

## The Revised Mass



Father Patrick Walsh  
St Vincent's Parish  
Sheffield

## INTRODUCTORY RITES OF THE MASS

The Introductory Rites begin when the people stand after the bell is rung and finish when they sit down before the Readings. The purpose of these Rites is to ensure that the Faithful establish communion as God's Family and dispose themselves to listen fruitfully to God's Word and celebrate the Eucharist with devotion.

### THE OPENING SONG

On Sundays everyone usually sings an **Opening Song**. It should be such that everyone is able, in some degree, to join in. Its purpose is to open the celebration, foster the unity of those present, introduce their thoughts to the Liturgical Season in hand or Feast being celebrated and accompany the entrance procession, if there is one.

The Opening Hymn replaces a one-sentence Antiphon to be found in the Missal for the Mass of the Day - so much the better if the choir can sing the Antiphon and repeat it as long as the procession lasts.

The ringing of the bell at the beginning at Mass is the signal for the people to stand, not for the music to start up.

## THE ENTRY PROCESSION

On Sundays the procession, consisting of (Thurifer), Cross-bearer, Candle-bearers, Readers (one carrying the Book of the Gospels) and Priest moves up the centre aisle of the church and unhurried. The Reader who carries up the Book of the Gospels places it reverently on the centre of the Altar and bows before it. After the Priest venerates the Altar he may incense it before going to the Presidential Chair to begin Mass.

*If, after three or four verses of a hymn, the Priest is at his post, ready to begin Mass, there is no need to go on singing all those extra verses holding up the Mass. It's more important to 'sing the Mass' rather than 'sing at Mass'. Hymns are not part of the Mass proper, but added extras. They generally accompany processions (entry, offertory, communion and exit) and are not sung for their own sake or because we like singing. Congregations too reliant on the 'four hymn sandwich' are not doing themselves any favours. Also overly loud organ music can sometimes inhibit congregational singing. The Music Ministry, like all ministries, operates on behalf of the congregation, helping them to 'lift up their hearts' in prayer and worship. Solo artists are for the Concert Hall.*

## SIGN OF THE CROSS

The Priest makes the sign of the cross while saying or singing the appropriate words after which the people respond by saying or singing 'Amen'. 'Amen' is borrowed from the Hebrew.

## THE GREETING

The priest then has a choice of three greetings to use and the response to these is changed in the revised translation. When the Priest says: "*The Lord be with you*" the congregation responds with "**And with your spirit**". It is easy to think that this exchange is just a formal way for the Priest and people to say "hello" to each other. But there is more to it than that. The words are intended as a prayer as much as a greeting. They are said at five pivotal times during the Mass and if they meant "hello everyone", they would not need to be repeated like this. Ordained ministers, as the Lord's anointed, have received special gifts in Ordination which they use to serve God's people especially in the Liturgy. There they represent Christ, mere mortals though they be. The people's response "and with your spirit" is specially referring to this. When the priest greets the people with; "the Lord be with you" or another similar greeting he is reaffirming them both as God's Holy people and the Body of Christ - not just a crowd of people who haphazardly show up for Sunday Mass. Both the greeting and reply are rooted firmly in the Bible. "The Lord be with you" is found in Judges 6:12, Ruth 2:4, Chronicles 15:2, and Luke 1:28. "**And with your spirit**" is found in 2 Timothy 4:22, Galatians 6:18, Philippians 4:23 and Philemon 25.

