

# Transitioning to the new Roman Missal

Part 4 in a series (Prepared for St. James Cathedral, Seattle by Corinna Laughlin)

October 2, 2011

One of the most familiar Christian prayers is known as the "Doxology," meaning *words of praise*: "Glory be to the Father, and to the Son, and to the Holy Spirit, as it was in the beginning, is now, and ever shall be, world without end." The Gloria we sing at Mass is sometimes called "the greater Doxology," because it is an extended hymn of praise to God the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit.

The translators of the 1974 *Sacramentary* wanted an English Gloria which was accurate in the essential points of the prayer, but which avoided repetitions which could be distracting in the vernacular. They also worked hard to make the text rhythmic and singable, so that it could be set to music naturally and memorably. In keeping with the Church's new guidelines on liturgical translation, the 2011 version of the Gloria reflects the Latin text more exactly. The most noticeable changes are in the litany of praise at the beginning of the prayer. The current version says (or sings!): "Lord God, heavenly King, / almighty God and Father, / we worship you, we give you thanks, / we praise you for your glory." The new version changes the order of these phrases, in keeping with the Latin, and adds

## 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 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.**

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additional words of praise: we "praise," "bless," "adore," "glorify," and "give... thanks." The Gloria is a poem, a song of praise, not a theological treatise, so this variety of language should probably not be read as if these phrases somehow constitute a precise summary of how we can praise of God. Rather, they should be experienced as we experience music or poetry, in which repetition is used for cumulative effect: in this case, a crescendo of praise.

The other significant difference comes in the second part of the Gloria, with the extended litany to Christ, who takes "away the sins of the world." This litany echoes the "Lamb of God" we will pray just before communion. In this part of the Gloria, we express our faith in Christ, the "Only Begotten Son" of God, and recall his saving mission for the world - and for us. He takes away the sins of the world, and so we ask him to "have mercy on us" as well. He is "seated at the right hand of the Father" to intercede for us, and so we ask him to

"receive our prayer."

The final part of the Gloria, which is unchanged, praises Christ and the triune God, bringing to a transcendent conclusion this great song of praise.

**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.