

## ON THE THIRD EDITION OF THE ROMAN MISSAL

**PREFACE:** Everything that the following article contains can only be fully understood by means of *faith!* Faith: *that gift that God freely gives to anyone who asks, so that we can communicate with God on his own level:* so that supernatural / spiritual realities are understandable; and so that they make sense in our everyday lives. Everyone who is baptized has received the gift of “theological faith” and therefore has the inherent ability – if only in seed form - to read this article and have it strike a real chord, deep in the soul!

In addition to faith, another understanding that is important – as it also involves the supernatural level - is the idea of “offering acceptable sacrifice to God.” It is our desire, duty and our privilege as creatures to render to God, the maker of all things (visible and invisible), a sacrifice that He approves of and which He will accept. There is *only one sacrifice that qualifies completely:* the self-sacrificing *immolation* (a complete and total giving, as in a holocaust) of His Own Son, Jesus, on Calvary – *for our sins*, and to *restore the lost friendship* that all people are born into the world deprived of. On the night before he died Jesus prefigured the gift of his self-sacrificial death on the Cross, by giving himself with the same intention to his Apostles *in the Bread and Wine*, that by his own words, actually became what he spoke: His Body and His Blood for our salvation! Then he said: *do this in memory of me:* thus commissioning and ordaining the Apostles to *do the same* until the end of time. Now everyone could know how much God loves them, and that it is possible for everyone to offer God *a spiritual sacrifice of praise* that is joined forever now with that of Jesus himself. This is an astounding fact!

This priesthood (those qualified to offer the spiritual sacrifice) has two distinct and different parts: *the priesthood of the faithful* (the baptized people of God); and also, the *ordained ministerial priesthood* (*the ministry of service to the priestly, kingly, prophetic people of God*). The

difference between them is in essence, and not just degree. It is the baptismal right and duty of all Catholics *to offer the Mass with the duly ordained priest* – giving God the glory that is his due, so that God can give us himself (both in His Word, and in his Eucharistic Presence in Bread and Wine); it is the ordination duty and privilege of the *priest to physically lead the liturgical ceremony that offers the sacrifice for everyone including himself, and to make Jesus really and truly present in the transsubstantiated bread and wine*. Not even a million priestly laypersons could do what one ordained priest can do in just one Mass. And so, at Mass each person in attendance has his/her own predetermined role: and it is brought together and unified by our common desire to give God the highest glory, honor, praise and thanks that we can possibly give him – united with that of His Son, Jesus.

In addition to the priest presider / celebrant who represents Christ himself leading the ceremony (and acting in his very person at the time of “consecration” of the elements), there are other important and integral ministries for the service: the *Ministers of the Word* (proclaim the sacred readings from Holy Scripture; the *Ministers of the Eucharist* (assist the priest in the reverent distribution of Holy Communion to the faithful – who reverently and devotedly receive it); the *Music Ministers* – keyboardist / cantors / choir play a vital role in an uplifting and beautiful celebration: theirs is the task of uniting all the voices of the congregation into a “joyful noise for the Lord!” – even though everyone at the service may not be a singer – in this case *trying* is what matters most; the *Ministers of the Altar* (servers – who assist the priest in the smooth execution of a holy, reverent and sacred ceremony); the *Ministers of Usher* (these help to seat people in the church, oversee the general atmosphere of attentive, reverent worship and take the collection of monies to be used for the welfare of the parish, diocese and church at large); the *Ministry of Greeter* concludes the list: making everyone feel welcome and a part of the celebration cannot be emphasized enough: Catholics have often been criticized for not

welcoming and giving notice to people who come to Mass – especially those who may not be known. All are welcome to the celebration; all ought to feel welcomed before the prayers even begin.

**INTRODUCTION: Beginning the First Sunday of Advent 2012,** (that is, November 27<sup>th</sup> 2011) the English speaking countries of the world will begin using the long-time coming, newly translated, *Third Edition of the Roman Missal (The Sacramentary)*: the big red book that the priest uses at the altar). This will be the first time since Vatican Council II (1962-65), that such a sweeping change will be made to the language of the Holy Mass. Since approval for the English version of the new missal was approved in 2009, the English-speaking world has been waiting with mixed feelings and emotions about what the changes might involve.

I write this brief article to lay some groundwork on which mass-goers, beginning this coming Advent, can hang their own thoughts and opinions concerning the changes. It is always good to research a topic thoroughly before pronouncing judgment (or an educated opinion).

