

## “YEAR OF THE EUCHARIST” -We’re all missionaries at Mass- by Fr. Steve Lape

Many people often think of the Mass in terms of being a time of praise and thanksgiving to God, since the word “Eucharist” comes from a Greek word meaning “thanksgiving.” The greatest of God’s gifts to us is Jesus, the Son of God, who became one of us as the greatest sign of God’s love for all humanity & the world. That love was presented so completely through Jesus’ suffering, dying and rising for us. Thus, every Mass is an Easter celebration, for we rejoice at every Mass in our Lord’s Resurrection and the hope it brings that we may join Him in eternal glory. As the Catechism of the Catholic Church explains, “by the Eucharistic celebration we already unite ourselves with the heavenly liturgy and anticipate eternal life, when God will be all in all.” (#1326)

Yet, one aspect of the Eucharist that many forget is that it’s a call to action. Considering that the word “Mass” comes from the Latin word “missa,” which basically means “sending forth” or “dismissal,” and that the concluding Latin words to the Mass have been traditionally “Ite, missa est” (Go, the dismissal is made), it doesn’t take a scholar to see how close the word is to “missionary”—one who is sent out on a mission. Consider another line from the Catechism, which connects these two: “*Holy Mass (Missa)*, because the liturgy in which the mystery of salvation is accomplished concludes with the sending forth (mission) of the faithful, so that they may fulfill God’s will in their daily lives.” (#1332) That doesn’t mean only about our living out Jesus’ teachings and obeying His commandments ourselves, but doing what Jesus and His Apostles did—spread the Word about God’s love and what God desires for all people! It’s not just a job for priests, deacons, religious brothers and sisters, and lay people who are on staff at churches. It’s a mission for all baptized Christians to fulfill—that hopefully our daily deeds and words inspire others to recognize Christ in their midst, and to want to come to know and follow Jesus more closely in their daily living. Thus, we should never be afraid of sharing or speaking about our faith, despite many people’s attempts in society to hush those who try to bring up the subject.



Consider a few words from the 1965 document released by the Second Vatican Council called “*Ad gentes*,” a Latin term for “to the nations.” The document was meant to highlight the urgent missionary nature of the Church to spread the Gospel message to all people of every land and tongue. Here’s what it stated: “Every disciple of Christ is responsible

in his own measure for the spread of the faith, but Christ the Lord is always calling from among his followers those whom he wills, so that they may be with him and be sent by him to preach to the nations.”(#23) Whether it’s in our own homes, neighborhoods, states or other countries, we’re all called to be missionaries! The Eucharist strengthens us with gifts from Christ’s Holy Spirit to live accordingly!