

## Appendix D

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### **Liturgical Celebration to Mark the Formal Closure of a Parish**

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The Mass to mark the formal closure of a parish should be as inclusive of the whole parish community as possible. Those entrusted with planning this celebration might consider the use of the Rite of Blessing and Sprinkling Holy Water, a procession with the *Book of Gospels*, and Holy Communion under Both Kinds. These elements highlight the essential bonds of communion within the parish – Baptism, the proclamation of the Word of God and participation in the saving death and resurrection of the Lord in the Mystery of the Eucharist. If the liturgical calendar permits, the *Roman Missal* and *Lectionary for Mass* texts can be taken from the Masses and Prayers for Various Needs and Occasions (for example, For Giving Thanks to God, ), which might be more suited to the occasion.

#### **Introduction after the Greeting**

*After the greeting, the priest celebrant may possibly speak to the assembly in these or similar words:*

We gather today to give thanks to God for the many years that (NAME) Parish has served us as a community of faith. While there is sadness in the closing of this parish, we can be grateful for all that it has provided us.

Although this is our last celebration in (NAME) Parish, we will continue to hear God's Word and share the Eucharist as a people of faith. In a spirit of gratitude, let us bring to this celebration of the Mass the memories of all the many blessings and graces we have received in this parish and trust in the providence of God as we soon become members of a new parish.

#### **Rite for the Blessing and Sprinkling of Water**

*This rite is found in Appendix II of the Roman Missal.*

#### **Possible Petitions to be included in the Prayer of the Faithful**

For the pastors, priest and deacons, religious and lay staff who have faithfully served in this parish in so many ways throughout its history, let us pray to the Lord.

For ourselves, the members of (NAME) Parish, that the gifts and graces we have received here in this holy place will guide us as we become members of a new community of faith, let us pray to the Lord.

#### **Possible Ceremony to follow the Dismissal**

##### **Priest Celebrant:**

My brothers and sisters,

Now that this Mass has ended and we leave this church to become parishioners of a new parish, we must turn to the Father in thanksgiving for the many ways the sacred images and places in this building have formed us as the Body of Christ and have led us to deeper grasp of the presence of God in our lives.

#### **At the Image or Statue of the Parish's Patron**

Priest: Let us remember our parish patron (NAME) and the many blessings we have received through his/her intercession.

*Pause for a moment of silence.*

Priest: We thank you for the inspiration and spiritual patronage bestowed on us through our devotion to (NAME OF PATRON).

All: Blessed be God forever!

### **At the Shrine of Our Lady**

Priest: Let us remember the generations of prayer and devotion that this sacred image of Mary has inspired over the years.

*Pause for a moment of silence.*

Priest: We thank you for the comfort and the consolation we have received through the intercession of Mary, the Mother of God and our Mother.

All: Blessed be God forever!

### **At the Twelfth Station of the Cross**

Priest: Let us remember those who walked these stations of prayer and devotion over the years.

*Pause for a moment of silence.*

Priest: The twelfth station of Christ's Way of the Cross, "Jesus Dies on the Cross." We adore you O Christ, and we bless you, because by your holy cross, you have redeemed the world.

All: Blessed be God forever!

### **At the Font**

Priest: Let us remember the Sacrament of Baptism celebrated over the years here at this font.

*Pause for a moment of silence.*

Priest: We thank you for the life of faith given to all who have pass through the waters of new life at this font.

All: *Blessed be God forever!*

### **At the Confessional or Reconciliation Chapel**

Priest: Let us remember the times we have been forgiven, comforted and consoled in the Sacrament of Penance and Reconciliation.

*Pause for a moment of silence.*

Priest: We thank you for the healing and reconciling love that has been given through the Sacrament of Penance and Reconciliation.

All: *Blessed be God forever!*

**At the Ambo**

Priest: Let us remember the power of God's Word proclaimed here at the ambo.

*Pause for a moment of silence.*

Priest: We thank you for your holy Word. May it always echo in our hearts and lives.

All: *Blessed be God forever!*

**At the Altar**

Priest: Let us remember the many times we have gathered at the altar of the Sacrifice of Jesus.

*Pause for a moment of silence.*

Priest: We thank you for nourishing us with the body and blood of your Son. May this saving mystery lead us to the joys of eternal life. Strengthened by this sacrament may we be open to what lies ahead.

All: Blessed be God forever!

**Priest Celebrant:**

My brothers and sisters,

Our thanksgiving for the sacred images and places in this church reminds us of the enduring reality they represent. Mary and all the Saints continue to intercede for us that we may be faithful to all that God asks of us in this time and in all times. The Word of God guides us and the Holy Body and Blood nourishes us to love and serve Him now and throughout our lives and one day in glory.

May our thanksgiving strengthen and encourage us to walk bravely the new path set before us with confidence in God's providence as members of a new family of faith.

*A suitable hymn or instrumental music may follow.*