

The Final Blessing at Mass –

Does the priest Bless me, or someone else?

As we come to the very end of the Mass, the last few little parts of the Mass are lumped together and called the concluding rites. I will put a little outline below to help you visualize where we have come from and where we are going in these last few little articles to help us understand the Catholic Mass more fully (and hopefully pray more deeply and experience Christ love for us more dynamically when we come to Mass as well). The last main aspect of the Mass has at least two distinct parts to it, which would be considered the (1) Greeting/Final Blessing as well as (2) the Dismissal. We will reflect on the dismissal next week, but for now, we think for a moment about the final blessing.

First of all, why would the priest say once again (as he has said multiple times already during the Mass) “The Lord be with you,” and the people respond “And with your spirit” before the blessing? Isn’t this just a strange repetition? After all we just received holy communion, so the Lord is truly with us! What is the priest trying to say by repeating that line again?! ...actually, there is no need to be confused here, because the priest is simply helping us remember and bring to the forefront of our minds what is already true (I’m sure none of you have every zoned out or drifted off in thought minutes after receiving holy communion, and failed to reflect deeply on Jesus presence within our souls....right?...). In addition, we should remember that this phrase is actually to prepare us for something important coming up in the near future. As we said at the very beginning of the Mass, the scriptural phrase “The Lord be with you” is almost always directed towards people being sent out on a mission or going through some trial or something similar in the near future. I’ll reflect on this more next week, but that is exactly the case at the end of Mass and being sent back out into our broken world!

Finally, the blessing that is given “May Almighty God Bless you, In the Name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit,” from the Catholic priest is meaning to be a very solemn and impactful moment. Whenever a priest gives the blessing, who is really doing the blessing? Of course, it is not the priest by himself with good feelings or good vibes sending them your way. We truly believe and understand that it is Jesus Christ Himself, who becomes present in and through the priest. Jesus is the one who is blessing you in that moment and trying to continue to send His grace into your hearts and confirm what has just occurred throughout the Mass. May we thank God for this blessing, and ask Him to help us open our hearts to receive it fully each and every Mass!

- **OPENING RITES**

- Greeting, Penitential Rite, Gloria
- Collect Prayer

- **THE LITURGY OF THE WORD**

- First reading, Responsorial Psalm, Second Reading, Alleluia, Gospel
- Homily, Creed, General Intercessions (Universal Prayer)

- **THE LITURGY OF THE EUCHARIST**

- OFFERTORY
- THE EUCHARISTIC PRAYER:
- THE COMMUNION RITE

- **CONCLUDING RITES**

- Greeting, Final Blessing, Dismissal