*Casual and personalised greetings ("Good morning folks and welcome to St Vincent's" etc.) which emphasises a merely human exchange and obscures the mystery of Christ's presence and action **are inappropriate**. At Mass the people have come from a secular environment to a sacred building consecrated for Divine worship, so liturgical language should reflect this. When people come to church for Mass they expect it to be a place of reverence and quiet, conducive to prayer - not mayhem. Those assigned for the Ministry of welcome should briefly greet people as they*

*enter the Church but not engage certain friends of theirs in extended conversation about this and that. People can talk all they want over a cup of tea after Mass.*

*It's lovely to see children of all ages at Mass, but what happens when an infant has a bad morning, becomes very unsettled and there is no let up? Most parents, in my view, adopt a common sense approach and instinctively know what to do. Mass is not an endurance test.*

## **OPENING WORDS**

*After the greeting the Priest may introduce the Mass with a few brief but well-chosen words. This helps to focus people's minds on the theme of the Mass being celebrated. However, by coming out with too much banter at this point, the Celebrant could unwittingly draw too much attention to himself, putting the people in the wrong frame of mind for listening to the Word of God. The same applies to the Priest opening the Mass with a mini-homily, which is not uncommon but definitely out of place.*

## **PENITENTIAL ACT**

There are three options for the Penitential Act. They are in the form of three acclamations concluding with 'Lord, have mercy, Christ, have mercy, Lord, have mercy' which everyone repeats after the Priest. After the acclamations the priest should observe a slight pause before he comes in with 'Lord, have mercy'. Priests have the option of substituting the English words 'Lord, have

mercy' with the original Greek texts, '*Kyrie eleison, Christe eleison, Kyrie eleison*'. The priest is also permitted to replace the acclamations with appropriate ones of his own. Improvised acclamations, however, should focus on the redeeming action of Christ rather than on personal sinfulness. The '*Kyrie*' is by nature a chant and is normally sung by all the people with the Choir or Cantor or Priest having a part to play.

Another popular form of the Penitential Act is the prayer known by its Latin title, '*The Confiteor*'. The '*Confiteor*' is followed as always by 'Lord, have mercy'. The priest concludes the Penitential Act with an absolution – though it is not to be confused with the one he gives in the Sacrament of Penance.

## **THE GLORIA**

We sing or recite it on all Sundays of the year except during Advent or Lent. It is also said or sung on other Feast days. Everyone may sing or recite the Gloria together or, if sung, the people may alternate with the Choir or the Choir may sing it alone. It may be intoned by the Priest, Cantor or Choir.

**The words of this ancient hymn (5<sup>th</sup> century) may not be altered or replaced by a text which is at variance from that in the Missal.** In the years following Vatican 11 parishes often took liberties in this regard and the Liturgy was all the poorer for it.

## **THE COLLECT**

The 'Collect' completes the introductory Rites. It may be sung or said. After the priest says, '*Let us pray*', all observe a brief silence so that they may be conscious of the fact that they are in God's presence and call their own petitions to mind. The Collect expresses the character of the celebration and prepares the congregation to listen to God's Word.



## THE LITURGY OF THE WORD

### INTRODUCTION

In the Readings, God speaks to His people with great love, opening up to them the mystery of redemption and salvation, and nourishing their spirit. Christ is Present in His Word when it is proclaimed at Mass. By their silent listening and pondering, by their singing and acclamations, the people make God's Word their own and affirm their acceptance of it in the Creed. The Biblical

Readings and their accompanying Scripture chants may not be omitted, or replaced by non-biblical texts.

### **'HOLD YOUR HORSES'**

*Those who read the Word of God at Mass should wait a moment for the people to sit down and compose themselves before they reverently approach the Lectern. Any sort of dashing to the lectern should be avoided.*

*Rushed Liturgy is poor liturgy and this also applies to the Celebrant. This doesn't mean the celebrant drags the Mass or says it with a sort of long drawn out unctuous 'parsonic voice' out of character with his ordinary way of speaking.*

### **'PAUSE FOR THOUGHT'**

After the Reader says: *'The Word of the Lord'*, there is a **short pause** before the Psalm is said or sung. If the Psalm is recited by the Reader, he/she should stay at the Lectern (Ambo) for this brief pause. But if the psalm is sung, the Reader can go back to their place immediately after the Reading. There should also be a **short pause** after the Second Reading before the 'Alleluia' is

sung - musicians take note. There are several places in the Mass where silent reflection is called for. The Liturgy will be all the poorer if we ignore them.

