

FROM THE PASTOR

My dear brothers and sisters,

So, did you get a Mass Journal, yet?

Just a reminder, you write in it: **Lord, show me in this Mass one way I can become a better version of myself.** When something strikes us at Mass (and it always will, if we are open to it), we then write that one thing down in the journal, and look at it throughout the week. As we do this we continue a dialogue with God.

We now continue our examination of the Mass. During the Processional Song, the Servers, Deacon or Lector and Priest move through the gathered assembly to the Altar. This is important. Processions help us to remember that Christ made us into a Holy Priesthood; that He called us to bear Christ to each other and to the world.

Those in procession then bow to the Altar. This is also important to note. They are not bowing to the cross of the chair, but to the Altar of Sacrifice. It is on this Altar that the sacrifice of Christ (how He died on the Cross 2000 years ago) is brought to the present in the Eucharist. In fact, the Altar is actually treated as a person – when it is consecrated, it is much like a baptism (use of Chrism oil, a cross, a white cloth placed upon it) – and it holds relics of saints. When the priest and deacon approach the Altar, they kiss it, as a sign of love for the One who makes the Altar sacred.

The priest then begins the Mass with the Sign of the Cross. This sign is twofold: action and word. We physically make the sign of the Cross – the shape of our redemption (the Cross of Christ) – on our bodies, giving ourselves wholly over to the victory of Christ. We also invoke the deepest mystery of our Faith, that God is Trinity: Father, Son, and Holy Spirit. We say, “**In the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit.**” Everything we do from that moment on is being done in the name of God, in the name of our God who is, at the very heart of His being, relational. This is a reminder to us that God calls us to be in relationship with Him and with each other.

The priest (in the person of Christ the head) then greets the people saying, “**The Lord be with you**” (or another similar formula). This is a blessing from the priest both acknowledging the presence of Christ the Lord, as well as invoking His presence.

The people then respond, “**And with your spirit.**” Since the new translation of the Roman Missal a few years ago, this has been confusing to people. In the Old Testament, God takes part of the spirit that is on Moses and shares it with seventy-two elders who help him lead the people (Numbers 11:24-30). Jesus also sends seventy-two disciples out to proclaim the Kingdom of God, and gives them authority to heal and drive out demons (Luke 10). While bishops are seen as successors of the twelve Apostles, priests are seen as taking on the ministry of the seventy-two disciples. As the Lord took the spirit of Moses and placed it on the seventy-two, so the “spirit” (when we say, “And with your spirit”) is the spirit of priesthood – that spirit given in ordained ministry. We say, “And with your spirit” right before the priest (or deacon) does something specific to that ordained ministry.