



It is Important to Finish Strong!

This week we will cover the end of Mass. Following the Prayer after Communion, which is a Proper and can be sung, comes the Blessing, which is also a Proper, and can also be sung! An interesting note about the Blessing is that there are several options, which mirror the idea of progressive solemnity. There's the regular Blessing, and on special occasions we get the triple Blessing. This is the one with three invocations.

Finally, the Dismissal, which also has several variations. During Eastertide, we get special dismissals (with the addition of Alleluias). The number of Alleluias depends on the degree of solemnity. On the major solemnities i.e. every day of the Easter Octave, we get two Alleluias, and on the other days we get just the one.

After this, the priest reverences the altar and Mass is over. The end.

But wait, what about the Recessional?!?!? Well, it is not part of Mass (which ends with the priest's veneration of the altar) though it does function to escort the priest back down to us, and as a final communal act of thanksgiving. Since it is not part of the Mass, there is no prescribed text so we select hymns that are related to the Mass of the day, or perhaps to the season/time of year (Marian in May, Sacred Heart in June, St. Joseph in March etc.) or to a secular observance of great importance (Independence Day, Veterans Day, etc.).

And just like that, we have made it through the entire Mass, albeit in quite an abbreviated manner. I hope you have found this series to be informative and enriching of your faith life. I encourage you to continue to delve deeper into the Mass. It is the source and summit of Catholic life, and it is so important to orient our lives toward it. As one of my greatest teachers said, two people will grow in love with each other proportionately to how much they grow in mutual love of something "other". I pray that you let your love of our Blessed Lord and His sacrifice at the altar be that which helps you grow to greater love of God our Father.

St. Cecilia, St. Elizabeth of the Trinity...Pray for us!

--Mark Wozniczka, Music Director (mwozniczka@archchicago.org)