*It may sometimes be helpful for the Readings to be introduced by a brief word from the Celebrant in order to facilitate listening. However, it's inappropriate for lay people to make interjections during Mass, such as: 'The First Reading' or 'The response to the Psalm is' or 'Please stand for the Gospel' or 'The Gospel Acclamation'. They hinder the prayer flow of the Mass and are unnecessary.*

## THE PSALM

The Psalm is an integral part of the Liturgy of the Word. It is best sung - at least on Sundays. The psalms, which come from the Old Testament, were used by Christ Himself in prayer. Appropriate psalms have been selected to help the Assembly to meditate on, and respond to the Word of God in the First Reading.

*The standard procedure is that the Cantor sings the prescribed Psalm from the Lectern (Ambo) and the whole Assembly comes in on the sung response. **It should not be altered or replaced by a Communal Hymn or other sort of Medley where the words, howsoever beautiful, are at variance from those in the Lectionary.** It's best to refrain from tampering with God's Word. When sung unaccompanied, Psalms can often come across quite prayerful and uplifting. When accompanied, music wants to be sufficiently soft so that the congregation can hear every word of the Psalm without difficulty. A well sung Psalm really enhances the Liturgy of the Word.*

## THE GOSPEL ACCLAMATION

This acclamation has traditionally accompanied the Gospel procession, in which the Book of the Gospels is carried to the Lectern (Ambo) accompanied by lighted torches and incense. This Acclamation Chant is sung by everyone present. The verse may be sung by the Cantor or Choir or even recited by the congregation.

## THE GOSPEL

This is the high point of the Liturgy of the Word. It is reserved for the Deacon or Priest. While bowing before the altar the Priest says a quiet prayer before he proceeds to read the Gospel. The Book of the Gospels may be incensed before the Reading. After the Gospel, as he kisses the book, the Priest says quietly the following words: "*Through the words of the gospel may our sins be wiped away*". To highlight its importance the Servers may stand with lighted torches at each side of the Lectern (Ambo) while the Gospel is proclaimed.

The celebrant or Deacon should refrain from holding aloft the Book of the Gospels when he says: '*The Gospel of the Lord*'. The Gospel is in the proclamation - it's not the Book itself.

## THE HOMILY

The Homily is an integral part of the Sacred Liturgy. It helps the assembly to understand the Word of God, assimilate it and apply it to their lives. On Sundays or holydays the homily may not be

**omitted** without a serious reason and is **not to be replaced by appeals** or other forms of preaching, howsoever worthy. It is reserved to the Priest or Deacon and is not to be given by a lay person. Short appeals by lay people may be made at the end of Mass. It's most appropriate that **a period of silence follows the Homily**, so that the people may take the Word of God to heart. The Homily may be given either from the Lectern or from the Priest's Chair.

*The Word of God first enters into my (mind) through my ears – 'faith comes through hearing' (Rom10:17.) It then must be allowed to 'drop from my head into my heart so that I make it my own and understand its implications and finally it reaches my hands so that I put it into practice in my daily life, remembering St James's words 'faith without good works is dead'. Remember the three H's - hearing, heart and hands.*

## **THE PROFESSION OF FAITH (CREED)**

The purpose of the Nicene Creed (formulated in the fifth century at the Council of Nicea) is that the whole Assembly may respond to the Word of God taken from the Readings and subsequently explained in the Homily. By reciting the Creed, the people also confess the great mysteries of the Faith soon to be celebrated in the Liturgy of the Eucharist. On more solemn occasions it can be sung but it is normally said. **A profound bow** is made by all at the phrase '*by the power of the Holy Spirit...and was made man*'. At masses on **Christmas Day and the Feast of the Annunciation all kneel** at these words.

## THE BIDDING PRAYERS

Having being nourished by the Word, the Faithful prays the 'bidding prayers' for the needs of the entire Church, for civil authorities, for those weighed down by various needs, for the local community and for the salvation of all.

