

Would You Like A Gloria With That Mass?



Our next stop in exploring the musical aspects of the Mass is the Gloria. The Gloria is a most ancient hymn of praise and we get its first words directly from the angels announcing the birth of the Christ Child at the first Christmas. The Gloria is part of the Ordinary of the Mass (recall that the Ordinary is the stuff that is always the same, and the Proper is the stuff that changes from Mass to Mass). It is said (sung) on all Sundays, solemnities, feasts, and other highly solemn occasions; except during Advent, Lent, and at daily Mass - curiously, the extraordinary form has the Gloria during its daily Mass. If you came to Mass this past Friday and wondered why you had a Gloria at daily Mass during Lent, this is why - it was the Feast of St. Joseph!

Following the Gloria is the Collect (pronounced coll-leckt). This is where the priest brings the collected prayers of all those at Mass together and presents them to the Lord, with special attention to the “theme” of the Mass. In fact, the word collect is just an abbreviation of the collected prayers of the people - it is similar to how we use abbreviated or contracted words and phrases. For instance, most people do not use the official name of the UK - the United Kingdom of Great Britain. The Collect is part of the Proper of the Mass, its text is different from Mass to Mass, and our personal prayers and intentions may also be different. After the invocation “Let us pray”, the priest pauses so that everyone at the Mass can mentally state their intentions, then continues with the specific prayer text for the Mass and it ends by invoking the Holy Trinity.

This concludes our observations on the Introductory Rites. So far, we have seen that every single text of the Mass, from the Entrance Antiphon through the Collect, is prescribed by the Church and has music that is designed to accompany it (emphasize and give greater solemnity to). Next up is the Liturgy of the Word.

St. Cecilia, St. Elizabeth of the Trinity...Pray for us!

--Mark Wozniczka, Music Director (mwozniczka@archchicago.org)

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