

# YEAR OF FAITH 2012-2013

## 23RD SUNDAY IN ORDINARY TIME | September 7-8, 2013

Use the dismissal of the Mass as the starting point of a homily on the Mass just as in movie genre's the action begins at the end and flashes back to the beginning. Use of the new dismissal, "Go in Peace Glorifying the Lord by your life!" This is the Missio, from which we get the word "Mass". This dismissal invites the congregation to go forth to do the missionary work of the Church; this work is the primary calling of the laity. They are nourished at the table of the Word and Sacrament to be strengthened to evangelize. This great mission requires preparation before Mass and attentiveness during Mass. Focusing on the importance of Eucharist to move the faithful to have greater reverence for Mass.

An effective genre of our time, so often found in movies, is the flashback. The movie opens in the present, which is in effect the end of the story, and then "flashes back" to the events that led up to the present end.

In the same way it may be useful to begin a contemplation of the Holy Mass by beginning at the end and then looking back.

In the most recent reforms of the Sacred Liturgy our Holy Father Pope Benedict XVI approved new dismissals for the Mass. One of these is, "Go in Peace glorifying the Lord by your Life"; usually promulgated by the deacon at the end of Mass.

These endings are known as the Missio, from which we get the English word "Mass". The Mass begins at the end. The Missio is the Missioning, the sending forth from the sacred liturgy into the world. We come to Mass to offer our thanks and adoration to God for all his myriad blessings. We have all heard someone say, "I don't get anything out of Mass". There is a kernel of truth in this statement because the primary reason we come to Mass is not to get something "out of it" but to "give something". What we come to give is our praise and thanksgiving. Gratitude is a hallmark of holiness. This is not to imply that we do not "get something" out of Mass. For surely we do get something, we receive Jesus Christ body, blood, soul and divinity, really, truly and substantially in Holy Communion. Having given to God our praise and thanksgiving he gives us himself. In the giving of himself he gives us ourselves thus we can say we are the Body of Christ.

At the very beginning of the Mass you entered the Church, you crossed the threshold of the building, the threshold of hope. The Catechism of the Catholic Church says, "To enter into the house of God, we must cross a threshold, which symbolizes passing from the world wounded by sin to the world of new life to which all men are called".

Thus when we enter into Mass we enter a different realm, a different time outside of time. In Holy Mass we come into direct contact with heaven, we touch eternity. Our lives are a pilgrimage to God; our ultimate goal is heaven to rest in blessed peace in the communion of the saints. The way that leads there is the path of the Mass. In Mass are fed first at the altar of the word where God reveals himself through the spoken word. Jesus Christ, as scripture says the same yesterday, today and forever, speaks

to us directly in His own words and by his example. The homily too is part of the ongoing unfolding of revelation.

As we move from the Liturgy of the Word we affirm our beliefs by our common profession of faith and then offer prayers of supplication for our needs and the needs of all people. In these acts we move beyond ourselves to a concern for our neighbor as the Lord Himself taught us to do.

We then offer to God simply gifts of bread and wine, elements available all over the world and the gifts of the poor. In these elements of wheat and grapes we also present ourselves and our poverty and ask God through the action of the priest to transform these gifts of bread and wine into the body and blood of Christ. By the power of the Holy Spirit these simple gifts are transformed in heavenly gifts.

St. Augustine taught that when we consume ordinary food it is assimilated into our bodies and becomes a part of us. He then explains the same does not hold true for Holy Communion. For when we receive Christ we are transformed into what we have received, we become one with His body. In that union St. Ignatius of Antioch reminds us that our Communion then is a remedy and antidote for sin and its destructive deadly force. In receiving Jesus we receive heaven itself and are united with the Holy Trinity in a most intimate and transformative way.

The Mass has changed very little from the simple house Churches of the first century to our own day. The externals may look different but in the essentials the Mass remains the same. If we were to examine the historical record, our flashback, we would see the “bones” are the same. Just as Jesus Christ is the same yesterday, today and forever so too is the Mass. Its essentials remain the same.

As we prepare each week to receive Jesus in Holy Communion we also want to be sure we are worthily prepared. A worthy confession of sin is a noble way to be certain that the vessel of our body, which is a temple of the Holy Spirit, will be clean living tabernacles for Jesus. We should come appropriately dressed, neat, clean and in clothes worthy of so great a celebration. We might also take time during the week to open our hearts to God’s Word for the upcoming Sunday by meditating on the readings for the Mass. We can come to Church a few minutes early to prepare and center ourselves for worship. In preparation for receive Holy Communion we must fast one hour prior to reception of communion. In this way we can be sure to express our love and desire to grow closer to Jesus who wants to draw closer to us.

Having been nourished at the table of Word and Sacrament we are then prepared to encounter the world as evangelizers, proclaiming Jesus both in our words and in our actions, Glorifying the Lord by our Lives!