*These intentions should be short, clear and to the point so that the Faithful can understand and respond to them without difficulty. After the intention is announced there should be a very short pause before the Reader says 'Lord, hear us' which, along with the response, may be sung. If sung, it should be brief and not drawn out as, for instance, in the 'Taize' chant.*



## LITURGY OF THE EUCHARIST

### PREPARATION OF THE GIFTS

At this point in the Mass the gifts of bread and wine are brought to the altar by members of the congregation and presented to the Priest. The collection and sometimes donations for the poor may also be part of the 'offertory' but **not token items** which will be retrieved after Mass.

*Any work or items associated with a particular celebration, say a Parish Jubilee Mass, or even an School Leavers Mass (eg. programmes of work, posters etc.), are best brought up in the Entrance*

Procession and placed in the Sanctuary. If the 'Presentation of gifts' takes too long or is given too much prominence, especially when the majority of items presented are **unconnected to charitable giving**, then it tends to **overshadow the Eucharistic Prayer** - the real high point of the Mass. In such cases the Liturgy becomes unhinged. The secret is to keep the Mass balanced, simple and uncluttered.

On occasions, celebrating a **'Liturgy of the Word' can be a far more appropriate Liturgy than a Mass**, especially in school situations, if the majority of the kids don't go to Sunday Mass. If a sizeable segment of the kids come up for a blessing during communion time, a custom which could be questioned, since there is a perfectly adequate blessing given to all at the end of Mass, then it might be time for a rethink as to whether Mass is the right Liturgy for these youngsters.. A Liturgy of the Word or Penitential Service may be far more appropriate. Sometimes I get the impression that Mass is more pageantry than Liturgy. **'MASS WITH EVERYTHING'** to me, is not the best pastoral or liturgical practice. When I was going through primary and secondary education, and that wasn't that long ago, school masses were unheard of. We went to Mass on Sundays and holidays with our families and that was it. School was a place where we learnt with rigour the rudiments of the Catholic Faith and rightly so. The 1970 instruction from the Congregation of Divine Worship in Rome states: "The Eucharist is celebrated as a rule in a place of worship.[34] Apart from cases of **real need**, as adjudged by the Ordinary for his jurisdiction, celebration outside a church is not permitted". (**Liturgicae Instaurationes 1970**)

Catholic parents are strongly encouraged to take their kids and teenagers to Mass on a Sunday in fulfilment of the promises they made to God when their children were baptised.

The purpose of any chant at this point in the Mass, is to accompany the taking of the collection, the procession and Presentation of gifts.

The singing or music should finish by the time the priest has washed his hands and not go on *ad infinitum*. I was at a funeral Mass recently when the offertory hymn went on for a full five minutes after the priest had washed his hands. This doesn't serve any useful purpose.

Sung texts need not speak of bread and wine, or of offering. Texts expressing joy, praise, community, as well as the spirit of the season are appropriate. Since the preparation of the gifts is preparatory, **instrumental music** (except during Lent) **or silence** may be more effective at this point.

The prayers accompanying the placing of the gifts on the Altar are based upon Jewish table-prayers.

*'Blessed are you Lord God of all creation  
For through your goodness we have received The Bread we offer You  
Fruit of the earth and work of human hands  
It will become for us the Bread of Life'*

These words express praise to God for the gift of creation and for human involvement in the making of bread and wine. Since wheat needs to be ground and grapes crushed before the bread and wine are made, the element of sacrifice is implied. The Mass is the Sacrifice of Christ and in union with Him, through the ministry of the Priest, we offer our lives to the Father.

