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THE CONCLUDING RITES IN TYPICAL EDITIONS OF THE MISSAL OF PAUL VI

Abstract. This study presents the structure of the concluding rites of the Mass in the post-conciliar Missal and their changes in the three typical editions. The post-conciliar reform preserved the tradition of the rites. In the Missal they are better arranged and more transparent with their meaning more clearly conveyed. The subsequent small changes were aimed at deepening this process. Therefore, the study gives selected historical roots of the rites and presents the corrections made in the Missal. This enables a better understanding of the evolution of the individual elements of the rites. It also serves as a spur to further research on the roots of the liturgical reform.

Key words: Missal of Paul VI; concluding rites; blessing; priest's greeting; announcements; altar.

The Missal of Paul VI is nowadays a basic liturgy book of the Church. The discussion among the experts gathered in *Consilium ad exsequendam Constitutionem de Sacra Liturgia*¹ was followed by the decision to retain the structure of the celebration consisting of two basic parts: the Liturgy of the Word and the Liturgy of the Eucharist. In addition, an important role was given to the introductory and concluding rites, which developed throughout centuries. They do not constitute the main parts of the liturgy; they play, however, a significant role in opening the celebration of the Holy Mass and ending it with the dismissal of the people assembled.² While the two main

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¹ Cf. Jerzy STEFAŃSKI, "Rola Consilium w posoborowej reformie liturgicznej," *Studia Theologica Varsaviensia* 23 (1985), no. 2: 291–310; Piotr KULBACKI, "Modlitwa powszechna jako modlitwa wiernych," *Roczniki Liturgiczno-Homiletyczne* 1 (57) (2010): 154–155.

² Cf. *Institutio Generalis Missalis Romani*, in *Missale Romanum*. Editio typica (Città del Vaticano: Typis Polyglottis Vaticanis, 1970) [hereinafter referred to as MR 1970], 19–92 [hereinafter referred to as IMGR 1970], no. 8.; *Institutio Generalis Missalis Romani*, in *Missale Romanum*. Editio typica altera

parts cannot be formulated in a different way, some elements or the entire form of the introductory and concluding rites can be replaced with other liturgical actions. The following study aims to investigate the concluding rites of the Holy Mass in three typical editions of the post-conciliar Missal.

1. THE REFORM OF THE CONCLUDING RITES

According to the Council Fathers' instructions concerning the liturgy, the dismissal rite was also simplified and more clearly defined.³ The blessing at the end of the Holy Mass included in the missal before the reform was presented in *Rubricae generales, Ritus servandus* and *Ordo Missae*. After the dialogue *Dominus vobiscum – Et cum spiritu tuo* there was the dismissal *Ite missa est – Deo gratias* or in the case of the ensuing procession *Benedicamus Domino – Deo gratias*; in the masses for the dead (one person or more): *Requiescant in pace* (always in the plural). Then there was the prayer *Placeat tibi, sancta Trinitas*, the kissing of the altar and blessing *Benedicat vos omnipotens Deus* ended *versus populum* with trinitarian *Pater et Filius, et Spiritus Sanctus – Amen*. In the masses which were ended with the words *Benedicamus Domino* or *Requiescant in pace* the prayer *Placeat* was followed only by the kissing of the altar. The entire rite was concluded with reading the beginning of the Gospel According to John (J 1:1–14) along with accompanying formulas and gestures.⁴ In the Missal of Paul VI “the last Gospel” was omitted. What is more, it does not include the prayers said at the end of the Holy Mass which were introduced in “difficult times” by Pope Leo XIII and were treated as a substitute for the universal prayer not present in the Roman Liturgy at the time.⁵

In the subsequent typical editions of the General Instruction of the Roman Missal only minor changes were introduced: some detailed instructions concerning the celebration and slightly different titles of the individual parts.

(Città del Vaticano: Typis Polyglottis Vaticanis, 1975) [hereinafter referred to as MR 1975], 19–92 [hereinafter referred to as IMGR 1975], no. 8; *Institutio Generalis Missalis Romani*, in *Missale Romanum*. Editio typica tertia. Reimpressio emendata 2008 (Città del Vaticano: Typis Vaticanis, 2008) [hereinafter referred to as MR 2008], 19–86 [hereinafter referred to as IMGR 2008], no. 28.

