

The New Liturgy of the Revised Roman Missal
Liturgical Minutes No. 14
The Entrance Procession

While the Mass really begins when the people start to gather for worship, the visible beginning of the Mass starts with the entrance procession of the priest and other ministers taking part in the Mass.

The entrance procession is not just a means to get to the front of the church and the altar; it has deep theological significance, reminding us all of the fact that the entire people of God are pilgrims – we are a pilgrim people on the road from here (the earth) to eternity (to heaven). The entrance procession symbolized that journey – from the world outside the doors at the back of the church, to our heavenly destination, symbolized by the sanctuary at the front of the church. In that journey, Christ is not only our goal, symbolized by the altar, but He also accompanies us on the way in the person of the priest.

As the procession reaches the altar, the priest kisses the altar, in effect, greeting Christ. While the altar can be traced back to Eucharistic Sacrifices first offered in the catacombs on the tombs of the martyrs, the altar stone has come to signify Christ as the cornerstone of that building which is the Church, the People of God, His body, just as God revealed in Chapter 2 of 1 Peter: “Behold, I am laying a stone in Zion, a cornerstone, chosen and precious, and whoever believes in it shall not be put to shame.”

The words of Jesus in the Gospels of Matthew and John, and the Book of Hebrews, tell us: “I will never forsake you or abandon you – I will not leave you orphans; I will come to you – I am with you always, until the end of the age.” Jesus comes to us in the Mass. Jesus is here; for He said, “where two or three are gathered in my name, there am I in the midst of them.”