



*From the Desk of Father Peter*

*Mass—The Final Blessing and Dismissal*

*How does Mass end? What does the final dismissal mean? At this point in the Mass, we have received the Body of Christ in Communion and have taken time to reflect in a period of silence that follows. We reflect upon the extra-ordinary gift that we have received in the Blessed Sacrament, the nature of communion with God himself, and also what all of this means for us in our daily lives. This last point of reflection is just as important as the rest because if we come to the liturgy and take nothing away that would nourish our faith and the way we live our lives, then we have missed an essential part of this mystery. This part of the Mass is so important that the name “Mass” is derived from this very notion within the liturgy.*

*In an action that mirrors the beginning of Mass and the Introductory Rites, the priest begins the Concluding Rites by standing and calling us to prayer with the words, “Let us pray” (Oremus). A concluding prayer is recited, which focuses on thanksgiving for the holy sacrifice of the Mass and a recapitulation of the overall theme of the liturgy as expressed in the Collect. The priest then gives us a blessing by invoking the Sign of the Cross and finally, we come to the words, “Go forth, the Mass is ended.”*

*What is a blessing? Why are they longer sometimes? As the Mass comes to a close, the priest gives a blessing to all the faithful gathered to celebrate the Eucharist. A blessing is a solemn act that calls upon and invokes the aid of God upon the person, asking that God grant him divine favor and sanctification. In the case of Mass, the blessing is called down upon the people for sanctification that they may go forth from the Mass renewed in zeal for their mission,*

*strengthened to resist evil, and grow in the spiritual life. In certain celebrations and in certain liturgical seasons, the priest invokes God in a special manner with a longer prayer that usually begins with an invitation for us to bow our heads. Here, the church is tailoring the blessing upon the people to match the season of the feast that we may more fully enter into the Christian mysteries and the church's liturgical life.*

*What does the final dismissal mean? The most succinct explanation of this phrase, "Go forth, the Mass is ended," comes from the "Catechism of the Catholic Church," which explains that "the liturgy in which the mystery of salvation is accomplished concludes with the sending forth (mission) of the faithful, so that they may fulfill God's will in their daily lives" CCC1332. Here, we see that the holy sacrifice of the Mass not only renders worship to God and offers the most effective prayer to God for our salvation, but the Mass, by its nature, enlightens our Christian vocation to share in the mission of Christ by bringing forth His message to the world. This does not need to be in extra ordinary ways. Rather, this mission is more properly concerned with an authentic life lived in accord with the Gospel, striving for holiness and spiritual growth in prayer. This focus allows us to carry the Gospel message to our families, neighbors, and world so that we too, have an important role in the task of evangelization by the faithful witness of our lives. All of this is reflected in the new options added to the Roman Missal for Dismissal: "Go and announce the Gospel of the Lord"; "Go in peace, glorifying the Lord by your life"; or simply, "Go in peace." Truly, at the end of the Mass, our Lord, through the priest, gives us this mission that demands a true witness of the Gospel. Will we deny His call?*



*Peace and love to all*

*Fr. Peter Enyan-Boadu*