In short: the third edition of the missal is meant to recapture the flavor and essence of the Church at the end of the Vatican Council II. But we must recall from the start that the Second Vatican Council's greatest contribution to Church history was both to recapitulate the entire underpinning and structural integrity of the entire Church from its beginning; as well as to poise this Pilgrim People of God, more clearly and energetically to embrace their present experience of Church, with newly stated, clearly defined documents and pronouncements; and also orient them towards their future: everlasting life in the Kingdom: the Church in its fullness.

But at the time of the Council's end, in its rush to change and become "relevant" immediately, it did not take the proper time then to transition in a more thoughtful and prayerful text for the Missal when

it changed from all Latin, to the vernacular throughout the world. Many of the prayers in the book involve responses and joint prayers that the priest recites in tandem, or in dialogue, with the people. The “new” prayers written in the early 1960’s for the then “new mass,” strayed often a great deal from the original Latin version of the Missal, which was handed down to us from centuries past. The new edition that is forthcoming now is simply truer, then, to the original Latin concepts and phrasings of the Roman Missal of the Latin Church to which we do belong, and whose mystique, and aura and beauty we are bound to preserve. These prayers we must note are composed from a two-thousand year history of Scriptural, Apostolic and Traditional perspective. These are not just randomly constructed prayers – and a chance to revisit the core and source of our essential flavor as Roman Catholics ought to be welcomed. There is a way to be relevant and conscious of our roots at the same time.

It must be taken into consideration as well how the English translation of any liturgical prayer book involves the entire English speaking world – and not just the United States. The translation just after the Vatican Council *did not* take into consideration a sharing of liturgical wording, cadence and meaning – it was truly a bottom-line “generic” kind of translation. And we will see when the new is introduced, how generic it really was.

This sense of blandness and even boredom led to various forms of abuses, especially in theological content as celebrants throughout the English-speaking world attempted to improvise their own rendition of the prayers – which has always been and is still now forbidden unless qualified (i.e. “the celebrant prays in these or similar words”).

And so now, after 40 years of using an essentially not-so-highly-flavored kind of liturgical language – the time has come to in a sense “go back and do it the right way this time” – but this going back should not be confused with a dogmatic or systemic backward looking posture: the

sacramentary is simply now fashioned into a beautifully written, well thought out and composed publication for us and for all of our brother and sister English-speaking Catholics *throughout the world*. For us we must remember, it is not just an “American Prayer Book” – we will now use a book that everyone who speaks English all over the world from the United States to England; from Ireland, to New Zealand and Australia – and many more on the long list of English speaking countries.

The change will take some getting used to, there is no doubt about that – the language is more colorful and expansive, the cadence will be somewhat unfamiliar for both the speaker (the priest) and the listener and co-participant (person in the pew) – but time will tell the real story of the beauty and the necessity of the change.

What will become necessary right off, will be the need for both the celebrant and the people to “slow down” in the rendering of the prayers – *so that they will have a chance to register and resonate in the mind and heart*. The scriptural and theological richness will need to be given time to be planted and grow in hungry souls!

The primary reemphasis is the undeniable and irrevocable theological fact that we are absolutely nothing on our own; and when we admit to this fact, embrace the fact and celebrate it, then we will encounter with great power and force: the God who is “rich in mercy,” and we will be eligible to receive all of his marvelous gifts. He cannot give anything at all to anyone who is not willing to accept what he has to offer: mercy, forgiveness and salvation being the absolute most important things there are; and then after that – the abundant life of richness and glory that he so very much wants to lavish on us if we want it.

And so, the prayers of the new missal will recapture the wonderful and true dynamic that we are God’s children who are absolutely dependent

on Him for everything; and that He is our incredibly generous, all loving, providential and merciful Father!

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## **PART ONE: BEFORE WE ARRIVE AT THE CHURCH**

It is important to begin the Sunday celebration at home! If we don't start "getting ourselves ready" at home, for the amazing event that will happen when we get there, then we may not get half of what is available to us once we do get there.

