

## Active Participation in Mass: An Act of Stewardship

### 3. Sending Forth: The Concluding Rites

#### Sent from Worship to Service

The Mass ends with a specific concluding rite at which the assembly is dismissed with words such as “The Mass is ended - go in peace to love and serve the Lord.” Those Concluding Rite words are powerful. **They are a dismissal to go forth for an important mission: to live our faith as Christ’s disciples and share that faith with others through sharing the gifts and blessings God has given us.** Actually, we begin in many ways during Mass to do what the Concluding Rite will send us out to do. Just by coming to church, all of us share the gifts of our presence and prayers with everyone there. Some may also:

- Share gifts as choir members, lectors, cross bearers, acolytes, table preparation, gift bearers and communion ministers.
- Share gifts as greeters and ushers.
- Share gifts teaching children during Liturgy of the Word.
- Share the gift of a smile and conversation.
- Share the gift of saying extra prayers for someone.

At the conclusion of Mass then, just as we have shared many gifts during liturgy, we are sent out to continue to do that in our daily lives.

There are many ways we may share our gifts with the people we encounter every day. We share with **family members** by cooking a meal, helping with chores, reading to a child, running an errand for someone. We share with **friends** when we do things like shovel snow for an elderly neighbor or give a friend a ride to an appointment. We might share with **people at school or work** by helping a classmate with homework or helping a coworker with a project. By such actions we are giving the gift of ourselves, our time and our resources which is what we are sent out from Sunday liturgy to do although we might not think about all those everyday encounters in that way.

The Concluding Rite of the Mass also dismisses us to live our faith in the **wider community** starting with our own neighborhoods and reaching out to other places in the world. What gifts and blessings has God given us individually and as a parish that we can share with that wider community in various ways? Some of us may:

- Share gifts through parish outreach efforts like Loaves and Fishes or Families Moving Forward.
- Bring food to church for the local food shelf.
- Visit the elderly in nursing homes or donate clothing for the needy.
- Give financial donations to the missions or disaster relief programs.

- Volunteer as a coach or tutor at a local school.
- Pray for people around the world suffering from poverty.
- Advocate with lawmakers for people suffering from an injustice.

There are many ways to serve-we are sent out from Mass to serve God by serving others.

At every Eucharist we celebrate, we gather as a community and receive the gift of Christ present in the bread and wine. We are dismissed from the Eucharistic celebration to be good stewards of that gift by sharing Christ with others in the way we share the blessings we have received from God. How will you share Christ with others this week?