



The Mass Is Never Ended: Rediscovering Our Mission to Transform the World

Gregory Pierce

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The main thesis of this new work by Gregory Pierce is that the Mass of the Catholic Church provides everything we need to be happy, holy, and fulfilled in our lives: a mission worthy of our lives, a community to send us forth, and a spirituality of work. These three embody the 15 chapters of *The Mass Is Never Ended*, each of which closes with a short "story about" that synthesizes the topic and questions for reflection and discussion.

The mission we share was given by the Father for Jesus to begin, then by Jesus to the first disciples and all who, by virtue of their baptism and confirmation, follow them. Pierce defines the mission as "no less than to transform the world into a place much more like the way God would have things." He then turns to the question of "how?" sharing answers he has discovered in the Mass. The liturgy assures us that bringing about the kingdom is God's job, not ours and that "Jesus never intended that any one person or any single group of us would be able to pull off this mission." Throughout the Mass, we are reminded that our work is acceptable, our failures are forgiven, and we are being sent forth once again so that God may use our collective efforts to accomplish the mission. Tracing the Latin word for "Mass" to a military term from which the word "missile" also derives, Pierce makes the point that the words of the dismissal, however humdrum they may seem, propel us, "like a cannonball," back into our workaday lives. Armed with the sending forth and the promise of re-gathering in a week or less, we approach our work, whatever it is, aware of our mission.

The book's final section on the spirituality of work provides concrete ideas and examples that support the author's argument that it's almost too simple. "Stick close to the Mass," he writes "Allow it to forgive you, to prepare you, and to send you forth. Leave the church as if you had been shot out of a cannon, embrace your mission to make this a better world, and develop your own spirituality of work to sustain you."

Pierce's latest work has much to offer individuals, RCIA groups, retreat planners, and small church communities. Appendixes contain a litany of work, a Eucharistic Prayer that emphasizes "sending forth," and synopses of books and movies that shed light on the spirituality of work.

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