Since the Mass is above all *prayer*, it is good to begin with two things, a period of turning down the sights and sounds of our regular time before Mass (*be quiet!*) and then a prayer (each person individually, or in a family group, etc.) in words of your own or something like these:

*Dear Lord Jesus, I am about to attend a truly awesome event! It will include two parts: the first, where I listen to what You, as God, have to say to me (there is something in the readings or in the homily given by the priest that "has my name on it");*

*then my life will be offered with the prayers of the priest over bread and wine that is brought to the altar during Mass. This bread and wine at this point in the Mass represents me and my joys and sorrows, happiness and concerns: they will become the actual, true and real Body and Blood of Jesus, spiritually, so that I can receive these changed gifts later in Holy Communion as spiritual food to help me resemble Jesus more and more in every way – every day!*

*Thank you for this truly awesome "get-together," May I appreciate what goes on more and more deeply, every time I "go to church" – "go to Mass!"*

*Amen.*

## PART TWO: ARRIVING AT CHURCH

When you actually arrive at the worship site – the church building, there are further preparations that can enhance your celebration so that you get everything that is available to you while there.

The first thing is to greet your brother and sister Catholics in the parking lot, and in designated “communal gathering” areas – if your church building has one (the “narthex” or “commons”). This is a real Catholic-Family Get-Together – so it only makes sense to talk to others who are there with you – they are your for real spiritual brothers and sisters. If there is no “narthex” or “gathering area,” your conversing and fraternal exchange needs to take place away from the interior of the worship space itself: in that space, the time before Mass is a very special time for *silent, joyful and prayerful anticipation* of what will be occurring there in a few minutes.

When you yourself enter into this awesome, quiet space, you need to take this last opportunity *to open your mind and heart to what will soon happen*: the arrival of God’s own Word, just for you and all gathered; and the arrival of his Body and Blood, again re-presented (as it was originally pre-sented at the Last Supper), for your spiritual growth and the spiritual transformation of the whole world. It is good at this time to think of all of the people you want to pray for during the Mass by name, and to unite your prayers, theirs and the whole church’s prayer together so that it can be offered to God with confidence and trust, through Christ his Son, by the working of the Holy Spirit. God never refuses a prayer offered in faith and with confidence and trust.

The last thing to remember before the Gathering Hymn is announced, is that the “stage” if you will, *the “sanctuary,”* where the altar (and the recommended visibly large Crucifix) is and all the action takes place: *represents three things*:

First: it truly is, at the time of the celebration *the symbolic but real presence of God's heavenly throne* – we are there – with all of the angels, and the saints and our relatives and friends who have gone there before us – in this sense it is the heavenly marriage-feast that the King (God the Father) is throwing for his Son (Jesus);

secondly, it represents, the *Table of the Lord's Supper* with his Apostles when he united Himself in truth to them irrevocably and deeply by feeding them His own spiritual flesh and blood using the bread and wine of the meal they were eating; and then ordained them to do that act of making himself sacramentally present in the bread and wine on every altar until the end of time, the very altar around which we are all gathered here today;

and lastly, it represents the very hill of Calvary, with Jesus who has now died on it: *for us and for our salvation*: for the forgiveness of our sins ((which would truly have kept us out of heaven forever), and as a source of all grace and blessing: the very sacramental life of the Church for our nourishment and growth in all the stages of our lives.

These three scenarios are combined into one right before our eyes – *in the sanctuary!* It would do us well to give our utmost attention to each and every little detail of what goes on there – and participate wholeheartedly and with deep gratitude when our turn comes to respond to prayers and sing the hymns.

### **PART THREE: THE MASS (Part One – The Liturgy of the Word).**

Before actually getting to the readings of the Mass: there is the Gathering Song, the welcome by the priest in the name of God, and then a pause to reflect on what we alluded to earlier: *we are nothing without God, we are weak and sinful and need his merciful help each and every day of our lives*: this is called the Penitential Rite: it involves calling to mind our sins and then praying a prayer asking for God's mercy – which he is always so eager to give us when we ask! (This does not,

however, suffice for taking away serious, grave sins – that must be confessed to a priest in the Sacrament of Penance).

Then, at most Sunday Masses through the year (except for Advent and Lent) *we sing to the glory of God*, reminding ourselves that we are there primarily to give him all praise, honor, glory, worship and adoration because he is our God, and he deserves it! The text of the “Gloria” has been slightly altered, to reflect the 1964 Latin Version of it, which is richer in beauty and meaning! It is interesting to note, that the more glory we give to God, both at Mass or at any other time, the peace on earth there truly is between people of goodwill!

