

Views from the Pews: The Shape of the Liturgy Part 3

Scene 6 is the Great Thanksgiving and is the heart of the service. In it we are reminded that God is present with us (as He promised) in spirit and we respond by lifting our hearts, the very essence of ourselves, and thus offering ourselves to Him. We are reminded of what God has done for us and we bow low in humility to recite the *Sanctus* and the *Benedictus*. The celebrant now recites the words of institution and the sacrament is ready for reception by all.

We move to the altar in Scene 7 to receive the blessed sacrament of the body and blood of Our Lord. It is a memorial of His passion and Death, and His rising again in all of which he gave Himself for us. As He promised Jesus is now present with us to strengthen us for our entry back into the world. We can be assured of His presence in our daily lives, and the help and strength that His presence brings to us if we accept His gift.

The scene is completed as the people return to their seats and join in short prayers of thanksgiving. These prayers also seek God's assistance to us to ensure that we stay faithful to Him until we meet again before the altar for the next celebration of the Eucharist. The priest then pronounces the blessing and we move to the final scene.

In Scene 8 we are dismissed and instructed to go in peace to love and serve the Lord and our response is that we leave in the Name of the Lord.

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