

Understanding the Mass

Part 7 in a series

The Gloria: We sing a hymn in Praise of our God

We have just asked for God's mercy for our sins. Now, we turn to him in song (everybody singing!) to praise him. The Gloria is also known as "The Great Doxology". A doxology is from the Greek meaning "a word of praise". It is actually a three part hymn.

Part 1 – We sing with the Angels!

"Glory to God in the highest and peace to people of good will". Wait a minute! That sounds familiar. Where have we heard this before? Yes, it is from Luke 2: 14. These are similar to the words the Angel and heavenly hosts (great numbers) sing to the shepherds in Bethlehem when announcing the birth of Jesus. We then open our hearts to our God, *"We praise you, we bless you, we adore you, we glorify you..."* We begin our celebration of the Eucharist by acknowledging God and praising him for his mercy and glory.

Part 2 – We acknowledge the salvific actions of Christ

We again acknowledge Jesus as the Son of the Father and ask for his mercy on us for our sins. While it seems repetitive (we just recited the Confiteor) remember, we are singing a great hymn of praise and thanksgiving to our God. We acknowledge that Jesus, by his cross and resurrection takes away the sins of the world; that he sits at the right hand of God and we ask him to hear our prayers.

Part 3 – We acknowledge the Blessed Trinity

We close our doxology by proclaiming with great fanfare that Christ is the Holy One, the Lord, and the Most High, with the Holy Spirit, in the glory of God the Father.

Remember, we are singing this hymn with great fanfare and beautiful music. Our hearts are bursting with praise for our Glorious God. We are in His house and we want to let him know that we truly glorify him so we join our voices together in song.

Why don't we sing the Gloria during Advent or Lent?

The Gloria is a song of exaltation and joy, whereas Lent and Advent are penitential seasons. During this penitential time we are focused on preparing for the coming of our savior (Advent) and the Easter resurrection that is to come (Lent). During these times of penitence, it is appropriate to omit the singing of this joyful hymn. However, with the coming of Christmas and Holy Thursday we bring the Gloria back into our services and following our time period of penitence we sing it with an even greater sense of the glory of God!