The *collect* or Opening Prayer then follows: which again states our childhood in God, our constant need for him and his blessings for our lives; and the fact that his mercy is his greatest attribute!

Then comes the *Liturgy of the Word!*

It is a wonderfully consoling fact to know that truth does not depend upon us or our own opinions. Truth is truth without us; for truth is from God. In fact, Truth, Jesus, *is* God. Before there was anything, there was God; there was Truth, and then *things* were made. God created everything by speaking one word: WORD (the Second Person of the Trinity -who later became JESUS). Everything else in the universe *participates in Jesus* for their very *existence*, for their very *truth*, for their very *reality*. Truth is truth without us - but at Mass – we have the opportunity to allow that very truth, that very Word, that very Jesus to come into us: simply by *objectively* opening both our minds and hearts to what is given at Mass especially from the Scriptures and homily.

*All Scripture is inspired and is useful for teaching, preaching and encouraging right living.*

During the *Liturgy of the Word*, when three readings are read and a responsorial psalm is sung, and a homily is given, *God continues to*

*reveal himself directly to us*, his people of today, and invites us to respond as his people have responded throughout the ages: *in faith*, by taking in what is heard, having it resonate in our beings, and then motivating us to leave after Mass and put into practice that message of the day that struck us most deeply – knowing that we have spiritual energy and power within us to do just that!

And so the first reading is proclaimed by a duly installed Minister of the Word (Lector). On Sundays it is usually taken from the Old Testament: the story of the formation of God's people up to the time of the arrival of Jesus in Bethlehem.

After this reading a significant but brief period of silence should be observed in order to fully take in what was just read – asking the help of the Holy Spirit to do this.

The second reading is a New Testament (non-Gospel) reading; taken from the Acts of the Apostles or the Letters of St. Paul or others.

Again a brief silent reflection afterwards is recommended.

The *Alleluia and Verse* are now sung! This should be done with great fanfare and exuberance: the very Gospel of the Lord will now be proclaimed, and a worthy introduction is called for!

After the reading of the gospel: the Alleluia section alone can be repeated!

The Gospel is now proclaimed by either the deacon present, or the priest. When we listen to the gospel we are actually listening to Jesus, through the priest, telling us directly about himself and the way of life that leads to everlasting life. There is something in every gospel passage for each person in attendance. It is up to us to find out what it is at each and every Mass.

The *homily* (used to be called “*sermon*”) is then given by the priest, or the deacon. The homily is both an instructive and inspirational application of the readings for the benefit of encouraging the people to hear it to want to know Jesus better as a person, and to live like him, with his very power living and working inside of us! Homilies to be effective can be short and to the point or at the most medium in length. Not too many people are receptive to long drawn-out homilies.

*A period of silence follows* the homily so that the congregation can fully take in and digest what they have just heard, through the action of the Holy Spirit.

On Sunday, what follows next is the *Profession of Faith*. The Church enthusiastically states the three primary things that it believes in wholeheartedly (and then a few others): The reality and work of God the Father; God the Son, and God the Holy Spirit; and the reality and life of the Church itself. It is a wonderful summary of our entire faith! This Profession will have some changes in it which will make it closer to the Latin original, and other scriptural and doctrinal considerations.

*The Liturgy of the Word* concludes with the *Prayer of the Faithful* (*General Intercessions*) where we gather together the specific prayer intentions that we want to remember at the given Mass that we are attending: these above all need to be *relevant and reflect what is actually going on* not only in the local Church, but in the Church at large, and in the world – especially the dire needs that can surface during any given week. These include *prayers for the leaders of the church*, the *leaders of government*: state, national and world; *prayers for the needy*, *prayers for the suffering*, *prayers for the sick and the dying*, and finally *prayers for the dead*. There is also a place at the end to add our own personal intentions, those things nearest and dearest to our own hearts that we want to place at the feet of Jesus at the throne of God!

### **PART THREE: THE MASS (Part Two – The Liturgy of the Eucharist).**

After the *Prayer of the Faithful*, the tone and mood of the Liturgy changes: excitement mounts and preparations are now made for the great *Eucharistic Prayer*, where an astounding miracle will take place – and then Holy Communion will be received – a miracle of transformation for our own lives!