³ Cf. SC 21, 34, 48.

⁴ Cf. *Missale Romanum*. Editio typica 1962. Edizione anastatica e introduzione a cura di Manilio Sodi and Alessandro Tonilio (Città del Vaticano: Libreria Editrice Vaticana, 2007), 35, 64–65, 322–412.

⁵ Cf. SACRED CONGREGATION OF RITES, Instruction *Inter oecumenici* (26 IX 1964), no. 48; KULBACKI, “Modlitwa powszechna jako modlitwa wiernych,” 147–148.

Generally, the text *Ordo Missae* of the post-conciliar Missal contains the same recommendations regarding the concluding rites as the General Instruction.⁶

The first two typical editions of the post-conciliar Missal of 1970 and 1975 in the general description of the liturgy of the Holy Mass mention the following parts of the concluding rites: a) the priest's greeting and blessing, which on certain days and occasions can be expanded and expressed in the prayer over the people or another more solemn formula; b) the dismissal: the assembly is dismissed so that each may come back to their duties, praising and blessing God.⁷ The third typical edition (2002), in the General Instruction, contains additional recommendations concerning different kinds of celebrations and mentions four elements of the rite: 1° brief announcements, should they be necessary; 2° the priest's greeting and blessing, which on certain days and occasions may be in the form of the prayer over the people or another more solemn formula; 3° the dismissal by the deacon or the priest, so that each may go out to do good works, praising and blessing God; 4° the kissing of the altar by the priest and the deacon, followed by a profound bow to the altar made by the priest, the deacon, and the other ministers.⁸ Possible kneeling before Holy Sacrament connected with returning to the sacristy is not mentioned as (in a strict sense) it is not an element of the rites concluding the liturgy of the Holy Mass.

2. MAKING ANNOUNCEMENTS

Brief announcements, if they are to be provided, may be made to the people when the prayer after Communion is concluded.⁹ If the Mass is celebrated with the deacon, he can be the one who will make announcements unless the priest would like to do it.¹⁰ The instruction released after the third typical edition of the Missal emphasizes that a lay person should not give information (or testimonies) then, except for special situations which will not be associated with a homily or treated as its substitute.¹¹

⁶ Cf. MR 1970, 475–476; MR 1975, 475–476; MR 2008, 603–605.

⁷ Cf. IMGR 1970, no. 57; IMGR 1975, no. 57.

⁸ Cf. IMGR 2008, no. 90.

⁹ Cf. IGMR 1970, no. 123; MR 1970, 141; IMGR 1975, no. 123; MR, 141; IMGR 2008, no. 90; MR 2008, 603.

¹⁰ Cf. IGMR 1970, no. 139; IMGR 1975, no. 139; IMGR 2008, no. 184.

¹¹ Cf. CONGREGATION FOR DIVINE WORSHIP AND THE DISCIPLINE OF THE SACRAMENT, Instruction *Redemptionis Sacramentum* (25 III 2004), no. 74.

Indicating this precise moment for announcements in the liturgy is more appropriate than the previous practice of combining them with a sermon delivered from the ambo (a pulpit), the place with appropriate acoustic qualities used for preaching in a vernacular language.¹² There were also traditions of providing announcements even before commencing the liturgy to avoid its interruption. Due to the fact that in the Middle Ages most participants of the Holy Mass did not receive Communion, when the deacon called upon them to make space for those who received Communion, they often left the Church after the priest's Communion. That was why the announcements about subsequent "station churches," feast and fast days, as well as other information, were given before Communion.¹³ Today, rather than accentuating informative or organizational announcements so much, it is advisable to give a short message that can be drawn from the liturgy (e.g. "word of life" taken from the Liturgy of the Word, euchology or the one referring to the celebrated event). The aim of this practice is to provide help, so that, as *Sacred Tradition* (3rd/4th century) presented it, one could do their daily duties worshipping God.¹⁴

