

The New Roman Missal

Changes in the Communion rite, dismissal

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By Sr. Ann Rehrauer

During the past eight weeks we've reviewed the basic structure of the Mass and a few changes in the words we'll hear in November. Today we focus on the "Communion Rite and Dismissal."

A key element of our worship and spiritual life as Catholics is our ability to share in the Body and Blood of Jesus in holy Communion. What we offer to the Father in sacrifice during the eucharistic prayer, the Father returns to us as gift in holy Communion. While the structure of the Communion rite (from the Our Father through the prayer after Communion) will not change, there are a few changes in wording.

For the "Invitation to the Lord's Prayer," the priest will say: "At the Savior's command and formed by divine teaching, we dare to say . . ." Then we will pray the Our Father exactly as we've done for years. This is followed by the embolism (a short prayer by the priest), and we conclude with our acclamation: "For the kingdom, the power and the glory are yours, now and forever."

Previously, the priest prayed that we be protected from "all anxiety." In November, he'll pray that we be safe from all distress, which focuses on the cause of difficulties rather than simply our feeling about it.

The priest then prays for the peace and unity of the church and greets us with, "The peace of the Lord be with you always." Our response will be our usual (but new), "And with your spirit."

After the Lamb of God (which is not changed), the priest invites us to holy Communion saying, "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." Blessedness is a bit different than happiness. While happiness may indicate a transitory feeling, we are truly blessed to be offered so precious an invitation.

Our response also changes slightly: "Lord, I am not worthy that you should enter under my roof, but only say the word and my soul shall be healed." If the text sounds familiar, it should. It's the response of the Gentile centurion who asked Jesus to cure his servant. We echo his words of humility, knowing that because of our sinfulness, we are not worthy to receive Jesus, and yet he chooses to come to us.

As we receive holy Communion we will still hear, “The Body of Christ. The Blood of Christ,” and we’ll respond, “Amen.” Following the “Prayer After Communion” are the usual parish announcements, a greeting and our response, and with your spirit, and the blessing.

But the dismissal has new options. The priest might send us forth saying, “Go forth, the Mass is ended.” But you might also hear, “Go and announce the Gospel of the Lord,” reminding us that we are to take the good news we have heard and experienced, and share it with others. A third option (and my personal favorite) is, “Go in peace, glorifying the Lord by your life.”

This greeting clearly expresses that we are sent forth with a mission — to glorify God by the way we speak and act and care for others. The fourth and final option is the simple “Go in peace.” And we won’t need to look at the pew card to remember our response of “Thanks be to God.”

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You may have heard that bishops may allow people to sing some of the new parts of the Mass before Nov. 27. Bishop Ricken has given permission for us to use the new sung parts of the Mass (Gloria, Holy Holy, and Memorial Acclamations) any time after Sept. 15, to make our learning and transition easier. Each parish will decide the best time to begin teaching and using these musical texts.

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