**Liturgy Matters Lesson #36**

**The Dismissal Rite: We are Sent Forth in the Name of the Holy Trinity**

**By Bishop Chad Zielinski**

I am Bishop Chad Zielinski, serving the Diocese of New Ulm. Thank you for joining me and asking the Holy Spirit to guide us as we conclude our lessons on “What Happens at Mass.”

The final unit of the Mass is called the dismissal rite. It is a very short unit but an extremely important one. If "Amen" is a signal that a liturgical unit is ending, the repetition of the greeting "The Lord be with you" is a sign that a new one is opening. The Mass ends as it began, namely, under the sign of the cross and "in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit." The priest traces in blessing over the assembly a large sign of the cross, saying, "May almighty God bless you, the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit." As he does so, the people mark again the sign on their bodies and say, "Amen" to the blessing.

After the blessing, the priest or deacon, in some short phrase, dismisses the people, sending them out. But this dismissal ought not to be understood simply as the banal announcement that “it’s over; you can go home now.” It needs to be grasped within the dynamic of Jesus' words, "As the Father has sent me, so I send you ."This "as" and "so" express a huge mystery; indeed, nothing less than an echo of the Trinitarian mystery in which the Son comes forth from the Father. In that same way, from those same mysterious depths, this assembly comes forth now from the risen Lord and is sent into the world. Thus, the pattern according to which the Lord entered the world must become the pattern for how every Christian comes into the world after celebrating the Eucharist. Now, the assembly has been made Church, and this is the Church in the world.

In the end, it is Christ himself, the eternal Son of the Father, carried now in the flesh and in the lives of his members, poured out in self-emptying love. This is what it means to be a kingdom of priests. Through communion in the body and blood of Christ, the whole Church, and each member become for the world what Christ is for the world: "life-giving Spirit". And the Church becomes this in the same pattern whereby Christ and the Spirit are this, namely, a complete self-emptying. "There is no greater love than this," and only love is credible to the world that does not yet believe.

And so ends the liturgy, but the Mass continues as we go out to fulfill our call to be good Christians. May we all remember the gift we are given each Sunday and share this love with all we encounter daily.

As this is our final lesson, “The Dismissal Rite," at every Mass, we are sent forth into the world to announce the Good News of our encounter with the Risen Christ at the Holy Eucharist. I pray that these lessons have provided an opportunity to grow closer to Christ as we deepened our understanding of “What Happens at Mass?” Thank you for your daily "yes" to Jesus. May our continued journey during the Eucharistic Revival bring forth a new awakening of our Catholic faith throughout the Diocese of New Ulm. May the blessing of Almighty God, the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit come upon you and remain forever. Go in peace, glorifying the Lord by your life.