



Fr. Daniel's Corner

Mass Moment: Part 5

THE LITRUGICAL GREETING:

The priest greets the gathered assembly with the formula, "The Lord be with you." This has been the greeting that gathers Christians together in worship for over a millennium. He does not say "Good Morning," etc., as the sacred greeting obviously includes all human sentiments of goodwill (It is the church's hello). Apart from the beginning of the Mass, it is also used before announcing the Gospel, at the beginning of the Eucharistic Prayer, the dialogue precisely and before dismissal. It is also found before blessing baptismal water and in the middle of *Exsultet* (Easter Proclamation). The biblical references in support of this greeting include Ruth 2:4, 2 Chr 15:2, Mt 28:20. There are also three other possible greetings: 'The grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, and the love of God, and the communion of the Holy Spirit be with you all,' 'Grace to you and peace from God our Father and the Lord Jesus Christ.' The missal specifies a bishop's peculiar greeting as 'Peace be with you.'

The greeting, "The Lord be with you," reminds us of the higher calling that each of us has. As children of God, we each have a specific purpose to fulfill in our Father's plan. Each of us has a role: in our marriage, in our work, in our family, in our community, in our parish, unlike anyone else. These words assure us that we are not alone in our daily trials, challenges, and struggles. In addition, this greeting points us to the realities in which we are all about to participate, namely the mysteries of Christ's death and resurrection and the communion with Christ's Body and Blood. This greeting signifies the blessing of the Lord's presence to the assembled community (Mt 18:20), and that we can trust in His help.

The response, "And with your spirit," from the 2011 translation of the Roman Missal reflects adequately the Latin text of the Mass and the language of St. Paul, "The grace of our Lord Jesus Christ be with your spirit." (Gal 6:18, Phil 4:23, 2 Tim 4:22). It acknowledges the Holy Spirit's unique activity, through the priest, during the Sacred Liturgy. This response of the people also addresses "the spirit of the priest, specifically that interior part of his being where he was ordained precisely to lead the people in this sacred action."

Pope Francis, in his General Audience on December 20, 2017, referred to the liturgical greeting "The Lord be with you" and the response, "And with your spirit", as "a symphony in which various tones of voice resonate, in view of creating harmony among all the participants. In this way, we express the common faith and the mutual wish to abide with the Lord and to live in unity with the entire community. The General Instruction of the Roman Missals (GIRM, #50) says: "By this greeting and the people's response, the mystery of the Church gathered together is made manifest."

And that is your Mass Moment for the week