If there is music, the Offertory Prayers are said quietly by the Priest. If there is no music he may say them audibly. The Bread and Wine, the Altar, the Cross, the Priest and the people may all be incensed at this point. This shows honour to the bread and wine soon to become Christ's Body and Blood, honour to the priest who represents Christ and honour to the congregation, God's priestly people. It also represents prayer rising up to God like sweet smelling incense. As the Priest washes his hands he says quietly '*Wash me, O Lord, from my iniquity and cleanse me from my sin*'. The Priest then invites the congregation to pray. In the revised text it runs:

*'Pray brethren (brothers and sisters) **that my sacrifice and yours** may be acceptable to God the Almighty Father.'*

In keeping with the Latin text, this implies that more than one Sacrifice is being offered. Yes, the Mass is a single Sacrifice offered by all present but each member of the congregation has his/her own individual input.

The Presentation of the Gifts concludes with a Prayer over the Offerings. There should be **a brief pause by the Priest** before he begins the dialogue before the Preface.

## **THE EUCHARISTIC PRAYER**

This Prayer is **the centre and summit of the entire celebration** of Mass. It is proclaimed by the Priest in the name of Christ and on behalf of the entire assembly which professes its faith and gives its assent through dialogue and acclamations culminating in the Great Amen. On more

solemn occasions the entire Eucharistic Prayer may be sung. 'Eucharist' means praise and thanksgiving which is especially highlighted in the Preface. Even though we use the word 'Preface' for this part of Mass it is not to be seen as a preliminary to the Eucharistic prayer but part of it. The Missal contains a number of Eucharistic Prayers. Along with the four we are familiar with, there are two on Reconciliation (*added in 1975*), sometimes used during the Lenten Season and other occasions. There are also Eucharistic Prayers for special needs and occasions. Before Vatican II (Second Vatican Council) which ended in December 1965, there was only one Eucharistic prayer, better known as the Roman Canon, which is retained in the present Missal. Eucharistic Prayer II, the shortest, and Eucharistic Prayer IV, the longest, date their origins back to the fourth century. Eucharistic Prayer III was newly composed following Vatican II.

The Eucharistic Prayer is said by the Priest alone and all the people should listen to it attentively with reverence and silence. The chief elements making up this Prayer are as follows:

**THANKSGIVING:** This is especially brought out in the Preface. The Priest, in the name of the people glorifies God the Father and gives thanks for the whole work of Creation or for some special aspect of it that corresponds to the Feast day or Liturgical Season in hand. In the revised translation the dialogue preceding the Preface is set to music so the priest is strongly encouraged to sing it, at least on Sundays.

**ACCLAMATION:** Uniting their voices with the Heavenly Hosts of Angels in a universal outburst of praise, the Priest and congregation sing the 'Sanctus' or 'Holy, Holy', the first line of which is based on a passage from the Book of Isaiah (6:3). 'Hosts' in the Latin translation is '*Sabaoth*'. Actually it

is a Hebrew word fused with the Latin. It refers to God's command over the armies of Angels. It proclaims the power of God who has all the forces of Heaven and Earth under his control. *'Blessed is He who comes in the name of the Lord'* is a direct quote from Psalm 118:26. The 'Holy Holy' is a musical priority and, if possible, should always be sung. **The words of the text should correspond with those in the Roman Missal and not be altered.**

**'EPICLESIS'**: (*meaning 'invocation upon'*) By stretching his hands, palms down, over the offerings the Priest in the name of the Church implores the Holy Spirit to come down on the Bread and Wine so they become Christ's Body and Blood at the consecration. This change is referred to as **'Transubstantiation'**

## **INSTITUTION NARRATIVE AND CONSECRATION:**

In words and actions the Sacrifice which Christ instituted at the Last Supper is celebrated. Under the appearance of Bread and Wine He offered His Body and Blood for us on the Cross, gave them to the Apostles to eat and drink and commanded that they carry on this mystery in His memory. Memorial, in the scriptures is not merely recording a past event but in a certain sense making it present again sacramentally. **At Mass Christ does not suffer or die again.** Rather he represents, prolongs, and renews His great moment of sacrifice down through the centuries - it's like Calvary being suspended in time for the benefit of men and women of every generation until He returns in Glory.

