



Let us go forth! But not so fast that we forget to give thanks! Another important part of taking in the graces received in the Mass is “the **personal thanksgiving**.” According to the Diocese of Peoria, “While nothing is officially noted in the rubrics, the importance of making a personal thanksgiving after Mass has been emphasized by many saints throughout the history of the Church. It is so important that the clergy are advised by canon law to make such an act. We never rush saying goodbye to someone we love. How true this should be with our Lord whom we have just praised and adored at the Holy Mass” (*A Study of the Mass*, p. 21).

Fr. Stefano Manelli notes saints who emphasized the personal thanksgiving after Mass. For example, St. Louis de Montfort “used to remain after Mass for thanksgiving at least a half hour, and he would not permit any need or assignment to serve as a reason for omitting it. He said, ‘I would not give up this hour of thanksgiving even for an hour of Paradise.’” In another story, Fr. Manelli explains, “A fellow sister asked St. Bernadette, ‘How are you able to remain for so long in thanksgiving after Holy Communion?’ The saint replied, ‘I consider that it is the holy Virgin who gives me the Baby Jesus. I receive Him. I speak to Him and He speaks to me’” (*Jesus Our Eucharistic Love: Eucharistic Life Exemplified by the Saints*, pp. 46, 113).

Lingering with Our Lord

Further exhorting the virtues of a personal thanksgiving, Charles Belmonte teaches that, “in Communion, Jesus not only comes into our arms, or sits by our side, but also enters and dwells in our hearts. Thus, our heart ought to glow in the same way that the hearts of the disciples on the road to Emmaus burnt within them as Christ spoke and explained the Scriptures to them. It is natural that we desire to remain a few minutes in prayer and thanksgiving after the Mass. The Church recommends this practice. Sometimes, we will be talking with Christ. At other times, we will say nothing at all; we will simply look at him and he will look at us. We should also know that Christ’s Body and Blood remain in us after communion as long as the accidents of the bread and wine remain as such. As soon as our bodily processes change these accidents, Christ’s real presence ceases to be. Nevertheless, we continue living in his Mystical Body. While Christ is really present inside us in the form of the consecrated species, we must be grateful and gracious hosts to him... St. Josemaria Escriva thus advises us: ‘Do not leave the Church almost immediately after receiving the sacrament. Surely you have nothing so important to attend to that you cannot give our Lord ten minutes to say thanks. Let’s not be mean. Love is paid for with love’” (*Understanding the Mass*, pp. 200–1).

Ideas to Pray in Thanksgiving after Mass

Need some further ideas of what to pray in personal thanksgiving? Belmonte continues, “The content of our thanksgiving will be just a continuation of the sentiments and affections we have felt—or tried to foster in ourselves—during the Mass, but perhaps in an atmosphere of greater intimacy this time. Sometimes, acts of faith, hope and charity addressed to the Three Divine persons will spurt from our soul. At other times, we will maintain an intimate dialogue with Jesus, our divine Friend who will purify and transform us. Or perhaps, we will just be sitting still, in silent adoration, in the same manner that a mother watches over her son who has fallen asleep. According to St. Teresa, there is no other time than thanksgiving after Mass when we can so easily enrich our soul with virtues, or so rapidly advance to a high degree of perfection. We should not look for prayers or formulas, if we do not find any need for them. But if we realize they can help us, we should overcome our laziness (say, to open our missal and read the prayers for thanksgiving there). [...] We should remember to pray for all those who cannot be with us in this celebration because they do not share the faith of the Church.” Belmonte reminds us that prayers to our Blessed Mother and the saints can be helpful, quoting from Pope St. Paul VI: “May the most Blessed Virgin Mary, from whom Christ the Lord took flesh that ‘is contained, offered, received’ in this sacrament under the appearances of bread and wine, and may all the saints of God and especially those who were more inflamed with ardent devotion toward the divine Eucharist, intercede with the Father of mercies so that this common belief in the Eucharist and devotion to it may give rise among all Christians to a perfect unity of communion that will one day flourish” (*Understanding the Mass*, pp. 201–3; *Mysterium Fidei*, 75).

No doubt, after Mass we will be excited to go out into the world! Perhaps we have people we are going to visit or gatherings or events we will attend. Hopefully, we don’t get in such a hurry that we omit the thanksgiving, a wonderful opportunity to solidify the fruits of the Mass!