

PREPARING FOR THE NEW TRANSLATION OF THE MASS

Communion and the Concluding Rites

On the First Sunday of Advent, November 27, 2011, Catholic parishes in the United States will begin praying the texts of the Mass using a new English translation of *The Roman Missal*. This week, we explore Communion and the Concluding Rites.

Our great prayer of praise and thanksgiving leads through the Lord's Prayer, our petition for daily bread, into the action of Communion. We sing together even as we rise and move forward in procession to the altar. We must move to receive Communion because the Eucharist is transformative—it demands action of us, internal as well as external. We do not receive the sacrament in silence, but with a dialogue that is a profession of faith: “The Body of Christ.” “Amen.” “The Blood of Christ.” “Amen.” Our “Amen” is also a prayer that we may become what we receive, the Body of Christ, living and active in the world. So it makes sense that after Communion we are dismissed—not just let out, but sent forth with a mission “to announce the gospel of the Lord.” This leave-taking is joined to a blessing, a prayer for God's continuing protection as we go out on our way.

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