

Reflection

What does it mean for me to be sent 'to love and serve the Lord?' To whom am I sent? What is it that I am asked to do?

In the scriptures we read again and again of people charged with particular work by the Lord. Sometimes they seem to receive their mission with great peace of mind. At other times their mission causes them great confusion or distress. We see this with Jesus himself, in the account of the agony in the garden. We see it in an altogether more humorous way in the story of Jonah – the prophet who tries to run from the Lord and ends up getting swallowed by a whale. But, almost without exception, we read how those called bring their struggles to the Lord in prayer. Our lives too are rarely trouble free – and it is good to bring all this to prayer, again and again, as often as we need to.

**Liturgy
Office**
ENGLAND
& WALES

This leaflet is one a series of resources produced by the Liturgy Office of the Catholic Bishops' Conference of England and Wales to assist parishes reflect on their celebration of the Eucharist in the light of the *General Instruction of the Roman Missal*. Excerpt from *EPVN* ©1994; GIRM © 2004 ICEL, Inc. All rights reserved. Leaflet & *Celebrating the Mass* © 2005 Catholic Bishops' Conference of England and Wales
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Prayer

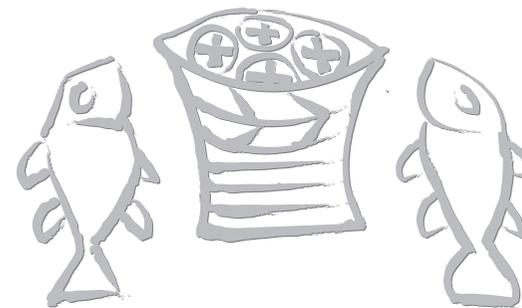
Open our eyes to the needs of all;
inspire us with words and deeds
to comfort those who labour
and are burdened;
keep our service of others
faithful to the example
and command of Christ.

Let your Church be a living witness
to truth and freedom,
to justice and peace,
that all people may be lifted up
by the hope of a world made new.

Why don't you?

- Pray for your community, that with you, they may be faithful to the mission entrusted to them.
- Find out more about any special mission project of your parish or dioceses, or the current projects of CAFOD.

In Communion with Christ 6. Mission



Go in peace to love and serve the Lord.
Thanks be to God.

Authentic Catholic spirituality is centred on communal celebration of the Paschal Mystery of Jesus Christ so that we may go out into the world to live that mystery, refreshed and restored as agents of God's love. The Christian is called into a broken world to witness to and work for the coming of the Kingdom of God. The Eucharist must feed those who celebrate: for their work in the healing of relationships, in the promotion of peace and justice, and in the proclamation of the Good News.

The Christian is called to work for the coming of the Kingdom of God

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Looking at the Mass

Introductory Rites

Liturgy of the Word

Liturgy of the Eucharist

Concluding Rite

Announcements

Blessing

Dismissal

After the Communion Rite, the Mass closes with a brief Concluding Rite. Its purpose is to send the people forth to put into effect in their daily lives the Paschal Mystery and the unity in Christ which they have celebrated. They are given a sense of abiding mission, which calls them to witness to Christ in the world and to bring the Gospel to the poor.

Just as the introductory comments by the priest at the beginning of the celebration may help the assembly to a better appreciation and experience of the mysteries celebrated in the Eucharist, so also the pastoral announcements at the end may help the people make the transition from worship into renewed Christian witness in society. They should help people become aware of the faith life and pastoral activity of the community and invite participation in the ongoing work of the Church.

The Dismissal sends the members of the congregation forth to praise and bless the Lord in the midst of their

In Communion with Christ

The Liturgy is frequently spoken of as the source and summit of Christian life. It is source: for in the Liturgy we receive the grace we need to live in communion with God each day of our lives. It is summit: because we bring to the Mass all the events of our lives, the joys and sorrows, the failures, the successes, and they are united with Christ's self offering of himself to his Father.

What we receive at Mass we take to our lives: what we live we bring to the Mass. Mass leads us to life/life leads us to worship – there is a progression, a cyclical, spiralling progression able to lead us into an ever-deeper relationship with God.

Pope John Paul recently asked us whether this is how things are. 'To what

At the end of Mass we are sent out extent does the Liturgy affect the practice of the faithful and does it mark

the rhythm of the individual communities? Is it seen as a path of holiness, an inner force of apostolic dynamism and of the Church's missionary outreach?' (*Spiritus et Sponsa*, 6)

At the end of Mass things don't suddenly end – we are sent out: 'go in peace', 'go to love and serve the Lord'. Sent to do in

the world what we have done at Mass – to be at one with others; to listen for God's voice; to offer praise and thanksgiving; to love. These are not easy things to do. We might want to live in peace, but our peace will often be disturbed by injustice and suffering. If these are things endured by others we might simply try to block them out of our consciousness. But then we simply live a lie. To live the peace of Christ's kingdom is to seek to heal all hurt, overcome all wrong-doing. It calls us to action, not to passivity. Not just to love the Lord but also to serve him. And Jesus teaches us that we most truly love and serve the Lord when we love and serve him in the least and the weakest of our brothers and sisters (Matthew 25.31–46).

It calls us to action.

Not to just love the Lord but also to serve him

daily responsibilities.

For Mass to be truly authentic it must give expression to the common life of the gathered community; the implication being that there is a common life to draw upon. The idea of strangers gathering for Eucharist, and remaining strangers thereafter, does not sit easily with the Gospel message.

Active participation in the Eucharist is a transforming experience. In our prayers, and that of the whole Church, we seek the transformation not only of the bread and wine into the Body and Blood of Christ, but that the same Spirit transforms us also into the Body of Christ. But it does not end here...

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