

# Introductory Rites continued

## Part IV in the Parish Liturgy Series



As we learned in Part III, the Penitential Act prepares our hearts by submitting our lives to the mercy and forgiveness of God. We want to sit worthily at the table of God's Word and Eucharist. On some Sundays we may plan for a Rite of Sprinkling in place of the Penitential Act. In the Rite of Sprinkling we recall our Baptism by which we have become a priestly people, called to "proclaim the glorious works of the One who called us out of darkness into his marvelous light". (1 Peter 2: 9) When the priest sprinkles us with the water reminiscent of our Baptism it is appropriate to make the sign of the cross with the intention of renewing our Baptism.

### Glory to God

Every Sunday of the year except during Advent and Lent the Church sings to God in an ancient hymn that gives glory and praise to God. We may come to Mass with many concerns to pray for. But our first prayer is one of praise. In the **Gloria** of the Mass we acknowledge that God is the ground of our being. Everything we have and all that we are belong to God. How important it is that before we hear God's Word proclaimed and before we bring our gifts to the altar we give to God the most important movement of hearts: praise and adoration to the One who has given us life and redeemed us in Christ. We stand to sing the Gloria because it is the posture of an Easter People, raised up by Christ to newness of life.

The revised translation for the Gloria is the most noticeable change in the prayers that the assembly offers at Mass. As we approach Advent and the immediate use of the new translation we will revisit the Gloria and provide an aid with the new translation.

### Let us Pray... the Collect

With the Introductory Rites completed, the priest issues an invitation to the congregation: "Let us pray." The pause in silence that follows allows us to formulate our own prayer in the silence of our hearts. Notice that the priest extends his hands outward as he offers the prayer. This ancient prayer gesture, referred to as the *orans*, is a gesture of openness and peace. It's similar to the gesture that one who has been arrested makes to show that he/she is unarmed. And so it is that we come before God unarmed, at peace, vulnerable and humbled before God. The same *orans* gesture conveys an openness to receiving whatever God would give us.

The priest then continues to offer the opening prayer of the Mass, called the "Collect", because this prayer is intended to collect the prayerful sentiments of everyone gathered for

worship. The Collect prayer is taken from the Roman Missal. Every Sunday and every Feast has its own Collect. On special Feasts, such as Christmas, or at special Masses, such as a funeral, the Collect prayer is more specific as it conveys the meaning of what we celebrate on that special occasion. The Collect prayers are addressed to God, the first person of the Blessed Trinity and conclude make intercession through Christ. This pattern of prayer is consistent with the entire Mass which is addressed to God, the Father, through Christ in communion with the Holy Spirit.

By the nature of the Roman Rite these Collect prayers are often very simple and somewhat generic in what they pray for. The reason for this, remember, is that these prayers are meant to collect the prayers of all. They are also intended to be used all over the world in every culture and in every language. When we listen to these prayers we have to remember that we are making our prayer as full body of Christ, not just a prayer intended for a few. We might prepare for Mass by finding the Collect that will be used and mentally filling in the blanks of the generic words, so that when the Collect is prayed aloud we may connect to this prayer and own it more deeply.

All the universal Collect prayers have been retranslated. While there is nothing new for the congregation to learn, listening carefully to the texts of the prayers can be inspiring. For those who pray the Liturgy of the Hours this same Collect of the day is used when praying Morning Prayer or Evening Prayer from the Liturgy of the Hours.

### Getting Ready for the Revised Missal

- Is your private prayer characteristically more praise or more petition?
- How might the recitation of the Gloria at Mass and in private prayer add a good balance to the way you pray?
- When you pray at home, try the *orans* gesture with a conscious intention of leaving yourself open and vulnerable before God. Reflect on how it affected your prayer.
- What does one miss spiritually, if one consistently comes late for Mass and arrives only after the Collect? How might our tardiness effect our participation in the rest of the Mass?