

# Transitioning to the new Roman Missal

Part 3 in a series (Prepared for St. James Cathedral, Seattle by Corinna Laughlin)

September 25, 2011

**A**t the beginning of Mass, we acknowledge our sins and praise God's mercy in the Penitential Act (formerly called the "Penitential Rite"). The new translation of the ancient confession of sin, the *Confiteor*, reflects the Latin text, with the thrice-repeated words "through my fault," and the ritual gesture of striking the breast.

In the 1570 Roman Missal (the "Tridentine" Rite, because it dates from the Council of Trent), this prayer actually occurs twice – once at the beginning of Mass, in the prayers said at the foot of the altar, and again just before the communion of the faithful. The reformed rite places it here, and makes it a prayer said by the entire assembly – priest and people together.

The *Confiteor* always rings true. If one had to summarize it in one word, perhaps that word would not be "sin" or "confession" but *responsibility*: this prayer is all about taking responsibility for our sins. Our sins are not thrust upon us—they are our own fault, as we now repeat three times. We sin not only in words, but in thoughts; not only in action, but in omission.

But there is hope in this prayer as well, as we turn towards God, and there is healing in the community that surrounds us: our "brothers and sisters" in the pews with us, and the invisible communion of saints, with Mary at their head, who pray for us to God.

## THE PENITENTIAL ACT

**I confess to almighty God  
and to you, my brothers and sisters,  
that I have greatly sinned,  
in my thoughts and in my words,  
in what I have done  
and in what I have failed to do,**

*And, striking their breast, they say:*

**through my fault, through my fault,  
through my most grievous fault;  
therefore I ask blessed Mary  
ever-Virgin,  
all the Angels and Saints,  
and you, my brothers and sisters,  
to pray for me to the Lord our God.**

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## THE LANGUAGE OF THE MASS IS CHANGING

The texts of the Mass, including the parts prayed by the priest and the people's responses, are changing. In just a few weeks, **on November 27**, we will begin using the new translation of the Roman Missal. This page is part of an ongoing series in the bulletin to help us understand the new texts and prepare to use them on the First Sunday of Advent. *Explore the whole series at [www.stjames-cathedral.org](http://www.stjames-cathedral.org).*

You are invited to participate in a **lecture and discussion series on the history of our worship, which begins Tuesday, October 4**. The series is offered on Tuesday evenings at 6:30pm and Saturday mornings at 9:30am. This series explores the history of our worship, why we pray the way we do, and includes time for discussion and reflection. In addition, on the weekends of November 13 and 20, there will be short, intensive sessions focused on learning the new responses after all the Masses. Please participate! Visit the Cathedral's website for more details on these programs.

