



Ask, Father James:

"Go! In the Peace of Christ" The Mass is ended! Please explain this dismissal form at Mass.

First, we have to understand that the above dismissal form is the translation of the original Latin form, "Ite, Missa est" - Go, The Mass is ended. To which we reply, "Deo Gratias" - meaning "Thanks be to God." This Mass ending form is a commitment to carry out what we profess each Sunday in the creed; that, "We believe in one holy catholic and apostolic church." Meaning, that the church is *catholic and apostolic*, which means that we are a missionary church and as apostles we are sent out into the missions at the end of each Mass. The New Testament Gospels variously record Christ commissioning the apostles to carry forward his mission to all the world (Matthew 28:16–20; Luke 24:44–49; John 20:19–23).

For instance, in Matthew's gospel, Christ appears to his disciples and instructs them:

All authority in heaven and on earth has been given to me. As you go, therefore, disciple all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit, teaching them to keep all that I have commanded you. And behold, I am with you always, unto the end of the age" (Matthew 28:18–20)

Likewise, at the end of every Mass, we are reminded that all members of the church are to be engaged in the apostolic work of discipleship. The Priest tells the people; "the Mass is ended, go in peace to love and serve the Lord." Don't always be in a hurry to leave the Mass before you hear this mission statement. The final blessing is the sending forth blessing to go into the world.

We are sent back into the world to go do Ministry and missionary work both in and around the church and in the world. We are "sent forth" to go continue to love and serve the Lord, to bring to the world what we received at Mass, namely the teaching of Christ from the Word, and the presence of Christ from the Eucharist. Go! In the Peace of Christ" is a commissioning by Christ to go forth and bring His Love into the world. When the priest gives us the final blessing, this is our commissioning for the coming week from the Holy Spirit. Our response of "Thanks be to God" is expressing our gratitude for "counting us worthy to be sent (apostles) to the world.

All Catholics, after attending Mass, should feel impelled by Christ to give a cup of water to the world's thirsty ones, or to write a cheque for the church to feed the hungry; to go out there to search for a lost friend or relative; visit a nursing home, or resolve to teach a Sunday school class next Sunday, share a meal, tell a child a Bible story, go to choir practice, and feed the hungry, give more offering money to the church to do Christ's work... Remember! You can't be a nominal Christian. You can't carry the name "Christian," and not be

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committed to being Christ-like. To become a disciple means a decisive and irrevocable action and making oneself sensitive to the needs of others, opening one's eyes and heart to recognizing injustice, suffering, oppression, and the plight of those who have fallen by the wayside...

In the dismissal form, we are told not only to love the Lord but also to “serve the Lord.” We serve our God and not ourselves or our own agenda. We go forth to act, serving and protecting the vulnerable and providing for the needs of others. We go forth recognizing that Jesus is present not only in the bread and wine that we have just received but also in “the poor, the sick, and the imprisoned” (Catechism of the Catholic Church, 1373). We are reminded by these words that to serve the Lord means to serve our neighbour. When we say, “Thanks be to God,” we are showing gratitude for the trust that God places in us to be Christ’s loving presence in the world.

ease email your Faith Questions to Father James at: fjowolagba@gmail.com

