseled to use caution and be aware of those behind them who may be surprised when they genuflect. People in the Communion procession, which should be reverent, dignified and not rushed, should be mindful of the person in front of them.” (Servant of the Sacred Liturgy – Liturgical Regulations for the Diocese of Baker, page 14)

**Prayer After Communion** - “To bring to completion the prayer of the People of God, and also to conclude the entire Communion Rite, the priest says the Prayer after Communion, in which he prays for the fruits of the mystery just celebrated. . . . The people make the prayer their own by the acclamation, *Amen*, #89.”

# Liturgy of the Eucharist

Commentator's Copy - Fourth Week of Teaching Masses

The commentator will read the Introduction right before Mass begins, before the opening hymn is announced and sung.

The 2003 General Instruction of the Roman Missal quoted from the *Ecumenical Council of Trent* to highlight the importance of teaching at Mass: “Lest Christ’s flock go hungry . . . the Holy Synod commands pastors and all others having the care of souls to give frequent instructions during the celebration of Mass, either personally or through others, concerning what is read at Mass; among other things, they should include some explanation of the mystery of this most holy Sacrifice, especially on Sundays and holy days, #11.” In response to this command, we continue today with a series of teaching Masses. This weekend we will focus on the **Liturgy of the Eucharist**. According to the General Instruction of the Roman Missal; “At the Last Supper Christ instituted the Paschal Sacrifice and banquet, by which the Sacrifice of the Cross is continuously made present in the Church whenever the priest, representing Christ the Lord, carries out what the Lord himself did and handed over to his disciples to be done in his memory. For Christ took the bread and the chalice and gave thanks; he broke the bread and gave it to his disciples, saying, ‘Take, eat, and drink: this is my Body; this is the cup of my Blood. Do this in memory of me.’ Accordingly, the Church has arranged the entire celebration of the **Liturgy of the Eucharist** in parts corresponding to precisely these words and actions of Christ.”

The commentator will read #1 after the Prayers of the Faithful (General Intercessions) while the ushers begin the collection, but before the Offertory Hymn is announced and sung.

## 1. The Preparation of the Gifts

“First, the altar, the Lord’s table, which is the center of the whole Liturgy of the Eucharist, is prepared by placing on it the corporal, purificator, Missal, and chalice.” “At the Preparation of the Gifts, the bread and the wine with the water (which will become Christ’s Body and Blood,) are brought to the altar, the same elements that Christ took into his hands.” “It is praiseworthy for the bread and wine to be presented by the faithful. . . . It is well also that money or other gifts for the poor or for the Church, brought by the faithful or collected in the church, should be received.” “The

bread and the wine are placed on the altar by the priest to the accompaniment of the prescribed formulas.” “The priest then washes his hands at the side of the altar, a rite that is an expression of his desire for interior purification.”

The commentator will read #2 after the priest washes his hands, when the Offertory Hymn is finished, before the Prayer over the Gifts.

## **2. The Prayer over the Offerings**

“. . . the invitation to pray with the priest and the prayer over the offering conclude the preparation of the gifts and prepare for the Eucharistic Prayer. . . . The people, uniting themselves to [the Prayer over the Offerings], make this prayer their own with the acclamation, *Amen*.”

The commentator will read #3 after the Prayer over the Offerings before the Eucharistic Prayer begins.

## **3. The Eucharistic Prayer**

“Now the center and summit of the entire celebration begins: namely, the Eucharistic Prayer, that is, the prayer of thanksgiving and sanctification. The priest invites the people to lift up their hearts to the Lord in prayer and thanksgiving; he unites the congregation with himself in the prayer that he addresses in the name of the entire community to God the Father through Jesus Christ in the Holy Spirit. Furthermore, the meaning of the Prayer is that the entire congregation of the faithful should join itself with Christ in confessing the great deeds of God and in the offering of Sacrifice. The Eucharistic Prayer demands that all listen to it with reverence and silence.”

The commentator will read #4 after the Great Amen before praying the Lord’s Prayer.

## **4. The Lord’s Prayer**

“In the Lord’s Prayer a petition is made for daily food, which for Christians means preeminently the Eucharistic bread, and also for purification from sin, so that what is holy may, in fact, be given to those who are holy.”

