

Roman Missal, 3rd edition

Homily Notes 1



3rd/4th September 2011 — 23rd Sunday of the Year

Lectionary	Liturgy Notes
<p>Ezek 33:7-9 <i>If you do not speak to the wicked man, I will hold you responsible for his death.</i></p> <p>Ps 94: 1-2. 6-9 r.7-8 <i>O that today you would listen to his voice! Harden not your hearts.</i></p> <p>Rom 13:8-10 <i>Love is the answer to everyone of the commandments.</i></p> <p>Matt 18:15-20 <i>If he listens to you, you have won back your brother.</i></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Can be used with handouts ‘the Lord be with you’ and ‘and with your spirit’. • The litany form of the penitential act might be used, • the ‘I confess’ will be explained next week.

As we introduce the new translation today we first remember that some things are always the same at every Mass. The presence of Jesus, his speaking to us words of strength, forgiveness and encouragement, the sharing in his great sacrifice - these are part of every Mass. At the end of today’s Gospel Jesus promises he is here with us today and whenever we come together. This is true no matter what translation we use. We meet in his name and he says he will listen to us in our prayer and need.

We are reminded of this by perhaps the simplest line said at Mass. ‘The Lord be with you’, remains the same in the new translation.

It can be said four times during Mass, at the beginning, before the Gospel, as the Eucharistic Prayer starts and at the end of Mass. On each occasion a prayer is being said and at the same time a great truth is pointed out. ‘The Lord be with you’ means both the prayer ‘may the Lord be with you’ and the truth that the Lord is with you.

As we begin Mass, we have confidence that all we bring of our lives will be understood, healed, forgiven and blessed; for the Lord is with us. We must have reverence for we stand on holy ground; the Lord is with us. The prayer, ‘may the Lord be with you’ asks God to surround us and make us aware of him in our brothers and sisters gathered with us today.

During the Liturgy of the Word, the Lord is with us speaking both in the Gospel and all the readings. Although we hear the voice of the reader it is Jesus we hear speaking. As we listen, he whispers in our hearts. We have to really concentrate, to focus on what he says, for he has something to say to every person here. The prayer, ‘may the Lord be with you’, asks that we may hear his message for each one of us today.

At the start of the Eucharistic Prayer, we give thanks for the good things of our world and we thank God especially for the gift of Jesus and all he has done. During this



prayer he comes among us in his supreme gift of the Eucharist. He is present with us and we are present with him as he saves us by his Cross, heals us by wounds and raises us to newness of life in his Resurrection. The prayer, 'may the Lord be with you', asks that we may share in this great coming together of heaven and earth that happens every time we celebrate Mass.

We go out of church with God's blessing ringing in our ears for the Lord is with us in all that we do. At every Mass we are renewed by Jesus and we take him with us. The prayer, 'may the Lord be with you', asks that we will carry out the task he has given to each one of us and that we will have the comfort and strength that we need.

Our response to the 'the Lord be with you' is changing. It is now 'and with your spirit'. In a way we are simply saying that the Lord is with the priest or deacon and praying that it may be so. But 'with your spirit' adds something. It reminds us that the whole point of being human and having the Lord with us makes us a spiritual people. We are saying that the priest, the deacon and all of us are so much more than mere flesh and blood. All of us have a special dignity and a spiritual destiny.

We might ask whether the priest could say 'with your spirit' to us too. The reason is that this is an ancient greeting and reply. It comes down to us from the time of Jesus and before. In that culture it was good manners to respond to this assurance and prayer of the Lord being with someone by adding a further richness in the reply. It's a bit like if someone were to wish us a thousand blessings we might reply wishing ten thousand. Keeping this kindness of courtesy we echo something that has been said by our ancestors in faith down through the ages.

As we think about this new translation of the Mass we can learn more about what it is to be Christian and how we are to treat others. As we hear the words 'the Lord be with you' we remember that we believe in one who comes close to us here in Mass and in our lives, he sits beside us, he whispers in our hearts, he holds us safe and he journeys with us.