

BULLETIN – JULY 24

“Where did the word *Mass* come from? It’s not in the Bible.” Well, yes it is, in a way. Look at Matthew 10:16, where Jesus tells the twelve Apostles, “I am sending you out like sheep in the midst of wolves.” Look at Mark 16:15, where he says, “Go into the whole world, and preach the Gospel to every creature.” The word “send” in Latin is *mittere*, and from it we derive words like “transmit,” “remit,” “omit,” “permit,” and so on. In its participle form, we find the root *miss-*, giving us words like “commission,” “dismissal,” “missionary,” and so on. The final words of the Mass in Latin are *Ite, missa est*, which literally means “Go, it is sent.” What is sent is the Church, the body of believers – sent out into the midst of the world just as Jesus first sent the Apostles. He’s been sending his Church out ever since, to do the same things he commanded the first twelve.

The words *Ite, missa est* are not the most important words of the Mass, but they are the **last** words, and thus a little more susceptible to be heard and memorized. The whole Divine Liturgy, as the Orthodox call it, thus came to be known in Latin as the *Missa*, from which we of course get the English word *missal*, or “Mass book.” The final words of any speech or ceremony are often the most memorable – which is why so many politicians like to end their speeches by saying, “God bless America,” whether they really mean it or not. So the word for what we call the Mass comes from *Missa*, which changed a vowel from Latin into the Italian *Messa*, and changed the vowel once again into the English *Mass*.

Thus the word *Mass* should ideally remind us that we are a people who are continually **sent** from the sacramental action Christ has performed with us. We have heard his Word in the Scriptures; we have worshiped in the fashion of God’s people in both the Old and New Covenants by eating and drinking, sharing a sacrificial meal with God; and we are strengthened for the great commission, to go out and bring the Good News to all people, by both word and service.

However we name it, the Mass, the Divine Liturgy, the celebration of the Eucharist, the Saving Banquet, it is what Jesus ordered us to do in his memory (Luke 22:19). It is why so many of the disciples parted company with him when he said, “My flesh is real food, my blood real drink” (John 6:55). It is how we continue the Passover of the Jewish Covenant and fulfill it in the one eternal Sacrifice of Christ’s New Covenant (Hebrews 9:12). It is how we carry on the Breaking of the Bread of which Luke writes in both his Gospel and in the Acts of the Apostles. It is how we hand on what has been given to us, as St. Paul indicates he received it (I Corinthians 11:23). It is to what all the early Christian writers and preachers clearly refer in describing their

worship in the centuries after Christ (the *Didache*, Ignatius of Antioch, Justin, Irenaeus, Hippolytus, Ambrose, Augustine, John Chrysostom, and on and on).

How significant that a simple little word – *Mass* – can carry so much meaning! It’s similar to the tiny forms of bread and wine conveying the Mystery which connects heaven and earth – the very presence of Christ in our midst, speaking his Word, giving us his Body and Blood as food and drink, and ever **commissioning** us to go out and bring his Good News to people near and far.

Angry birds. They're not just cartoon characters. When the country (let alone the world!) can be brought to near emotional paralysis by angry ambushes of police in some kind of ill-conceived, misdirected "response" to deadly clashes between law enforcement and citizens, it's clear that there's lots of anger out there. But our patience with its display might be wearing thin. Friday, July 15, was supposed to be a national "Day of Rage," according to whoever the spokespersons-of-the-day were for Black Lives Matter and other anarchic organizations. But the general public attitude seemed to be, "I spit on your 'Day of Rage.'" The day passed with barely a sneer -- and two days later we had more officers apparently lured to their deaths by the assailant in Baton Rouge.

As I go around our neighborhood and metro area, I see plenty of interaction between and among people of different races and, presumably, different national origins, religions, opinions, and orientations of various kinds. Some folks are a little more hesitant than others, some a little more outgoing -- but there are shy people and boisterous people in every family. Most of us don't have the time or energy to try to read other people's minds when we hold a door for someone, or when we are preoccupied and don't. But many of us will at some time or another give in to the temptation to read things into the actions of others that were unintended. I held a door for a nicely-dressed lady coming out of a local hospital one day, and she passed by with a furious glance saying, "I'm quite capable of doing that myself!" Did she hate priests? Was she anti-Catholic? Was it because she thought a man was chauvinistically implying that she was a member of the "weaker sex"? Or had she just gotten a horrible report from her doctor that left her feeling powerless? I'll never know, but it didn't stop me from holding doors for people, nicely-dressed or not.

We'll begin to avoid lots of our anger when we stop thinking that the 11 guys in the huddle on the football field are talking about *us* -- in other words, when we get over the narcissism that places us at the center of everyone's world, including our own. My own experience has been that 99% of the time when I have felt aggrieved, victimized, or offended, it was because I *imagined* that someone had singled me out for persecution. The antidote? Say a prayer for them, and move on. Once you've made them a prayer partner, it's hard to remain angry. Even when they've given you a furious glance, you've quietly given them something much, much better. And it's healing, for them *and* you.

Wedding anniversary? Plan ahead: Bishop Walkowiak invites all couples who are celebrating 25, 30, 40, 50, and 60+ years of marriage to join him for the annual Wedding Anniversary Mass at St. Andrew's on Sunday, October 2, 2016, at 10 a.m. Family members and friends are of course welcome. A simple reception will follow. If you plan to go, please call the parish office at 454-6000 with the approximate number in your party. We shall advise the diocesan office for planning purposes. Congratulations!

Welcome to St. Anne's! A hearty mid-summer welcome to all St. Anne's Society members and to all who are joining us through Tuesday, July 26, for our 76th annual St. Anne's Novena! The Novena closes this Tuesday evening with Mass, prayers and procession. Please join us. God bless you!

Fr. Den

Thought for the week: “There is a fountain of youth: It is your mind, your talents, the creativity you bring to your life and the lives of people you love. When you learn to tap this source, you will truly have defeated age” (Sophia Loren, 1934- , Italian-born actress).