The commentator will read #5 after the Lord's Prayer before the Sign of Peace.

## **5. The Rite of Peace**

“The Rite of Peace follows, by which the Church asks for peace and unity for herself and for the whole human family, and the faithful express to each other their ecclesial communion and mutual charity before communicating in the Sacrament. It is, however, appropriate that each person offer the sign of peace only to those who are nearest and in a sober manner.” “The priest may give the sign of peace to the ministers but always remains within the sanctuary, so as not to disturb the celebration.”

The commentator will read #6 after the Sign of Peace before we begin singing the Lamb of God.

## **6. The Fraction**

“Christ's gesture of breaking bread at the Last Supper . . . signifies that the many faithful are made one body (1 Cor 10:17) by receiving Communion from the one Bread of Life which is Christ, who died and rose for the salvation of the world.”

The commentator will read #7 after the people respond; “Lord, I am not worthy to receive you, but only say the word and I shall be healed.” This will be before the Communion Song is announced and sung and before communion is distributed.

## **7. The Communion Rite**

“Since the Eucharistic Celebration is the Paschal Banquet, it is desirable that in keeping with the Lord's command, his Body and Blood should be received as spiritual food by the faithful who are properly disposed.” “In order to be properly disposed to receive Communion, participants should not be conscious of grave sin and normally should have fasted for one hour. A person who is conscious of grave sin is not to receive the Body and Blood of the Lord without prior sacramental confession . . .” “Because Catholics believe that the celebration of the Eucharist is a sign of the reality of the oneness of faith, life, and worship, members of those churches with whom we are not yet fully united are ordinarily not admitted to Holy Communion.” “When receiving Holy Communion, the communicant bows his or her head before the Sacrament as a gesture of reverence and receives the Body of the Lord from the minister. The consecrated host may be received either on the tongue or in the hand, at the discretion of each communicant. When Holy Communion is received under both

kinds, the sign of reverence is also made before receiving the Precious Blood.” “Those who choose to genuflect are counseled to use caution and be aware of those behind them who may be surprised when they genuflect. People in the Communion procession, which should be reverent, dignified and not rushed, should be mindful of the person in front of them.”

The commentator will read #8 after Communion is finished and the priest has returned to his chair and is seated.

### **8. Prayer After Communion**

“To bring to completion the prayer of the People of God, and also to conclude the entire Communion Rite, the priest says the Prayer after Communion, in which he prays for the fruits of the mystery just celebrated. . . . The people make the prayer their own by the acclamation, *Amen*.”

# Sending Forth

## Fifth Week of Teaching Masses

The 2003 General Instruction of the Roman Missal quoted from the *Ecumenical Council of Trent* to highlight the importance of teaching at Mass: “Lest Christ’s flock go hungry . . . the Holy Synod commands pastors and all others having the care of souls to give frequent instructions during the celebration of Mass, either personally or through others, concerning what is read at Mass; among other things, they should include some explanation of the mystery of this most holy Sacrifice, especially on Sundays and holy days, #11.” In response to this command, we finish today with our series of teaching Masses. This weekend we will focus on the **Concluding Rites**. According to the General Instruction of the Roman Missal; “The concluding rites consist of: brief announcements, if they are necessary; the priest’s greeting and blessing, which on certain days and occasions is enriched and expressed in the prayer over the People or another more solemn formula; the dismissal of the people by the deacon or the priest, so that each may go out to do good works, praising and blessing God; the kissing of the altar by the priest and the deacon, followed by a profound bow to the altar by the priest, the deacon, and the other ministers, #90.”

**Announcements** - The proper place for the announcements is following the *Prayer after Communion* and before the *Concluding Rite*. Announcements should be about public worship or a brief explanation of events found on the parish calendar. They should be brief and not distract from the sacred character of the Mass. Sometimes announcements become unduly long and could be shortened if more people took the time to read the church bulletin carefully.