3. THE PRIEST'S BLESSING

Then, according to the Missal, the priest extends his hands and greets the people saying *Dominus vobiscum*, and the people reply *Et cum spiritu tuo*. The priest adds *Benedicat vos omnipotens Deus* and blessing the people with the sign of the Cross, he continues *Pater, et Filius, et Spiritus Sanctus*. The people respond with the word *Amen*. On certain days and occasions the blessing formula may be preceded by another solemn formula or the prayer over the people included in the Missal. These formulas stand outside the purview of the following study. The third typical edition gives a clear instruction that in this case it is the deacon who should say *Inclinate vos ad benedictionem*.¹⁵ The missal blessings can refer to Jesus' farewell to Apostles on the Ascension Day (Lk 24:50–51). The greeting with the promise of salvation can be found in the conclusion of the Epistles containing

¹² Cf. Albert GERHARDS, *Wo Gott und Welt sich begegnen. Kirchenräume verstehen* (Kevelaer: Butzon & Bercker, 2011), 125–126.

¹³ Cf. Michael KUNZLER, *Liturgia Kościoła*, trans. Lucjan Balter SAC (Poznań: Pallottinum, 1999), 294–295.

¹⁴ Cf. Bogusław NADOLSKI, *Liturgika*, vol. IV: *Eucharystia* (Poznań: Pallottinum, 2011), 376; see Henryk PAPROCKI, "Hipolita Rzymskiego *Tradycja Apostolska*. Wstęp, przekład, komentarz," *Studia Theologica Varsaviensia* 14 (1976): 145–169.

¹⁵ Cf. IMGR 1970, no. 124; IMGR 1975, no. 124; IMGR 2008, no. 167, 185.

a blessing (cf. 1 Cor 16:23; 2 Cor 13:11 f.; Gal 6, 18; Eph 6:23 f.; Phil 4:19-20.23; Col 4:18b; 1 Thess 5:23n.28; 2 Thess 3:16.18).¹⁶ The oldest traces of the elaborate blessings at the end of the liturgy can be seen in the *Apostolic Constitutions* of the 4th century. Due to the call of the deacon for bowing down, they are named *oratio inclinationis*.¹⁷ After the deacon's calling, the celebrant said the prayer which in the Roman Liturgy was the *oratio super populum* type. From the time of Amalarius of Metz onwards, this prayer was to be said only during the time of Lent. Such a limitation could be rooted in the idea of a Lenten spiritual battle supported by an additional blessing, which could be treated as a substitute for *eulogy* for those who do not receive Communion. In the time of Gregory the Great, penitential discipline during Lent was stricter in comparison to the other periods, and in order to foster the awareness of the need for renewal, public penitents were strengthened with the blessing in the form of the prayer *super populum*. Hence this prayer was omitted on joyful Sundays. In time the penitential element disappeared and in the Franconian Liturgy the prayer ceased to be confined to the period of Lent.¹⁸

When the current announcements were made before Communion, then immediately after that the blessing was bestowed upon the faithful. It was solemnly administered by the bishop and its purpose was to prepare the people for the reception of Communion worthily. However, in the tradition of the Gallican Liturgy, it became, as mentioned above, a substitute for Communion for those who did not receive this Sacrament, who after the celebrant's blessing left the church.¹⁹ This blessing bestowed by the bishop consisted of three parts with a repeated acclamation *Amen* and was modelled on Aaron's blessing (cf. Num 6:22–26), but it did not refer in its content to forthcoming Communion. This custom of giving a blessing was adapted in the Roman Liturgy; however, Spain opposed it, and the faithful in this country remained in the Church until the end of the Mass. Finally, it has become customary to make the blessing after Communion.²⁰

¹⁶ Cf. Józef SROKA, "Obrzęd Komunii," in *Msza święta*, ed. Waclaw Świerżawski (Kraków: Papieska Akademia Teologiczna, 1993), 312; Kazimierz MAŃKOWSKI, "Obrzędy zakończenia mszy św.," in *Mszał księgą życia chrześcijańskiego*, ed. Bogusław Nadolski (Poznań: Księgarnia św. Wojciecha, 1986), 472.

¹⁷ Cf. Josef Andreas JUNGSMANN, *Missarum sollemnia*, vol. II (Wien, Freiburg, Basel: Herder, 1962), 529–530; Marian MICHALSKI, *Antologia literatury patrystycznej*, vol. II (Warszawa: Instytut Wydawniczy PAX, 1982), 354–355.

¹⁸ Cf. JUNGSMANN, *Missarum sollemnia*, 532–533; NADOLSKI, *Liturgika*, vol. IV, 371.

