

## Pastor's Message

This week we continue to look at the introductory rite of our Mass. We have begun with song and approached the altar. We have named ourselves with the sign of the cross and greeted each other in the name of our triune (3 person) God. Next we must acknowledge our sin being aware of our unworthiness in the presence of God. We ask for God's mercy and receive it. This part of the introductory rite is called the penitential rite. God reminds us over and over again that we are a holy people and so we are. But we also recognize that we sin; we do not live up to our call to holiness as we should. So we ask for mercy to once again become aware of our innate holiness and we receive God's forgiveness and mercy.

The missal gives us four different ways to acknowledge our sin and ask for God's mercy. We have the prayer called the confiteor: *I confess to Almighty God and to you my brothers and sisters that I have sinned...* Since the new missal changed some of the words to that prayer it is seldom used anymore because we have not learned it yet. A second and third option uses versions of what we usually say: *Lord have mercy, Christ have mercy, Lord have mercy.* A fourth option uses the ancient Greek formula: *Kyrie eleison, Christe eleison, Kyrie eleison* which simply means *Lord have mercy, Christ have mercy, Lord have mercy.* Oh, and by the way, the missal suggests that all these penitential rites be sung by priest and people! Having acknowledged our sin and unworthiness to approach the altar of God and celebrate God's presence among us in Jesus Christ we are now ready to give glory. For in the face of our sin God has shown mercy, called us together into His presence and sent us His Son as our Savior.

So we (sing) the Gloria. *Glory to God in the highest and on earth peace to people of good will. We praise you, we bless you, we adore you, we glorify you, we give you thanks...* This ancient hymn gathers us together recognizing what we are here to do, i.e., to give glory to God and to be forgiven, nourished, and sent by God into the world to do God's will. The Gloria is a hymn to be sung. It is never to be recited just like you wouldn't recite the Happy Birthday song at a birthday party. So the missal recommends that if the Gloria is not to be sung then it should not be said.

The introductory rite ends with the opening prayer which properly is called the "Collect". This first invitation to prayer always starts with silence so we can focus. As the Hindus say: all prayer and song comes from silence and returns to silence. This first prayer prayed by the presider (therefore called the presidential prayer) *collects* the prayers of all of us into one prayer. These prayers always call upon God to hear us, thank God for His gifts to us; ask God to hear some need of ours, and always pray all this *through Christ our Lord.* There are many, myself included, who think that the new translations of these prayers do not translate well into English. In Latin they are poetic and often "sing" (yes, the missal suggests that these prayers be sung). In English they often sound convoluted or fall flat. Some day I hope we will give these prayers (and our entire Eucharistic prayers) to some poets who could help us create prayers and words that once again are worthy of God and sound beautiful to our ears. For now, we have what we have.

The Collect ends our introductory rite and now we are ready to hear God's holy Word in the first major section of our Eucharistic celebration: the Liturgy of the Word.

Fr. Chris