First a collection of money is taken for the financial needs of the parish, and other special concerns (usually prescribed by the diocese). These monies are brought forward to the priest who is waiting at the head of the middle aisle, along with the actual elements of bread and wine that will be *trans-substantiated* (*changed in substance*) into the Body and Blood of Jesus in a short while. As these gifts pass us in the aisle we need to place in that bread all of our lives as they are right now, the good, the bad and the uncomfortable, even the sinful parts; and into the cup of wine, all of our sufferings, pain, fears, sorrows and disappointments. Along with the bread and wine, our lives too will have the opportunity of being transformed as we trust that Jesus is faithful to his promise of health, hope and salvation!

After the priest receives the gifts he prays *three important prayers* using them: the Offering of the Bread; the Offering of the Wine; the Prayer over the Gifts. In the history of the Liturgy, at one time, the *Prayer over the Gifts* was the only one used at this part of the Mass; but later developments introduced the other two. What will be noticeably different about the first two in the upcoming Missal will be a newer phrasing which match each other in format, a small but important change.

Now comes the most important prayer of the Mass: *The Eucharistic Prayer* which gives God supreme glory as He deserves, re-presents the act of Atonement for the sins of all mankind, and makes Jesus, his Son,

the Atoner, our Lord and Savior, present in a very true, real and spiritual way on the altar! We are at the Last Supper, we are at Calvary – in faith – as much as any who were physically there at the time they were taking place. This is awesome to the maximum!

*The Eucharistic Prayer* begins with the “Preface” – we are invited now to a higher level of attention and devotion as we listen to the prayer (that is recited or chanted) that gives thanks to God the Father for what He has already done for us, and continues to do, through Jesus.

*The Preface Response (Acclamation)* is a paraphrase of the jubilant and glorious hymn which the angels of heaven constantly sing with all of the saints: the “church triumphant” at the Throne of God in heaven: *Holy, Holy, Holy is the Lord our God! Heaven and earth are full of your glory. Hosanna in the highest!*

God loves it when we give him his due: GLORY!

*The Eucharist Prayer* begins now: and can be among several options chosen by the celebrant of the Mass. The four major ones remain: Eucharistic Prayer I – or *The Roman Canon* – based on the great Latin liturgy of the ancient Church. The newer translation of it now will be in a sense closer to the 1964 Missal of Pope Paul VI but with sprinklings of deeper scriptural and doctrinal renderings that will make it seem more true to the ancient nature of the mystery being proclaimed.

Eucharistic Prayer II – will remain the shortest – as we now have it. It is still based on the Greek language prayer used in 215 by St. Hippolytus of Rome. It will contain some fresh scripturally based and even poetic rendering of some words and phrases.

Eucharistic Prayer III – will remain an abbreviated version of Prayer I – the Roman Canon. The language you will note to be more circuitous and spiral, as if the prayer was gathering momentum as it goes along.

Eucharistic Prayer IV – will remain the lengthy Prayer based on the Eastern Church’s liturgy. Its prayers, restated and focused will again tell the story of the election of God’s people and the covenants he made with them which conclude with the New Covenant made through Jesus, which gives us in the very Mass.

There are other optional Eucharistic Prayers as well; for Children’s Masses; for Reconciliation Events; and many other pastoral needs.

Many though the options of these prayers are: they all have these seven elements, abbreviated or drawn out as they may be:

- *Thanksgiving and acclamation*: takes place in the Preface and the “Holy, Holy, Holy”
- *A prayer for the sending of the Holy Spirit* (also called the epiclesis)
- *The institution narrative* – the story of the Last Supper
- *Remembrance* (also called anamnesis) – after the consecration the priest intones: “*The Mystery of Faith*” – to which we make (by song or recited) an acclamation of remembering and proclaiming the death and resurrection of the Lord until He comes again (of the three options we will now use, two will be newly worded)
- *Intercessions* – Praying for the intercession of the Mother of God and of the saints, and for the Pope, bishop, the dead,
- *A final doxology* (where the prayer is summed up in the majestic singing of the “Through him, with him, in him...” prayer! The people’s Great sung AMEN! is their resounding affirmation of the very mystery of Redemption!

We have just witnessed the *Calvary* and the *Empty tomb* part of the Mass; now we prepare to approach the *Table of the Lord's Eucharistic Banquet* to be fed the very Bread of Heaven at the supper of the Lamb. We begin by praying a prayer that puts both God and ourselves in our proper place: He is our Father, and we are his children – and so Jesus taught us to pray: “Our Father, who art in heaven...” This prayer joins everyone in the church in mind and heart, making them a unity before they receive the communion sign and reality itself!