¹⁹ Cf. Thomas SCHUMACHER, *Die Feier der Eucharistie* (München: Pneuma Verlag, 2009), 93.

²⁰ Cf. KUNZLER, *Liturgia Kościoła*, 295.

Before the custom of the blessing with the sign of the Cross appeared in the Roman Liturgy, the Pope proceeding to the sacristy, after the deacon's words *Ite missa est*, replied to the people's requests *Iube, Domine bendicere* with the words *Benedicat nos Dominus*. This form of the blessing became bishops' privilege. Administering the blessing at the altar is recorded from the 6th century in the Gallican Liturgy when after *Pater noster* the priest blessed those who did not receive Communion. The custom of giving the blessing at the altar at the end of the Liturgy instead of during the procession became widespread in the 12th century with different formulas being used, including Trinitarian ones. The formula used today, included in *Ordo Romanus XIV*, was recorded in the 13th century during the Synod in Alba; it reads as follows: "May Almighty God, the Father, and the Son, and the Holy Spirit bless you."²¹

In the Greek tradition one could perceive a certain combination of some fingers referring to the Roman gesture of the command. It can be seen on Christian frescos and sarcophaguses from the 6th century onwards. This gesture also expresses the idea of giving the blessing on a specific action, and sometimes a recommendation to listen closely and the idea of the command. Although the gesture of the blessing is made by a celebrant, it is God who bestows this blessing.²²

4. THE DISMISSAL OF THE PEOPLE

The Missal of Paul VI states that after the blessing, with his hands joined, the priest adds *Ite missa est* and all reply *Deo gratias*²³. When the Mass is celebrated with the deacon, he is the one who dismisses the people saying *Ite missa est*.²⁴ It was not until 2008 that Benedict XVI agreed to supplement, as suggested, the typical edition of the Missal (*editio tertia emendata*) by three additional dismissal formulas: 1) *Ite, ad Evangelium Domini annuntiandum*; 2) *Ite in pace, glorificando vita vestra Dominum*; 3) *Ite in pace*.²⁵ The words *Ite missa est* are probably rooted in the ancient secular custom of ending

²¹ Cf. NADOLSKI, *Liturgika*, vol. IV, 374.

²² Cf. Bogusław NADOLSKI, *Leksykon symboli liturgicznych* (Kraków: Wydawnictwo Salwator, 2010), 89–90; see IDEM, *Błogosławienie (sposób)*, in *Leksykon liturgii*, ed. Bogusław Nadolski (Poznań: Pallottinum, 2006), 164–166.

²³ Cf. IGMR 1970, no. 124; IMGR 1975, no. 124; IMGR 2008, no. 168

²⁴ Cf. IMGR 1970, no. 140; MR 1970, 476; IMGR 1975, no. 140; MR 1975, 476; IMGR 2008, no. 185; MR 2008, 605.

²⁵ Cf. MR 2008, 605; Robert CABIÉ, "The Eucharist," in *The Church at Prayer*, vol. II, ed. Aimé Georges Martimort (Collegeville, MN: The Liturgical Press, 1986), 219.

gatherings by using the word *missa*, which was confirmed by Bishop Avitius of Vienne († 518) who quoted the formula well-known to him *missa fieri pronuntiatur*. In the Byzantine Empire the word *missa* (sometimes the Greek *minsa*) meant ‘the assembly is over’ (*missio* — *dimissio*). Not until this word was used in the liturgy did it acquire religious meaning. In antiquity there were also other dismissal formulas, for example in the Greek Liturgy: Go in peace (the deacon’s call in Antakya) or Go in peace of Christ (in Syria), to which all replied: In the name of the Lord. The formula *Procedamus cum pace* with the reply *In nomine Domini* was used in Milan, and in the Mozarabic Liturgy — *Sollemnia completa sunt in nomine Domini nostri Iesu Christi. Votum nostrum sit acceptum cum pace* with the reply *Deo gratias*. The custom of using the word *missa* in the dismissal formula *Ite missa est* was already known in the 4th century; the significance of this dismissal was enhanced by the priest’s formula *Dominus vobiscum* and the acclamation said by the people *Deo gratias*.²⁶

