



12th July 2020

15th Sunday in Ordinary Time

Having listened and prayed and eaten and drunk at the Lord's table, we are sent away. The very name of "the Mass" comes from the final words: "*Itte, missa est!*" ("Go, you are dismissed!") But in these words is contained something else: as Pope Emeritus Benedict said: "*In antiquity, 'missa' simply meant 'dismissal'. In Christian usage, however, it gradually took on a deeper meaning. The word 'dismissal' has come to imply a 'mission'. These few words succinctly express "the missionary nature of the Church."*" (SC 51). Sunday Mass is the **SOURCE** of all our other activity as disciples of the Lord. Please use this sheet for discussions at parish meetings or thoughts at home.

## 4. MEETING JESUS IN OUR MISSION

Bishop John writes ...

Having encountered Jesus in each other, in his word and in his body and blood we are called to go out from our parish communities and be the living Church. When we receive Jesus in the Eucharist, he lives in us and we live in him. This is the source for our Christian lives and the source of our strength for the mission that Jesus gave us "to make disciples of all the nations" (Matthew 28:19). We are called to become what we have received and to be Jesus to others. We must speak to others of his love and mercy, we must serve our brothers and sisters around us and we must care for his creation, our common home, as Missionary Disciples and ambassadors for Christ. The parable which we have just heard, the Parable of the Sower (Matthew 13:1-9), underpins the Hope in the Future Programme. Our mission is to continue sowing seeds everywhere we go. Some seeds will fall on good soil and grow whilst others may not. If we continually share the Good News of Jesus with all those we meet - through our actions as well as words - we can leave the rest to God. During these challenging days, we have had to be a missionary Church in different ways. It has been wonderful to see so many parishes live streaming Masses, offering online formation, and providing acts of service to their communities. As churches reopen, we have a wonderful challenge of welcoming newcomers to our parishes.



This deliberate brevity is because there is a job to be done, a mission to be embraced: in Mass we have gathered as the Church, listened attentively to the Word of God, offered ourselves with Jesus and received Him in return. Now it is time for us to put all that into practice as we are sent back into the world.

There are three forms of dismissal: the first is simple and to the point “Go forth, the Mass is ended,” but the other two give us lots to think about: “Go and announce the Gospel of the Lord” or “Go in peace, glorifying the Lord by your life.” Both of these dismissals set out a clear mission for every member of the congregation, which we each need to apply to the circumstances and possibilities of our coming week. “How will I announce the Gospel?” “How will my life glorify the Lord?”

One question remains: how has our participation in the Mass changed us? Every week it is meant to “do something to us” Recently Pope Francis gave a series of talks on the Mass, and ended by talking about this:

**“We know well that when Mass ends, the commitment to Christian witness opens up. Christians do not go to Mass to do a weekly task and then forget, no. Christians go to Mass to participate in the Passion and Resurrection of the Lord and then live more as Christians: the commitment to Christian witness *opens up*. We leave the church to “go in peace” to bring God’s blessing in daily activities, in our homes, in the workplace, among the occupations of the earthly city, “glorifying the Lord with our lives”. Every time I leave Mass, I have to go out better than I entered, with more life, with more strength, with more desire to give Christian witness.**

After the Communion Rite, the Mass closes with a brief Concluding Rite. Its purpose is to send the people forth to put into effect in their daily lives the Paschal Mystery and the unity in Christ which they have celebrated. They are given a sense of abiding mission, which calls them to witness to Christ in the world and to bring the Gospel to the poor. The Dismissal sends the members of the congregation forth to praise and bless the Lord in the midst of their daily responsibilities.

The Concluding Rites of the Mass are deliberately brief, and should not be extended: in one sense, Mass ends with the silence after communion, which is “sealed” with the prayer and the blessing, after which all are dismissed. Parishes should be wary of “adding” elements to the Concluding Rites—indeed in some ways it is alien to the traditions of the Roman Rite to have a final hymn. The “final” hymn of Mass would be a hymn of thanksgiving after holy communion.

## DISCUSSION AND REFLECTION QUESTIONS

*Use these questions to guide your personal reflection, or in parish groups*

- ◆ **Do I feel nourished after holy communion? Do I feel a sense of relief that Mass is over?**
- ◆ **Has the Mass strengthened our identity as a community?**
- ◆ **Do people (do I) leave immediately after communion? Are there justifiable reason for this?**
- ◆ **Do I leave Mass feeling different from when I arrived?**
- ◆ **Do I take away a message, thought or prayer for the week?**

*Practical Questions*

- ◆ **Is the Concluding Rite cluttered? Are there too many notices?**
- ◆ **How can we develop a sense of mission as we leave Mass on a Saturday/Sunday?**
- ◆ **If we have been streaming Mass online, could this continue for the housebound? Could a message be added to the end of the stream encouraging those joining the stream to attend in person?**
- ◆ **Is our parish website/social media up-to-date with the latest newsletter and prayer resources?**