*At the risk of diminishing the doctrine of the Real Presence in the eyes of the Faithful, the Church asks us to refrain from using common vessels at Mass which are lacking in quality, or seen as **mere containers**. Also proscribed are vessels made from glass, earthenware, clay, or other materials that break easily. (Redemptionis Sacramentum 2004)*

After the Consecration there is as usual the 'Proclamation of Faith'. Just like we say 'The gospel of the Lord', so also at this point in the revised text we simply say '*The Mystery of Faith*'.

*If anything, the Liturgical Renewal enshrined in the revised Missal is aiming to refocus our attention back on to the prime purpose of Mass which is adoration and praise of God, as well as supplication and obtaining pardon for our sins. In my humble view, after Vatican II, the celebration of Mass tended to downplay the Divine element and lean more towards the human. Congregations contracted as a result. Mass is not a performance - still less pageantry. Neither is it a 'Service' which suggests nonparticipation by the assembly. The Involvement which is called for is a real engagement of mind and heart where the Faithful, in a spirit of humility, through word, action and silent reflection are drawn to offer praise and thanks to God 'in Spirit and in Truth'. 'Full, active and conscious participation called for in the Second Vatican Council means much more than 'running around in circles, chasing our tails'.*

**'ANAMNESIS':** (*memory*). Fulfilling the command of Christ given to the Apostles at the Last Supper and passed on to us, the Church treasures the memory of the saving work of Christ in His Passion, Death and Resurrection.

**OFFERING:** The Church here and now assembled offers Christ, the Victim to the Father in the Holy Spirit. The Faithful also offer themselves so as to be drawn into ever more perfect union, through Christ, with God the Father and with each other so that God may be all in all.

**INTERCESSIONS:** The Eucharist is a celebration of the whole church in Heaven, on Earth and in Purgatory, so the offering is made for all its members both Living and Dead.

*I notice in Catholic circles these days that Funeral Masses are seen more as celebrations of the life of the person than praying for the 'happy repose of their soul'. It may be fine for other denominations who, by and large, don't believe in praying for the Dead but for Catholics it's different. On the cover of the 'Order of Service' it's no harm to remind people that the Mass is primarily said for the 'happy repose of the person's soul'. We still believe in Purgatory. It is firmly attested to in Scripture and part of the constant teaching of the Church. To enhance the above I believe that purple vestments are best worn at adult funerals. In the case of children white seems more appropriate.*

*Long winded eulogies are also out of place at funeral Masses. That doesn't mean that we don't mention anything about the person. Saying 'over the top' things like 'we're burying a veritable saint today' are completely inappropriate. That is God's domain and we should leave it to Him.*

*Also it is best to refrain from bringing up a raft of objects at the Presentation of the Gifts associated with a person's life. I remember once at a funeral in Ireland when the family brought up the dead person's pipe and placed it on the coffin. These things trivialise the Liturgy and should never be allowed.*

*Another thing which puzzles me is when ministers set about explaining the symbolism of an action such as incensing the coffin or sprinkling it with holy water. By doing this they take the power out of the symbol. It's like someone, before they shake hands with you, saying "I'm going to shake hands with you now" which sound puerile. People don't need explanations at funeral Masses or any Masses for that matter. The fewer words we say the better. In some instances the 'Liturgy of the Word' degenerates into a 'liturgy of words'. It's best to let Liturgy speak for itself. Of course some people like listening to the sound of their own voice.*

**THE FINAL DOXOLOGY:** Just like the Eucharistic Prayer opens with a dialogue so also it closes with one. The praise of God is expressed in the Doxology which is sung by the priest, then affirmed and concluded by the people's sung response in the Great Amen. Since it consists of only two syllables it may be best to repeat it a number of times when sung.

*Once when asked to explain the meaning of the word 'Amen', a child thought for a minute and then compared it to e-mail. It's like hitting the 'send' button. We send our entire message all at once through the Angelic Web server to the in-box of the One who rules over all.*

## THE COMMUNION RITE

### THE LORD'S PRAYER

Because of its themes of Daily Bread and mutual forgiveness the Lord's Prayer is the most appropriate preparation for Holy Communion "so that what is holy may be given to those who are holy". The Communion Rite begins with the Lord's Prayer and continues through the prayer after Communion.