The response of the congregation *Deo gratias* was used in the Church in North Africa not only during the Holy Mass – these words also meant agreement or greeting. Using these words, the listeners confirmed that they had understood the readings or, according to the Rule of St Benedict, a monk who opened a monastery gate said these words as a response to knocking on the gate, showing in this way respect for the person who wanted to enter. On the one hand, these words said at the end of the Holy Mass were an expression of gratitude for the graces received at the Mass; on the other hand, they were the confirmation of understanding and accepting the preaching. The words *Ite missa est* said by the deacon referred to the ministry of a herald who announced loudly what a judge or a state official, aware of their dignity, uttered in a hushed voice.²⁷ The extended version of the dismissal with additional words *Alleluia*, essentially intended for singing, is to be used in the Easter Vigil and during the octave of Easter,²⁸ and according to the second and the third typical editions, also at the Mass on the day of Pentecost.²⁹

²⁶ Cf. NADOLSKI, *Liturgika*, vol. IV, 372.

²⁷ Cf. JUNGSMANN, *Missarum sollemnia*, vol. II, 540; KUNZLER, *Liturgia Kościoła*, 397.

²⁸ Cf. MR 1070, 288, 292; MR 1975, 288, 292; MR 2008, 376, 379, 387,

²⁹ Cf. MR 1975, 314; MR 2008, 448.

5. THE VENERATION OF THE ALTAR

The Liturgy of the Holy Mass commenced with kissing the altar and ended also with kissing it. No mention of this gesture in *Ordo Romanus I* is probably due to the omission, as the gesture was present in other liturgies. The great significance of this gesture is confirmed by the prayer accompanying the kiss in the Syrian (Jacobite) Liturgy; it is as follows: “Remain in peace, O holy altar of the Lord, for I do not know whether I shall return to you or not. May the Lord make me worthy of the vision of you in the assembly of the first-born, in heaven. In this covenant I trust”. In the Franco-ian Liturgy in the Sacramentary of Amiens (9th century), the kissing of the altar was accompanied by the prayer *Placeat*, which was omitted as the result of the implementation of the post-conciliar reform.³⁰

The post-conciliar Missal in the concluding rites states that only the principal celebrant and the deacon are to kiss the altar as a sign of honour.³¹ It should be noted that *editio typica* of 1970 also describes the function of a subdeacon. This major order of the clergy was abolished after promulgating the Missal by Paul VI’s Motu proprio *Ministeria quedam* (in 1972).³² That is why the first edition of the Missal states that at the end of the Holy Mass the subdeacon along with the principal celebrant and the deacon honour the altar by kissing it. Then, having venerated the altar by making a profound bow, the priest withdraws with the other ministers. Together with the priest the deacon (and subdeacon) also withdraw in the same order as in the entry procession³³.

6. SPECIAL VERSIONS

Ordo Missae of John XXIII did not contain a blessing formula said by the bishop. Similarly, the first two editions of the Missal of Paul VI only mentioned a final blessing bestowed by the bishop when he is not the celebrant of the Liturgy of the Eucharist.³⁴ Only the third edition, published after the

³⁰ Cf. JUNGSMANN, *Missarum sollemnia*, vol. II, 542–543; NADOLSKI, *Liturgika*, vol. IV, 373.

³¹ Cf. IGMR 1970, no. 125, 141, 231; IMGR 1975, no. 125, 141, 231; IMGR 2008, no. 169, 186, 251.

³² PAUL VI, Motu proprio *Ministeria quaedam* (15 VIII 1972), AAS 64(1972) 529-534.

³³ Cf. IGMR 1970 n. 125, 141, 152, 208, 231; IGMR 1975 n. 125, 141, 208, 231; IMGR 2008 n. 169, 186, 193, 251, 272.