**The Priest’s Greeting and Final Blessing** - “The priest, extending his hands, greets the people, saying, *The Lord be with you*. They answer, *And also with you*, #167.” “Since the celebration of Mass by its nature has a ‘communitarian’ character, both the dialogues between the priest and the faithful gathered together, and the acclamation are of great significance; in fact, they are not simply outward signs of communal celebration but foster and bring about communion between priest and people, #34.” “The acclamation and the responses of the faithful to the priest’s greetings and prayers constitute that level of active participation that the gathered faithful are to contribute in

every form of the Mass, so that the action of the entire community may be clearly expressed and fostered, #35.”

The *Final Blessing* before the *Dismissal* asks for blessings to come upon those who have partaken of the Word of God and the Body and Blood of Christ in the Eucharist. Jesus prayed a final blessing over his disciples before he Ascended into heaven. “Then [Jesus] led [the Disciples] out as far as Bethany, raised his hands, and *blessed* them. As he *blessed* them he parted from them and was taken up to heaven. They did him homage and then returned to Jerusalem with great joy, and they were continually in the temple praising God,” (Luke 24:50-53).

**The Dismissal of the People by the deacon or the priest, so that each may go out to do good works, praising and blessing God** - What is meant by the priest telling us to “Go in peace to love and serve the Lord?”

In the celebration of the Mass . . . “the mysteries of redemption are recalled so as in some way to be made present. Furthermore, the other sacred actions and all the activities of the Christian life are bound up with it, flow from it, and are ordered to it, #16.” “Christians who have participated in the Sacrifice of their Lord, which was offered for the salvation of all human beings, and offered with the Church which is the Sacrament of salvation for the world, cannot be content with just going back home, satisfied at having accomplished their duty and obeying the law. . . . They must strive to radiate justice and charity around them,” (Dictionary of the Liturgy, page 164).

“The sacred liturgy does not exhaust the entire activity of the Church: it must be preceded by evangelization, faith, and conversion. It can then produce its fruits in the lives of the faithful: new life in the Spirit, involvement in the mission of the Church, and service to her unity,” (Catechism of the Catholic Church, 1072). “The fidelity of the baptized is a primordial condition for the proclamation of the Gospel and for the Church’s mission in the world. In order that the message of salvation can show the power of its truth and radiance before men, it must be authenticated by the witness of the life of Christians. The witness of a Christian life and good works done in a supernatural spirit have great power to draw men to the faith and to God,” (CCC, 2044). “The duty of Christians to take part in the life of the Church impels them to act as *witnesses of the Gospel* and of the obligations that flow from it. This witness is a transmission of the faith in words and deeds,” (CCC, 2472).

**The Reverencing of the Altar** - “The gestures and posture of the priest, the deacon, and the ministers, as well as those of the people, ought to contribute to making the entire celebration resplendent with beauty and noble simplicity, so that the true and full meaning of the different parts of the celebration is evident and that the participation of all is fostered, #42.” “Indeed, they form one body, whether by hearing the word of God, or by joining in the prayers and the singing, or above all by the common offering of Sacrifice and by a common partaking at the Lord’s table, [the altar]. This unity is beautifully apparent from the gestures and postures observed in common by the faithful, #96.”

*The Code of Canon Law*, Canon Law Society of America, Paulist Press, 1983.

*Dictionary of the Liturgy*, Rev. Jovian P. Lang, OFM, Catholic Book Publishing Co., New York, 1989.

*Fulfilled in Your Hearing: The Homily in the Sunday Assembly*, National Conference of Catholic Bishops, 1982.

*General Instruction of the Roman Missal*, United States Conference of Catholic Bishops, Washington, D.C., 2003.

*Servant of the Sacred Liturgy: Liturgical Regulations for the Diocese of Baker*, Oregon, February 2004.

# Sending Forth

Commentator's Copy - Fifth Week of Teaching Masses

The commentator is to read the introduction right before Mass starts, before the opening Hymn is announced.

