

The New Dismissals: A challenge to live our Catholic Faith in the Public Square

We have come to the end of our review of the changes that will affect us when we begin using the 3rd Edition of the Roman Missal on November 27, 2011. Over the past three months, I have attempted, not only to explain what is being changed in the Mass, but also why the changes in the English Missal were necessary. Among other things, the words we will pray at Mass beginning in Advent will be much more similar to the Mass in Spanish, French, Italian and German which in turn will reflect the unity and universality of our Catholic faith more clearly. In this final column, I would like to focus on the words of dismissal that have been added to the 3rd Edition of the Missal and which are the final words spoken by the priest or deacon at Mass.

Why a need for new words at the dismissal you might ask? As a result of the Bishops' Synod on the Eucharist in 2005, Pope Benedict XVI issued an Apostolic Exhortation in 2007 entitled, "Sacramentum Caritatis" meaning, "The Sacrament of Charity." In paragraph 51 of that letter the Holy Father writes, "*The word dismissal has come to imply a mission. These few words succinctly express the missionary nature of the Church.*" He concludes by saying, "*The People of God might be helped to understand more clearly this essential dimension of the Church's life, taking the dismissal as a starting point.*" So, keeping in mind the missionary nature of the Church, let's review two of the new dismissals.

The first new dismissal says, "**Go and announce the Gospel of the Lord.**" Each and every one of us is called to be evangelizers, to share with others the Good News of Jesus Christ and the gift of the Church. Do we do that on a regular basis? Do we leave Mass desiring to announce the Gospel of the Lord? The Bishops of America met in Baltimore this past week for their fall conference. At the top of their agenda was the question of religious liberty in America and the disconcerting attacks on religious liberty, especially against Catholics over the past few years. Now is the time for us to announce loud and clear, with humility and love, the liberating message of Jesus Christ, especially in the Public Square.

The second dismissal now says, "**Go in peace, glorifying the Lord by your life.**" What a powerful and challenging dismissal! Yes, as Temples of the Holy Spirit, we are called to glorify the Lord with our bodies. As Catholics, we don't have a public and private life. No, all that we do is meant to give glory to the Lord. May these new dismissals be a clarion call for us to live out our Catholic faith in the Public Square by announcing the Gospel of the Lord and by glorifying the Lord by the way we live and act.

Fr. Jesse