

Roman Missal, 3rd Edition Looking at the text 10

On that day a Light rose that can never be overcome. Jesus brings new Life and Light so that we can live in the day and he does this especially in the Mass. We are promised that, although our earth continues to spin in a cycle of darkness and light, there is now a new Light which will never go out. Week after week, ever since that first morning the Church has prayed on the Lord's Day. We celebrate Mass above all on Sunday, the Lord's Day, asking that the Spirit descend like the dew; to bring life to a world thirsting for life.

By the power of the Holy Spirit, he descends like dew. Just as the manna in the desert appeared like dew, Jesus comes quietly. The world seemed largely asleep when he was born in Bethlehem. The guards at his tomb claimed to have slept through the dawn of his Resurrection and, even now, many seem unaware of the change he brings. He comes in simple ways: through others, in his Word and in what looks like bread and wine.

The word 'dewfall' helps us think about how God works among us and the dawn of that morning when Jesus changed everything.

Q *How can God's power change us?
How can we keep holy the Lord's Day?*

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Go forth, the Mass is ended.
Or:

Go and announce the Gospel of the Lord.

Or:

Go in peace, glorifying the Lord by your life.

Or:

Go in peace.

The people reply:

Thanks be to God.



Time to Go

As we come to the end of Mass we seem to return to our roots and the reason why we are there in the first place.

The name 'Mass' comes from the words in Latin that are said as people are told that the time has come to return to the business of everyday life. 'Ite missa est' is simply a command to go and in the ancient world might have been said to a gathering of people as things wound up and it was time to leave. It gave us the Latin name 'Missa' which we translate as 'Mass'.

We come to Mass every Sunday for several reasons: to give glory to God, to hear his Word, to offer the Sacrifice of the Mass for the living and the dead, to be nourished by the gift of Holy Communion and in order to be sent out into the world. In a way, we come to Mass in order to be told it is time to go. At the heart of every Christian's vocation is the call to witness to the Gospel by a life of faithful service.

The words of dismissal reflect on our vocation. To draw this out special forms of the invitation of 'go forth, the Mass is ended' have been written.

'Go and announce the Gospel of the Lord', reminds us of Jesus' command to 'go out and teach all nations' – to spread the Good News. Some may have the task of teaching in a public way but all of us are called to spread Christ's message in ordinary ways. Sometimes it's not even what we say but how we say it; it's not always what things we do but how we do them. Often people who are attracted to the Church say that what caught their attention is the sense that a person of faith has something very special about them. It is so important that our lives reflect our beliefs. Our attitudes and the way we treat people give the most eloquent witness.

'Go in peace, glorifying the Lord by your life' tells how we give glory to God. It is by the way in which we live. Jesus said 'I have come that they may have life and have it to the full'. Saint Irenaeus, one of the early teachers of the Church, wrote 'The glory of God is man fully alive'. As we try to live fully at one with God and our neighbour we give him glory and we live in peace. It is the peace which Christ gives, the peace which

our world needs.

We go out of the church as part of a great procession as members of the Church, the Body of Christ on our pilgrim way to the glory of heaven.

Q *Think about ways in which you witness to your faith in every day life.*

The Lord's Day

During the Eucharistic Prayer, the Church asks the Holy Spirit to come upon the gifts to change them into Jesus. The priest extends his hands over the bread and wine praying for the coming of the Spirit and he prays for a change in us too. In the new translation of Eucharistic Prayer 2, the priest says 'Make holy, therefore, these gifts, we pray, by sending down your Spirit upon them like the dewfall.'

This idea of God descending like dewfall is ancient. It also recalls a line in a well-known hymn: 'Sweet the rain's new fall, sunlit from heaven, Like the first dew-fall on the first grass.' We sing 'Morning has broken' in celebration of the beauty of creation renewed in the sunrise and freshness of each day. The dawning of every day should remind us of that special morning, when Jesus rose again. What's more, no matter what the time is or the date, every Mass takes us back to that morning.

Easter Morning changed everything. Creation began all over again when Jesus rose. In the story of Adam and Eve, God walked in the garden at the end of the day. Describing the Resurrection, St. John's Gospel (Chapter 20 verses 14-16) reminds us of this tale when it relates that at the start of a new day, Jesus, the new Adam, is thought to be the gardener by Mary Magdalene. In a way, he is the gardener; putting right the mistake told in the poetic account of Genesis. That day was the first day of a new week. Because of the Resurrection on that first day, at the start of every week we celebrate 'the Lord's Day' – his day.

