

Understanding the Mass – The Gloria

The ultimate purpose of the liturgy is to praise and worship God - and the *Gloria*, a hymn from the early Church of praise to God, does just that. This hymn is reserved for Sundays and feasts and should appropriately be sung if possible. It is not used during Advent and Lent to maintain its special character and to allow the song to ring out with new vigor in the seasons that follow.

Having asked for God's mercy in the Penitential Rite, we are ready to sing praise to God for who He is and what He has done. The *Gloria* begins with the words of the angels proclaiming the birth of our Lord. We continue the song of the angels as Jesus is now coming to us in the Mass, humble and lowly, first as the Word of God and then in the form of bread and wine. The hymn continues with a litany of praise, first to our heavenly Father and then to Jesus Christ and concluding with the Holy Spirit, making it a true song of praise to the Trinity. Other scriptural references in the *Gloria* put on our lips the words of John the Baptist and the praise of the Lamb from the book of Revelation.

In the new translation of the missal, the words of the *Gloria* will more closely follow the theological language of the early Church and the scriptures. Through this it will more clearly highlight Jesus' unique relationship with the Father and his role in our salvation.

The new language of the Gloria will be energizing and even more joyful, enabling us to join with all the heavenly hosts in praise of God in the liturgy of the Mass.