

Understanding the New Roman Missal

The Concluding Rites

For our last reflection on the changes to the English translation of the Roman Missal that will be implemented during Advent, we will take a look at the Concluding Rites. This section of the Mass is much shorter than the three parts that precede it. Thus, there will be significantly fewer changes to the words that both the priest and the congregation will say in comparison to earlier portions of the Mass.

The Concluding Rites will begin with any brief announcements that need to be made, if necessary. Then, the priest will greet the congregation as he has always done: “The Lord be with you.” Following the precedent set throughout the Mass to this point, those assembled will respond, “And with your spirit.”

The priest or deacon will then invite the congregation to bow their heads, so that he may offer a prayer or solemn blessing. These blessings will be more formal in tone than in the previous translation, and the priest will conclude the blessing by making the Sign of the Cross over the congregation, as he always has.

The biggest change in this portion of the Mass may occur during the priest or deacon’s dismissal. This is because he now has four options of what to say when he is sending forth those assembled. The priest or deacon has the option of either saying, “Go forth, the Mass has ended,” “Go and announce the Gospel of the Lord,” “Go in peace, glorifying the Lord by your life,” or just “Go in peace.” The reason for these changes, as Fr. Paul Turner points out in *Understanding the Revised Mass Texts*, is that “These new formulas were promoted by a recent synod of bishops in Rome. When Mass concludes, we do not just leave the building. We enter the world with a mission.”

The Mass will then end as it always has: the congregation will respond, “Thanks be to God,” and the liturgical ministers will then process out, either in silence or to an optional closing hymn.

For more information on the new English translation of the *Missale Romanum*, please visit the United States Conference of Catholic Bishops’ Web site at www.usccb.org/romanmissal.