

# I. Introductory Rites: Forming a Community to Worship

**It is good for us to be here.**

When we go to Mass, we do not just walk in and have God's Word proclaimed. This is too sacred of a moment to rush right into it. That is why we have the Introductory Rites – we need to get ready.

1. Call on God's name in the Sign of the Cross, Confess our sins, Ask for God's mercy, Sing His praises and Offer our Prayers in preparation for this moment when we hear God's words.
2. We need to be formed into a Community ready to Worship our Lord.

The Introductory Rites have the character of a **beginning, introduction, and preparation**. This points to two very important elements of the introductory rites.

1. When the bishops of the Second Vatican Council described the ways in which Christ is present in the celebration of the liturgy, they underscored these four:
  - a. Christ is present in the Priest-President,
  - b. Christ is present in the Word proclaimed,
  - c. Christ is present most especially in the Eucharist,
  - d. Christ is present in "the Church that prays and sings."

["For where two or three are gathered together in my name..." (Mt.18:20)] Thus, our coming together for worship is a response to God's initiative and invitation so that, when we do gather, we manifest the Body of Christ in the world.

"In the restoration and promotion of the sacred liturgy *the full and active participation by all the people is the aim to be considered before all else...* " (CSL 14)

More than just being "nice for us to be here," our the coming together shows the "full, active, and conscious participation of the faithful" and we manifest Christ at worship.

2. The second important element of GIRM 46 describes the *purpose* of the Introductory Rites. These rites are intended to be the means by which we prepare to hear the Word of God.

"When the Scriptures are read in Church, God himself is speaking to his people and Christ, present in his own word, is proclaiming the Gospel." (GIRM 29)

**The Entrance:** We Stand – Shows Respect – shows we are participating.

**Entrance Procession:** Priest, Deacon, Altar Servers and Lector enter the church for the celebration of the Liturgy. Book of the Gospels is carried and placed on the Altar.

## **The Entrance Song**

The Entrance Song is meant to foster the formation of a community that worships and reveals the presence of Christ.

"The purpose of singing at this time is to *open the celebration, intensify the unity* of those who have assembled, *lead their thoughts* to the mystery of the liturgical season or festivity, and *accompany the procession* of the priest and ministers." )

**Greeting of the Altar:** As an expression of veneration, the Priest and Deacon kiss the altar itself because it was anointed with chrism, stands for Christ, our salvation.

**Greeting of the People:**

**Sign of the Cross:**

We call on God's Name, invoking His Holy Presence among us ('where two or three are gathered together in my name' Matt 18:20), and ask His protection over our lives as we begin our worship in the celebration of the Mass.

**Greeting: Lord be with You.** 4 Time in Mass.

Signifies our great call from our Baptism and that God's Presence is with us to help us in our lives, trials, families, friendships and work.

"Then through the greeting the priest signifies the presence of the Lord to the community gathered together. *By this greeting and the people's response the mystery of the Church gathered together is made known.*" (GIRM 48)

**Penitential Rite**

**Humbling ourselves before God, we are Sinners, seek His Forgiveness, and Mercy.**

Most of the time, the presider may choose from three options. The Confiteor, a shorter litany, and the Kyrie Eleison or Lord, have mercy.

**Confiteor:**

I Confess to Almighty God and to you my Brothers and Sisters:

This prayer asks each one of us to think about the ways we have sinned: (FAILED TO LOVE)

in My Thoughts, in My Words, in what I have Done, and what I have Failed To Do. That sure does cover a whole lot of territory in our lives.

**The Kyrie Eleison – Lord Have Mercy:**

If not already included, we the faithful acclaim the Lord and implore His mercy.

When we go to Mass, we ask for God's Mercy for our:

- Sins, but also for our
- Sufferings, fears, uncertainties, weaknesses, struggles, even our struggles with sin –
- Lord have Mercy on me.

We also entrust those we love to God by calling out for His Mercy for others – Family, sick, etc.

Lord have Mercy on ...

### **Our Father sees our hearts.**

#### **He comes and He responds with great love.**

The Kyrie is first praise, based on faith in God's mercy. Then, secondly, we ask for mercy. It is not a time to focus on our sinfulness only, but to glorify Christ who loves us and knows us as sinners. In this way, the rite models for us a strongly relational character.

During the Easter Season the Presider can use the Rite of Blessing and Sprinkling with Holy Water.

On Sundays, especially in the Season of Easter, in place of the customary Act of Penitence, from time to time *the blessing and sprinkling of water to recall Baptism may take place.*" (GIRM 51)

### **Clarifications regarding the Penitential Rite**

Over the years, the use of the Penitential Rite is not just like going to confession, it is merely part of the rites that prepare us for the rest of the Mass. Thus, the revised GIRM states:

"Then the priest invites them to take part in the penitential rite, which, after a brief pause for silence, the entire community carries out through a formula of general confession, and which is concluded with the priest's absolution.  
***This latter, however, lacks the efficacy of the sacrament of penance.***" (GIRM #51)

### **The Glory to God**

Ancient hymn of **praise to glorify** God. It is used on all Sundays (outside of Advent and Lent) and solemn celebrations. The beginning text originates from the Christmas narrative in the Gospel of Luke (Luke 2:14).

Gloria tells the story of Jesus Christ.

- The Only Begotten Son
- The Lamb of God who takes away the sins of the world.
- He is Seated at the right hand of The Father.

So, the Gloria is a summary of Salvation History in praise.

### **The Collect, or Opening Prayer**

The priest says, "Let us pray," and the assembly prays in silence for a moment.

We pray to God for our Intentions

Then, he says the Opening Prayer and "collects" the prayers that the faithful make in silence and directs them to the Father in the Son and through the Holy Spirit.

Then all are seated.

A successful conclusion to the introductory rites leaves our hearts ready to hear and respond to the Word of God.

**For discussion/reflection:**

- At what point in the liturgy are you ready to be present to God, to others, to the prayer?
- How does the parish build a worshipping community at Mass? Outside Mass?
- What else do I need to understand to be able to enter into the Introductory Rites? What did I learn that is new?
- What word, prayer or action will I look for next week as a way to enter into the Introductory Rites?