### THE SIGN OF PEACE

After the Lord's Prayer the Priest prays for peace and unity in the Church. In this prayer pronouns referring to the Church are feminine. This recalls the Church's image as the Bride of Christ. The Sign of Peace is optional but it is normally exchanged. It should only be given to those nearest to you and in a *sober* manner.

### THE FRACTION

The priest breaks the large host to signify that we are part of one body (1Cor:10:17) because we all receive from the 'one loaf'. One of the early names for the entire Mass was 'the breaking of bread'.

However, this action should not be unnecessarily prolonged or accorded undue importance.

The Priest puts a small piece of the Bread into the chalice to signify the unity of Christ's Body and Blood in the work of salvation.

*The Body and Blood of Christ should only be received by Catholics who are properly disposed. On-going repentance should be a common feature in the lives of Christians. Holy Communion will be more fruitfully received by those who are no strangers to private confession, before which they should make a thorough examination of conscience. We all need to be on our guard against the deadly effects of routine. It was only after the Prodigal Son turned away from his sinful way of life and was reconciled with his Father that a family feast (communion) was in order, but not before. According to Church teaching there are some states of life which deter one from receiving the Holy Sacrament. (see article entitled **'CAN I RECEIVE HOLY COMMUNION'** on my web site **(crookes.catholicweb.com)**)*

**WORDS OF WISDOM FROM ST PADRE PIO:** *"My dear daughter, I think that the holy Eucharist is a great means through which to aspire to perfection. But we must receive it with the desire and intention of removing from the heart all that is displeasing to him with whom we wish to dwell". (Letter to Maria Gargani 1917) Saint Pio of Pietrelcina*

## **HOLY COMMUNION**

*An appropriate hymn, sung by the people whilst coming up to receive Holy Communion is the norm. Better still, though, are short verses from Scripture incorporating a communion theme sung by the Cantor in the form of a Litany, with the people coming in on a repeated sung response as they make their way up the church for Holy Communion. They don't need hymn books for this repeated sung response. After the distribution of Holy Communion, however, a period of silence is called for. (Pope Benedict observed quite an extended period of silence after Holy Communion during His Mass at Westminster Cathedral in 2010). What also goes down very well is an uplifting meditative piece sung by the Choir alone when everyone is settled.*

*The playing of loud thumping organ music, during or after Holy Communion is inappropriate and not very conducive to quiet prayer or reflection. Mass is not to be confused with a 'night at the proms'. The organist should also benefit from this period of quiet reflection.*

\*\*\*\*\*



## THE CONCLUDING RITE

Announcements should be brief and only given when necessary. That's why we print bulletins. Bulletins should be made up of 'bullet points' and not all sort of stuff more suited to a parish magazine.

Appeals may also be made at this point in the Mass. **There is no need, however, for long-drawn-out appeals** – a couple of minutes should suffice.

If the priest is using a solemn blessing he will first say: '*Please bow down for the blessing*'. The people's answer to each of the blessings is the Hebrew word 'Amen'.

*The recessional hymn is optional and may be replaced by organ music. The Mass ends when the priest says: "The Mass is ended, go in peace". If there are many verses to a recessional hymn, some organists like playing them all but the final hymn is meant to accompany the exit procession of priest and servers from the Church and not go on forever.*

*Father Paddy's email: [crookes@catholicweb.com](mailto:crookes@catholicweb.com)*

*St Vincent's Website: [crookes.catholicweb.com](http://crookes.catholicweb.com)*

*Thanks to Father John Dane (Barnsley) for providing the illustrations*

*Thanks to Philip Finnigan (St Vincent's) for proof reading the text*

*Fr Paddy is a native of Kilmanagh, Co Kilkenny, Ireland*