After the *Lord's Prayer* there is an extended prayer, newly worded, *asking for peace and protection* amidst the world and its enticements and the wiles of the devil who is very real and on the prowl – but it ends as the former version *looking forward with hope to the coming of the Lord Jesus* who will bring it all to a grand conclusion!

Then the priest prays the Easter Sunday Night peace prayer that Jesus offered his Apostles after they ran away and deserted him a few days before. There was no scolding, no placing blame *only the offer of peace and goodwill*. The Apostles are amazed, they were filled with faith, and they felt the wave of peace flow into them – they felt really united in spirit for the first time! Then priest then extends this exact same peace to everyone present; and invites all to share a sign of Christ's own peace, with one another. This is meant to be a time of unity and peace grounded and rooted in Christ – and not a simple “how do you do”! Those who participate thus can tell the difference between the two!

Next comes the singing of the Lamb of God. This takes place during the “fraction” – the breaking of the consecrated bread that is now the very real spiritual Body of Christ into pieces that can easily be distributed with the communion prepared at the Mass. Then the priest says his own private prayer before receiving communion. We must remember that the priest receives communion on behalf of all the people in the world, even those who have abandoned the faith and have no regard for

the Eucharist any longer; he does so devotedly and reverently to help make up for his own offenses and theirs.

Then comes a new wording: the priest holds up the consecrated host and says the newly restored version of this invitation: *Behold the Lamb of God. Behold him who takes away the sins of the world. Blessed are those who are called to the supper of the Lamb*; and then the people respond with the older version now translated which is poetic, rich, prayerful and scripturally grounded: we, with the Roman centurion who asked for healing for his servant, say: *Lord, I am not worthy that you should enter under my roof, but only say the word, and my soul shall be healed*. These words are very powerful, very deep and very appropriate for an immediate preparation for Jesus to come into the “home of our hearts,” the floor of which being our faith, and the walls and roof, our acts of charity already done in his Name and with his help! He does *have* to come into our house, but he *wants* to very much – and “to remain with us.”

The priest then receives communion first: he represents Christ in person, and he must fill himself to the full, in order to have something abundant and overflowing to give to others. The Eucharistic Ministers gathered around the altar receive communion after that, being his immediate helpers; and then everyone else in the sanctuary; and then, led by the priest, all of the Eucharistic Ministers take their place for the distribution of the Host and the Cup.

It is helpful for the Ministers (and the priest) to remember that *they are feeding the flock of God as surely as Jesus did on the mountain side or in the plain*. This should be done with great dignity, respect and devotion.

Those receiving should present themselves in a worthy manner – dressed properly to attend “the wedding banquet of the Lord.” One should always *bow* (or genuflect) before receiving the Host; and then *receive either on the tongue or in the hand*. If by tongue, then the mouth

should be open fairly wide, with the *tongue extended* (it ought never be an option to grab the host by the teeth or in any other way take it into the mouth); if in the hand: the hand you eat with should be placed underneath your other hand, palm-outstretched you should then reach up as though you were presenting the priest a “crib” or a “throne” for Jesus to rest in when he places Him in your hand. It is very important to recall that Jesus is your God – and that he deserves an uncommon amount of reverence and respect when you come into literal contact with him.

When the priest announces to you that this is indeed: “The Body of Christ,” with a pious enthusiasm sparked by your love for Jesus and the entire mystery of his love for you, respond audibly: AMEN! (which means: *Yes, it is true, I believe that this is really You, Jesus; Son of the Living God, and Son of Mary – My Lord, My Savior and My Brother*). The same reverence and response should accompany drinking from the cup offered by the Eucharistic Minister. We return to the pew now for silent prayer of adoration – this is a very important moment in the Mass – *you and Jesus are quite literally heart-to-Heart! What do you have to share with him; what do you think He has to share with you?*

After everyone has received Holy Communion and the sacred vessels have been purified and removed from the altar, it is the time for a general silent period of thanksgiving for the marvels that we have just witnessed and participated in: GOD has visited us, to STRENGTHEN us and NOURISH us, so that, resembling Christ more and more now (which is a primary effect of receiving Holy Communion), we can go out and LIVE OUR BELIEF by HELPING OTHERS because WE LOVE GOD and are members of a TRULY CARING COMMUNITY of parishioners.

