

THE MASS UNFOLDED

THE CONCLUDING RITES, MISSION AND MINISTRY



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The Forgotten Beginning: Why the Mass Doesn't End

We tend to think of the Mass as something that “finishes”—a sacred moment we attend and then leave behind, but the Church insists: the Mass doesn't end, it *sends*. Our common word for the Eucharist in English is The Mass. This derives from the Latin word *missa* which means to send but we are not just sent out of the church – no we are sent “on mission”—the dismissal is not an afterthought but the culmination. We come together so that we might go out as disciples. The question is not “Has Mass ended?” but “What has begun?”

“Go Forth...” — The Language of Commissioning

The dismissal—“Go forth, the Mass is ended”—echoes the great biblical pattern of sending. Think of Isaiah: “Here I am, send me.” Or the Risen Christ in Gospel of Matthew: “Go, therefore, and make disciples.” At every Mass, we stand in that same current of divine mission. The final blessing is not a polite farewell—it is empowerment for the task ahead.

From Eucharist to Mission: The Logic of Gift Becoming Task

What we receive in the Eucharist must become what we give. Pope Benedict XVI emphasised that true participation is not merely external but transformative. The Second Vatican Council called this a deep, interior engagement that reshapes the whole of life. Both our lives and the life of the whole Church. If we have truly encountered Christ—Body, Blood, Soul, and Divinity—then we cannot remain unchanged. The Mass is not self-contained; it is centrifugal, pushing us outward.

Eucharist and the Shape of Christian Life

The Eucharist forms us into a Eucharistic people:

A people of **service** — feeding the hungry, caring for the poor.

A people of **evangelisation** — sharing the Good News not as ideology but as lived reality.

A people of **communion** — building up parish life, not as a club, but as the Body of Christ. The leaven in the loaf in our world.

The pattern is simple but demanding: **Receive → Become → Give.**

The Weekly Reorientation of the Soul

Every Mass is a re-centring of our lives. In a distracted, fragmented world, the liturgy draws us back to what makes sense of life and gives meaning. It recalibrates:

Our **minds** toward truth,

Our **hearts** toward love,

Our **lives** toward mission.

Without this rhythm, we just drift. But with it, we are anchored in the Ultimate.

A Glimpse of Heaven: The Eucharist as Foretaste

The Mass is not only about mission—it is also about destiny. It is a foretaste of the heavenly banquet, the fulfilment of all longing. In the Book of Revelation heaven is described as the wedding feast of the Lamb. What we experience sacramentally now will one day be seen face to face with the vision of the Divine.

Conclusion: Sent into the World

We come to Mass not simply to be comforted, but to be commissioned. The Church gathers us so that Christ can send us. And so the final word is not “stay,” but “go.”

Go, and become what you have received. Let the Eucharist take flesh in your life.

Christ has no body now but yours.
No hands, no feet on earth but yours.
Yours are the eyes through which he looks compassion on this world;
Yours are the feet with which he walks to do good.
Yours are the hands with which he blesses all the world
Yours are the hands,
Yours are the feet,
Yours are the eyes,
You are his body.

Christ has no body now but yours.

No hands, no feet on earth but yours.

Yours are the eyes through which he looks compassion on this world

Christ has no body now on earth but yours.

St Teresa of Avila



Thank you to our wonderful speakers and to everyone who joined this year's talks—whether in person or online, from our parish or beyond. It's been a fantastic opportunity to explore our faith and extend the conversation beyond St Vincent's.

Wishing you all a blessed Easter.