

“YEAR OF THE EUCHARIST” - MASS PARTS (PART 1) - Fr. Steve Lape

As you may know, every Mass has 4 basic sections: the Introductory Rite, the Liturgy of the Word, the Liturgy of the Eucharist, and the Concluding Rite. In this article, we'll review a few words which describe certain Mass parts within the 1st section: The Introductory Rite. Some you may already know; some you may not. After the opening hymn, the sign of the cross & the greeting from the presiding priest or bishop, the following occurs:

Penitential Rite—During this action, the congregation “does penance” or publically expresses its regret for certain sins that each person privately calls to mind, then calls upon God to show mercy towards the people for their wrongs. Sins hurt the individual’s ability to love God and other people, either in small or large ways. Our individual sins hurt the whole Body of the Church, and, thus, need to be acknowledged in some way publically for the pain that such sins have caused the whole Body. This rite of penance is not meant to take the place of celebrating the Sacrament of Reconciliation, especially if one is aware of more serious (called mortal) sin on their souls. However, there is healing grace to be received for less serious sins committed (also known as venial sins) when one celebrates the Eucharist, receives Communion, and expresses genuine sorrow for sins committed. This rite begins with an invitation by the presider to have all gathered call to mind their sins. After a short period of silence, one of 3 forms may be used. One form is a brief dialogue between the presider and the congregants, which goes as follows: Priest says, “Have mercy on us, O Lord”. The assembly responds, “For we have sinned against you.” The priest then says, “Show us, O Lord, your mercy.” The assembly then adds, “And grant us your salvation.” This form is the most infrequently used one. The other 2 forms are the Kyrie and the Confiteor.

Kyrie Eleison (pronounced KEE-ree-ay ay-LAY-ee-son)—This form is often referred to as “the Kyrie.” The words “Kyrie Eleison” come from Greek words meaning, “Lord, have mercy.” With this form, the presiding priest or assisting deacon gives 3 expressions which highlight some aspect of the merciful love and presence of Jesus Christ in our lives, with each fol-

lowed by “Lord, have mercy,” after the 1st one, “Christ, have mercy,” after the 2nd, and “Lord, have mercy” after the 3rd. This could be spoken or sung.

Confiteor (con-FEE-dee-or)—This Latin word means “I confess” or “I admit.” It is the prayer spoken aloud by all gathered to acknowledge our sinfulness before God during the Mass. This prayer gets its name from the first word used in the Latin translation of the prayer. In English, it begins, “I confess to almighty God and to you, my brothers and sisters, that I have greatly sinned...”

A brief prayer of absolution is said by the presider after each of the 3 forms. He says: “May almighty God have mercy on us, forgive us our sins, and bring us to everlasting life.” If the 1st form or the Confiteor is used, then the “Kyrie Eleison” form follows the presider’s prayer of absolution. The Penitential Rite is omitted at certain times of the year. For example, on Ash Wednesday, the distribution of ashes after the homily replaces this rite. The blessing of water and sprinkling rite that is done at the beginning of Mass during the Easter season also replaces this rite.

Gloria – This refers to the Christian hymn which is known as the Hymn of the Angels. As you may recall in

Luke 2:14, the angels announced Jesus’ birth to the shepherds, beginning with the words, “Glory to God in the highest,” or, in Latin, “Gloria in excelsis Deo.” These words of praise & worship to God are sung or spoken on solemnities (special days of highest importance on the Church’s calendar), feast days (not as high-ranking as solemnities, but still of special importance), and most Sundays of the year, except during Advent and Lent.

Collect (pronounced COLL-ect, not coll-ECT, as in, “I collect the money.”)—This is the opening prayer which the presider gives just before the Scripture readings are proclaimed. This is the final part of the Introductory Rite.

Next week, we’ll look at terms which describe parts from the 2nd and 3rd sections of the Mass—words such as intercessions, epiclesis, embolism, doxology, sanctus, preface, and others.

