

Series on the Mass, Part 76: Communion Antiphon

Sept. 12, 2021

The communion antiphon is generally a phrase taken from sacred scripture and very often from the Gospel of the day. The antiphon is used by the Church to highlight a particular point for us to meditate on during or after receiving Holy Communion and, when it takes up a passage from the Gospel, it can help us understand that passage in terms of the whole Mass.

At a Low Mass the priest recites the antiphon once out loud for all to hear, but at a High Mass, the schola would sing the antiphon during communion. If the communion of the faithful is going to take some time, other verses of a psalm can be added while repeating the antiphon after each verse or two.

Once the priest recites the Communion Antiphon, he returns to the center of the altar where he places his hands flat on the *mensa* (the table of the altar) and kisses it. This embrace and veneration of the altar shows once again that the altar represents Christ. The priest performs this action as one of the faithful chosen from among them to represent them before God.

After venerating Christ on their behalf, he turns to the faithful and, opening and closing his hands, says, “*Dominus vobiscum*” (the Lord be with you), and all respond “*et cum spiritu tuo*” (and with thy spirit). In turning towards the faithful, he is acting in the person of Christ, giving the Lord to all present.

Sincerely in Christ,

Rev. Charles Van Vliet, FSSP

Pastor, Regina Caeli Parish