



## From the Deacon's Desk

- Go forth; the Mass is ended.
- Go and announce the Gospel of the Lord.
- Go in peace, glorifying the Lord by your life.
- Go in peace.

Response: Thanks be to God

We're all familiar with these words, but they are far more than a clue that it's time to leave. The priest's final blessing, coupled with this exchange, is not the cue to start for the parking lot, collect our belongings, or put on coats. The Mass ends when we respond, "Thanks be to God." Before we leave, we follow the command of Psalm 98: "Make a joyful noise to the Lord, all the earth; break forth into joyous song and sing praises." We sing one last song of praise and thanksgiving. "The congregation stays to finish singing the song before leaving - it's the polite thing to do.

Each dismissal starts with a command – the same command Jesus gave to His apostles and disciples – "go." We have received the Body and Blood of Christ. He resides within us – is part of us. With the command to "go," we take the Mass with us. That "go" comes at the end of our liturgical journey and becomes the beginning of a different journey – our journey as a witness to God's love, the glory of his Son, and the power of the Holy Spirit.

The response "thanks be to God" is not an expression of relief that Mass is over. Rather, it's "a shout of joy" [Ps 47:1]. We thank God because we have been strengthened through receiving the body and blood of His Son and are ready and willing to take His message into our world.

The dismissal is a reminder and warning that our personal service to God has only just begun. Just as the priest acts in the person of Christ [In persona Christi], the Deacon in the image of God [In imago Dei], the people who have participated in the Mass become Christ-bearers [Cristoforos].

Each Sunday, listen closely to the dismissal to hear God's command. Make your "thanks be to God" a fervent prayer of thanksgiving that you have been chosen by God to bring news of His Son into the world in which we live.

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