The 2003 General Instruction of the Roman Missal quoted from the *Ecumenical Council of Trent* to highlight the importance of teaching at Mass: “Lest Christ’s flock go hungry . . . the Holy Synod commands pastors and all others having the care of souls to give frequent instructions during the celebration of Mass, either personally or through others, concerning what is read at Mass; among other things, they should include some explanation of the mystery of this most holy Sacrifice, especially on Sundays and holy days, #11.” In response to this command, we finish today with our series of teaching Masses. This weekend we will focus on the **Concluding Rites**. According to the General Instruction of the Roman Missal; “The concluding rites consist of: brief announcements, if they are necessary; the priest’s greeting and blessing, which on certain days and occasions is enriched and expressed in the prayer over the People or another more solemn formula; the dismissal of the people by the deacon or the priest, so that each may go out to do good works, praising and blessing God; the kissing of the altar by the priest and the deacon, followed by a profound bow to the altar by the priest, the deacon, and the other ministers.”

The commentator is to read #1 after the *Prayer after Communion*.

## 1. Announcements

The proper place for the announcements is following the *Prayer after Communion* and before the *Concluding Rite*. Announcements should be about public worship or a brief explanation of events found on the parish calendar. They should be brief and not distract from the sacred character of the Mass. Sometimes announcements become unduly long and could be shortened if more people took the time to read carefully the church bulletin.

The commentator is to read #2 after the announcements before the *Final Blessing*.

## 2. The Priest's Greeting and Blessing

“The priest, extending his hands, greets the people, saying, *The Lord be with you*. They answer, *And also with you*.” “Since the celebration of Mass by its nature has a ‘communitarian’ character, both the dialogues between the priest and the faithful gathered together, and the acclamation are of great significance; in fact, they are not simply outward signs of communal celebration but foster and bring about communion between priest and people.” “The acclamation and the responses of the faithful to the priest’s greetings and prayers constitute that level of active participation that the gathered faithful are to contribute in every form of the Mass, so that the action of the entire community may be clearly expressed and fostered.”

The *Final Blessing* before the *Dismissal* asks for blessings to come upon those who have partaken of the Word of God and the Body and Blood of Christ in the Eucharist. Jesus prayed a final blessing over his disciples before he Ascended into heaven. “Then [Jesus] led [the Disciples] out as far as Bethany, raised his hands, and *blessed* them. As he *blessed* them he parted from them and was taken up to heaven. They did him homage and then returned to Jerusalem with great joy, and they were continually in the temple praising God” (Luke 24:50-53).

The commentator is to read #3 after the *Final Blessing* and before the *Dismissal*.

## 3. The Dismissal of the People by the deacon or the priest, so that each may go out to do good works, praising and blessing God

What is meant by the priest telling us to “Go in peace to love and serve the Lord”?

In the celebration of the Mass . . . “the mysteries of redemption are recalled so as in some way to be made present. Furthermore, the other sacred actions and all the activities of the Christian life are bound up with it, flow from it, and are ordered to it.” “Christians who have participated in the Sacrifice of their Lord, which was offered for the salvation of all human beings, and offered with the Church which is the Sacrament of salvation for the world, cannot be content with just going back home, satisfied at having accomplished their duty and obeying the law. . . . They must strive to radiate justice and charity around them.”

“The sacred liturgy does not exhaust the entire activity of the Church: it must be preceded by evangelization, faith, and conversion. It can then produce its fruits in the lives of the faithful: new life in the Spirit, involvement in the mission of the Church,

and service to her unity.” “The fidelity of the baptized is a primordial condition for the proclamation of the Gospel and for the Church’s mission in the world. In order that the message of salvation can show the power of its truth and radiance before men, it must be authenticated by the witness of the life of Christians. The witness of a Christian life and good works done in a supernatural spirit have great power to draw men to the faith and to God.” “The duty of Christians to take part in the life of the Church impels them to act as *witnesses of the Gospel* and of the obligations that flow from it. This witness is a transmission of the faith in words and deeds.”

The commentator reads #4 after the *Dismissal* before the *Sending Forth Hymn* is announced and sung.

#### **4. The Reverencing of the Altar**

“The gestures and posture of the priest, the deacon, and the ministers, as well as those of the people, ought to contribute to making the entire celebration resplendent with beauty and noble simplicity, so that the true and full meaning of the different parts of the celebration is evident and that the participation of all is fostered.” “Indeed, they form one body, whether by hearing the word of God, or by joining in the prayers and the singing, or above all by the common offering of Sacrifice and by a common partaking at the Lord’s table, [the altar]. This unity is beautifully apparent from the gestures and postures observed in common by the faithful.”