*The Prayer after Communion* concludes the Communion Rite: this is a prayer in which we thank God for the Eucharist that he gives, so that we can live good daily lives, and prepare ourselves for eternal life.

Then comes the *Blessing and Dismissal*: we are *blessed* now by the priest *for service, and to glorify God by the lives we lead*. You will notice some new wordings in this mandate: to better state the commission and sending to serve others!

The Mass concludes with the Sending Forth Hymn – which accompanies the ministers’ procession out of the church and into the gathering area for a final farewell and some coffee and donuts, in some locations. This hymn is usually vibrant and energetic due to what has just occurred in the past hour.

#### **PART FOUR: AFTER THE MASS**

We recall the gospel story of the *ten lepers who were cured by Jesus, and only one – realizing that he had been cured – came back to thank Jesus*. What happens at just one Mass is really an astounding reality. God visits the people to simply be with them, to accept their praise and worship, thanks and adoration. He listens to their petitions, and feeds them with His word and the spiritual Body and Blood of His Risen Son, Jesus. He then sends them out to live their faith lives – “in the midst of a twisted and depraved generation in which they should shine like that stars of heaven” – just a little bit differently than they would have, if they had not come to church that day!

One of the great allies that we have in our daily battles to live as *supernatural / natural people* in a more and more purely secular-minded / natural world is the prayers and help of the angels and saints in heaven. They truly can help us *if we ask them to!* Everyone should have patron or favorite saints with whom they can identify, either because we are named after them, or because we have heard about or read about their lives and we want to imitate their victory of struggles in their lives. More and more saints are being canonized (officially recognized for their holiness) all of the time! These range from Popes,

and nuns, to ordinary persons in the pew, including children. If you don't already have a patron, look one up and start praying to him/her daily! Remember these saints went to church too, they prayed attentively, listened closely to what God had to tell them, received Holy Communion, then tried to go out and live the things they heard: if they can be saints – then certainly we can too – if we are willing to try!

It is always a very good idea to enlist, as well, as you go out into the world after Mass, the help and aid of the greatest warrior we have on our side: *St. Michael the Archangel*. Being like Lucifer, an archangel, Michael has even greater power than Lucifer (Satan) because he is an ally of God, while Satan is God's enemy. Before the Vatican Council II the *Prayer to St. Michael the Archangel* was always recited before the Mass even concluded; now it is optional, and is not part of the Mass at all. But that doesn't mean that the prayer cannot be said by any who wants to. I would highly recommend saying this prayer as a part of / or even if you are rushed for time, your entire, prayer of thanksgiving and protection:

## **Protection Prayer**

**St. Michael, the Archangel**, defend us in the battle. Be our protection against the wickedness and snares of the devil. May God rebuke him, we humbly pray, and do thou, O prince of the heavenly host, by the power of God, cast into hell Satan and all the evil spirits who prowl about the world seeking the ruin of souls. Amen.

*St. Michael the Archangel: be our Protector.*

*St. Michael the Archangel: be our Defender and Friend.*

*St. Michael the Archangel: pray for us.*

It would make perfect sense – if one, or two, or five or ten or more participants in so great a drama – would remain in the church for a few minutes afterwards or come back after socializing, before going home –

to, like the grateful leper, thank God for being so wonderful, so loving, so awesome; and to pray the **Protection Prayer to St. Michael**. Who knows the added graces and blessings that they could take with them on their way if they did just that after each and every Mass they attended?

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I hope that this article has been both informative and helpful as the English-speaking Church readies itself for some significant changes. Pray to be open to the Spirit, and pray for your brothers and sister who might find this change difficult. It is the will of God, as ordained by the Teaching Authority of the Church that this happen: it has the stamp of the Holy Spirit on it, and his very life within it, so it will be fruitful – for those with faith, who live in hope of good things to come, and ground their very lives in the charity of Christ – doing all things for love of Him and His Father.

God bless you – and thank you for reading this.

Fr. William Dinga, Jr.

August 24, 2011 Feast of St. Bartholomew

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For further reading: “The Mass” The Glory, The Mystery, The Tradition by Cardinal Donald Wuerl and Mike Aquilina, Doubleday, 2011.

And also: “Christ in His Mysteries,” Blessed Abbot Columba Marmion OSB, Zaccheus Press, 2008.