

Number Seventeen: The Dismissal

Mass ends with a Dismissal or a 'commissioning'. Instead of ending with a casual 'good-bye' or 'see you soon', the priest or the assisting deacon send God's people forth into the world with one of four different dismissals. These dismissals recall Christ's commissioning of his disciples before his Ascension to "Go and make disciples of all nations" (Matt 28:19). They remind us that we are to be witnesses to the Gospel in our daily life outside the walls of the parish church. Two of the options are very simple: "Go forth, the Mass is ended" or "Go in peace". But even these simple dismissals are reminders to us of our duty to spread the Gospel. "Go forth" has a forceful ring to it and "Go in peace" reminds us that we go forth from the church carrying not the world's idea of peace, but rather to share the peace of Christ. The other two options make our commission to witness to the Gospel even more beautifully explicit: "Go and announce the Gospel of the Lord" or "Go in peace, glorifying the Lord by your life". We are sent out into the world to be witnesses to the Gospel and to glorify our good and gracious God by how we live. We respond to all of these great commissions in gratitude and love by responding: "Thanks be to God".