**Lesson 13: The Concluding Rites**

The Concluding Rites are meant not to simply dismiss us, but to send us forth. They begin with the Announcements which should be brief and should ideally be subjects which pertain to the whole community. They are made from a lectern distinct from the ambo. The ambo is reserved for the proclamation of the Word of God which includes the singing or reciting of the responsorial psalm and the reading of the intentions of the Prayers of the Faithful. It may also be used for the Easter Proclamation (Exsultet) at the Easter Vigil.[[1]](#endnote-1)

The priest then gives the Blessing. It may take the Simple Form in which the priest asks God, the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit to bless all those present. The people respond, “Amen.” This form concludes any of the other forms of blessing used at Mass. The Solemn Blessings are generally used on Feasts and Solemnities and may be used on Sundays and other occasions at the discretion of the priest. In this form the people are asked by the deacon or priest to bow for the blessing. This form usually includes a three-part blessing in which after each part, the people respond, “Amen.” The Prayers Over the People are associated primarily with penitential seasons and in the new Roman Missal, a full set of Prayers over the People has been added for the weekdays of Lent. As in the Solemn Blessing the people are asked to bow for God’s blessing. The priest then prays the Prayer, which concludes with, “...through Christ our Lord,” followed by the people’s response “Amen”. A concluding Trinitarian blessing is given and the people again respond, “Amen.” The Blessing at the Conclusion of a Pontifical Mass takes place when a bishop presides. After the greeting, he says, “Blessed be the name of the Lord,” and the people reply, “Now and forever.” He then says, “Our help is in the name of the Lord,” and the people reply, “Who made heaven and earth.” Then the simple form of the blessing is said with the bishop making the Sign of the Cross three times rather than once over the people, who respond, “Amen.”[[2]](#endnote-2)

The Mass closes with the Dismissal which sends the people forth. Our presence and participation at Mass is only the beginning. We are called, once we have left the assembly, to be actively engaged in the Lord’s work on earth. We are told in the dismissal to go forth and we are given a mission. Pope Benedict XVI, in his encyclical, “The Sacrament of Charity”, no. 84 wrote:

The love that we celebrate in the sacrament [Eucharist] is not something we can keep to ourselves. What the world needs is God’s love; it needs to encounter Christ and to believe in him… We cannot approach the Eucharistic table without being drawn into the mission which, beginning in the very heart of God, is meant to reach all people. Missionary outreach is thus an essential part of the Eucharistic form of Christian life.

The lessons in this walk through the Mass are meant to not simply convey knowledge of the Mass. Knowledge alone is not sufficient. Attentive listening to the promptings of the Holy Spirit, fortified by the graces of the Eucharist and by personal prayer help us to choose the right path individually and together as Christ’s Body. Above all, we need to have faith in the power of the Eucharist to give us light, courage and strength to carry on his work in the world.

1. Sr. Janet Baxendale, SC, *A Walk through the Mass,* p. 9, taken from “Become One Body, One Spirit in Christ” CD resource (International Committee on English in the Liturgy, Inc. 2010). [↑](#endnote-ref-1)
2. Ibid. [↑](#endnote-ref-2)