

Number Five: Why “And With Your Spirit?”

“The Lord be with you” and the response, “and with your spirit”, echo St. Paul’s conclusion in his letters to the Galatians and to Timothy (Gal 6:18 and 2 Tim 4:22). This greeting is used 4 times during Mass. The celebrant bishop or priest uses it at the beginning of Mass, during the Preface Dialogue before the Eucharistic Prayer and at the End of Mass. The deacon uses it (or in his absence the priest) before the Gospel. In the New Missal the response matches the original Latin text “And with your spirit”. This revision conforms the Mass in English with the Mass in French and all other languages that refer to the “spirit”. “Spirit” signifies the spirit given to the bishop, priest or deacon at his ordination for service to the Church. St. Paul reminds us “there are varieties of gifts, but the same Spirit; and there are varieties of services, but the same Lord; and there are varieties of activities, but it is the same God who activates all of them in everyone.” (1 Cor 12:4-6) The revised greeting and response help us to remember that the Holy Spirit empowers the celebration of the sacraments in which God blesses, heals, forgives, strengthens and nourishes us.