

The Mass In Slow Motion

Volume — 9

The Gloria

The Mass In Slow Motion is a series on the Mass explaining the meaning and history of what we do each Sunday. This series of flyers is an attempt to add insight and understanding to our celebration of the Sacred Liturgy. You are also invited to learn more by attending Sunday School classes for adults which take place in the school cafeteria each Sunday from 9:45 am. to 10:45 am.

This series will follow the Mass in order.



So, we have gathered and acknowledged God's presence in several ways — hymn of praise, incense, veneration of the altar, and the greeting of the celebrant. We have examined our consciences and asked God to give us pure hearts and minds to praise him. At most Sunday Masses what comes next is a kind of outburst of praise called the Gloria — "Glory to God in the highest!" Knowing and experiencing God's presence and mercy brings forth joy and a desire to praise him. And so we sing:

Glory to God in the highest, and peace to his people on earth. Lord God, heavenly King, almighty God and Father, we worship you, we give you thanks, we praise you for your glory. Lord Jesus Christ, only Son of the Father, Lord God, Lamb of God, you take away the sin of the world: have mercy on us; you are seated at the right hand of the Father: receive our prayer. For you alone are the Holy One, you alone are the Lord, You alone are the Most High, Jesus Christ, with the Holy Spirit, in the glory of God the Father. Amen.

The Gloria is a very old and venerable hymn of the Church. It is sung by the congregation, or by the congregation alternately with the choir. If it is not sung it is to be recited by all in unison or alternately. It is sung on Sundays outside the Advent and Lenten seasons, as well as on solemnities and feasts and at special, more solemn celebrations. The text of the Gloria echoes the song of the angels at the Nativity. Further, it praises and invokes both the Father and Son and concludes with a brief doxology to the Trinity.

History - The Gloria was not created originally for the Mass. It is an heirloom from the treasure of ancient church hymns. Indeed, it is a precious remnant of a literature now mostly lost but once certainly very rich. These hymns imitated and borrowed from biblical themes. Indeed they may even be said to take after the tradition established by Mary who proclaimed her Magnificat by borrowing heavily from the biblical themes.

themes with which she was so familiar. So too, Zacharia in his Benedictus. Few of these early hymns of the Church remain however. One other hymn which does remain is the Te Deum and it, unlike the Gloria, has retained its existence apart from the Mass. The roots of the Gloria may be found as early as the 4th Century where a text very close to our present text is found. Likewise, another text from the 7th Century is also very close. Again, this hymn was not originally part of the Mass but was probably sung as the Te Deum is today, as a thanksgiving hymn for feasts and celebration. It was sometimes included in the Mass as a hymn as early as the 6th Century and perhaps even earlier by some accounts. But definitely by the 6th Century Pope Symmachus permitted its use on Sundays and feasts of martyrs but only at a Mass presided over by a Bishop. Pope Gregory allowed its use at the Easter Mass even if the Celebrant was only a priest. It was not until the 11th Century that the distinction allowing it only for Bishop's Masses was dropped. This was due to continual requests that it be allowed. Today, the Gloria is said at all Masses of a festive character outside of penitential seasons.

A full analysis of the hymn could be a course in itself. However, suffice it to say that it is understood to be a hymn of praise which is well brought out in the present. However, the new translation improvement. Lastly, it is fitting. Reciting the Gloria comes in at a the National anthem. We just don't honor of the song requires it be possible it should therefore be sung. ends up being recited. It should at manner to avoid the possibility of



almost ecstatic in quality. This is not as English translation for use in this country. coming in November will be an that the Gloria be sung if possible. very poor second. It is kind of like reciting do this because the very festivity and sung. The Gloria is like this. If at all However, this is not always possible and it least be recited in a vibrant and pious the text becoming wooden and dull.

In the end, these introductory rites of procession, penance and praise all serve to establish the fact that we are in the presence of God. Casting aside our sin and sorrow we enter God's presence with reverence, confidence and joy. Next we will pause to pray before we sit to attentively listen to God speak to us.