

Lesson 7 Gloria

Action

After the Penitential Rite, which as you recall may be done either through the usual prayers or the Rite of Sprinkling, the priest joins his hands and either begins singing or says the first words of the Gloria (except in Advent and Lent). Often, especially here at St. Luke's, the cantor may begin the prayer. It is sung or recited by everyone. Twice during the Gloria, the priest celebrant bows his head at the name "Jesus Christ." During this prayer we all stand.

History

The first words of the Gloria are taken from the Gospel of St. Luke. The words are those spoken by the angels to the Shepherds when they announced the birth of Jesus. "Glory to God in the highest and peace to men who enjoy His favor." (*Lk 2:14*) This hymn dates all the way back to the very early church. It was probably sung at Mass by the early Christians. Until the sixth century it was regularly sung at Morning Prayer by the monks and nuns and a little later it was included in all the Christmas Masses. Gradually, its use was extended to Sundays and feasts of the martyrs at Masses. Finally, by the eleventh century it was sung on Sundays and Feast days throughout the entire western Church. According to the New Instruction of the Roman Missal, "The Gloria... praises and entreats God the Father and the Lamb.... It's sung or said on Sundays outside Advent and Lent, on solemnities and feasts, and in special more solemn celebrations." Because the Gloria is part of the Introductory Rites of the Mass its purpose, like the entrance hymn, is to bring the people together as a praying and worshipping community of believers.

How we can better participate in this prayer

When we say the Gloria with the others in the church we should try to lift our minds and hearts to God. Let the words of the prayer become your words. We

believe that God is the one to whom all glory and honor belong. It's only because of God's love that we are able to stand in His presence to offer Him thanksgiving and praise. This is truly a great gift and we should never forget it.