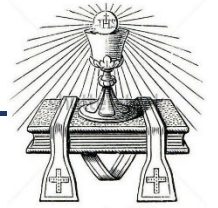




The Mass in Slow Motion



The Gloria

This 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.

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!” or in Latin, “Gloria in excelsis Deo!” 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 on earth peace to people of good will. We praise you; we bless you, we adore you, we glorify you, we give you thanks for your great glory, Lord God, heavenly King, O God, almighty Father. Lord Jesus Christ, Only Begotten Son, Lord God, Lamb of God, Son of the Father, you take away the sins of the world, have mercy on us; you take away the sins of the world, receive our prayer; you are seated at the right hand of the Father, have mercy on us. 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. They may even be said to take after the tradition established by Mary who proclaimed her *Magnificat* (My soul proclaims the greatness of God...) by borrowing heavily from the biblical themes. So too, Zechariah in his *Benedictus* (Blessed be the Lord, the God of Israel. He has come to his people and set them free...). Both of these hymn-like praises are found in the Gospel of Luke in the first chapter. Few of the other early hymns of the Church remain, however. One other hymn which does remain is the *Te Deum*, (We praise you Oh God and acknowledge you to be Lord...). It too is a hymn of thanksgiving and praise to God. Unlike the Gloria, it 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 in celebrating liturgical feasts. 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 almost ecstatic in quality. So, it is fitting that the Gloria be sung if possible. Reciting the Gloria comes in at a very poor second. It is a bit like reciting the National Anthem. We just don't do this because the very festivity and honor of the song requires it be sung. The Gloria is like this, if at all possible, it should therefore be sung. However, this is not always possible and it ends up being recited. It should at least be recited in a vibrant and pious manner to avoid the possibility of 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, as we shall study, we will listen attentively to God speak to us.



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Mass schedule: Sundays: 8 am, 9:30 am, 11 am & 7 pm; Saturdays: 8 am & 4:30 pm; Daily: 7 am in the chapel