³⁴ Cf. IMGR 1970, no. 59; IMGR 1975, no. 59; IMGR 2008, no. 92.

promulgation of *Caeremoniale episcoporum* supplemented *ordo missae* with a description of the basic blessing formula given by the bishop.³⁵ According to the post-Tridentine tradition, the presbyter makes the blessing with one sign of the Cross and the bishop—three signs of the Cross.³⁶

When the Holy Mass is concelebrated, the Missal states that the dismissal rite is done by the principal celebrant while concelebrants remain at their seats. There are no instructions here for the deacon; the description of his function, however, indicates *per analogiam* that he is supposed to dismiss the people.³⁷ The third edition of the Missal clearly refers to the rite performed with the deacon in the previous rubrics.³⁸ The description of the concelebrated Mass refers to the previous instructions only stating that the concelebrants venerate the altar making a profound bow to it before *ab altari descendant*.³⁹

The sections entitled *Missa sine populo* of the first two typical editions mention the participation of only one minister; in the third edition, however, the relevant part was *explicite* entitled *De Missa, cuius unus tantum minister participat*. Then the concluding rite after the blessing does not include the dismissal *Ite missa est*.⁴⁰ In an exceptional case of the Holy Mass celebrated without the faithful, which cannot be celebrated in accordance with the Missal of 1970 and 1975 *nisi ex gravi necessitate* but in accordance with the Missal of 2002 *ne fiat iusta et rationabili de causa*, the final blessing is omitted.⁴¹ The Missal also says that when the Holy Mass is followed by another liturgical action, the concluding rites (the greeting, the blessing and the dismissal) are omitted.⁴²

CONCLUSION

The concluding rites have an analogous structure to the introductory rites of the Holy Mass: the entrance (possible kneeling before *Sanctissimum*), the kissing and incensation of the altar, the sign of the Cross, the liturgical greeting, the introductory word, and then the penitential act and *collecta*. The

³⁵ *Caeremoniale episcoporum*. Editio typica (Città del Vaticano: Typis Polyglottis Vaticanis, 1985); MR 2008, 603–605

³⁶ Cf. NADOLSKI, *Liturgika*, vol. IV, 374.

³⁷ Cf. IGMR 1970, no. 140, 207; IMGR 1975, no. 140, 207

³⁸ Cf. IMGR 2008, no. 166-168, 250.

³⁹ Cf. IGMR 1970, no. 208; IMGR 1975, no. 208; IMGR 2008, no. 251.

⁴⁰ Cf. IGMR 1970, no. 231; IMGR 1975, no. 231; IMGR 2008, no. 272.

⁴¹ Cf. IGMR 1970, no. 211; IMGR 1975, no. 211; IMGR 2008, no. 254.

⁴² Cf. IMGR 1970, no. 126; IMGR 1975, no. 126; IMGR 2008, no. 170.

concluding rites are done in the reverse order: the concluding word and announcements, the greeting, the sign of the Cross (the blessing), the veneration of the altar (possible kneeling before *Sanctissimum*), withdrawing to the sacristy. Obviously, the concluding rites do not include the incensation of the altar, the penitential act or the final prayer (an analogous role can be played by preceding *postcommunio* or solemn prayer formulas over the people).⁴³

In the concluding rites, the emphasis is placed on the priest's blessing, which along with the dismissal, points out to the missionary aspect of the Eucharistic celebration. The concluding rites, which underwent evolution over centuries, were not significantly altered in the Missal of Paul VI. The rubrics and texts said by the priest and the deacon were arranged in such a way so that the message of bearing fruit of the holiest sacrifice in everyday life could be more legible.

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⁴³ Cf. MAŃKOWSKI, *Obrzędy zakończenia mszy św.*, 469-470.

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OBRZĘDY ZAKOŃCZENIA W EDYCJACH TYPICZNYCH MSZAŁU PAWŁA VI

Streszczenie

Niniejsze opracowanie ukazuje strukturę obrzędów zakończenia Mszy św. w mszale posoborowym i zmiany w trzech edycjach typicznych. Posoborowa reforma zachowała tradycję ukształtowanych obrzędów, porządkując je, czyniąc bardziej przejrzystymi i lepiej oddającymi ich sens. Kolejne, drobne zmiany miały na celu pogłębienie tego procesu. Dlatego opracowanie podaje wybrane historyczne korzenie obrzędów i prezentuje wprowadzane poprawki w mszale. Umożliwia to lepsze zrozumienie ewolucji poszczególnych elementów obrzędów i daje impuls do dalszego pogłębiania studiów nad korzeniami zreformowanych obrzędów liturgicznych.

Słowa kluczowe: mszał Pawła VI; obrzędy zakończenia; błogosławieństwo; pozdrowienie kapłana, ogłoszenia, ołtarz.