



Praying the Mass Anew *The New Translation of The Roman Missal and Our Actual Participation at Mass*

11. Glory to God in the Highest.

On Sundays outside Advent and Lent, and on major feast days (some of which are given the proper title “solemnity,” as a designation of their importance), the Church proclaims “Glory to God in the highest,” just as the host of angels sang on the night of our Lord Jesus’ birth

(Luke 2:14). Having received the mercy of God in the Penitential Act, the *Gloria*, as the hymn is properly called, is sung to the Glory of the Father, to Christ the Lamb of God, and to the Holy Spirit. Below is the newly translated text:

**Glory to God in the highest,
and on earth peace to people of good will.
We praise you,
we bless you,
we adore you,
we glorify you,
we give you thanks for your great glory,
Lord God, heavenly King,
O God, almighty Father.
Lord Jesus Christ, Only Begotten Son,
Lord God, Lamb of God, Son of the Father,
you take away the sins of the world,
 have mercy on us;
you take away the sins of the world,
 receive our prayer;
you are seated at the right hand of the Father,
 have mercy on us;
For you alone are the Holy One,
you alone are the Lord,
you alone are the Most High,
Jesus Christ,
with the Holy Spirit,
in the glory of God the Father.
Amen.**

In the new translation of the *Gloria*, the literal translating of the Latin can be seen:

- “*Laudamus te, benedicimus te, adoramus te, glorificamus te:*”
literally: “We praise you, we bless you, we adore you, we glorify you.”
- “*Domine Deus, Agnus Dei, Filius Patris:*”
literally: “Lord God, Lamb of God, Son of the Father.”
- Double use of “*qui tollis peccata mundi,*”
or “you take away the sins of the world.”
- The sentence structure itself of this new version shows that the hymn is ancient – meant to be chanted straight through, rather than broken into verses or fit to a rigid music setting.

In the *General Instruction of the Roman Missal*, this hymn is said to be “very ancient and venerable,” [from the 4th or 5th Century] such that its ancient roots make it so that it is not to be ever replaced by any other hymn or hymn text (GIRM 53). The hymn is meant in praise of God’s glory only, and hence it stands alone in the liturgy, with nothing else taking place as it is sung. In the new translation, the priority for literal translation is very clear, even without appealing to the Latin text. The literal nature of this translation is evident simply in looking at the structure of the hymn that appears very uneven or without rhythm in places, along with the intentional repetition of some of the lines. Such repetition serves to emphasize those words and truths that are repeated.

Like many other prayers of the Mass, there are multiple places within the *Gloria* that have Sacred Scripture as their source. We have already seen how the very first line of the hymn is formed from the words of the angels who appeared to the shepherds at Bethlehem.

Later in the text of the hymn, we see the use of the title for Jesus of “Lamb of God,” as he who “takes away the sins of the world.” These words are drawn from the words of John the Baptist, given in John 1:29, as he sees Jesus approach him at the Jordan River. Other Scriptures that form lines of this hymn include Revelation 15:4, which refers to God alone as holy, and Psalm 83:19, which says “Show them you alone are the Lord, the Most High over all the earth.” Given these scriptural references, we can see very clearly how not only the readings for Mass, but the prayers themselves, are rooted in Sacred Scripture.

As we continue to learn to sing or recite this new version of the *Gloria*, we remain mindful that all glory belongs to the Triune God: to God the Father, and to the Lamb of God, Jesus Christ, who died and was raised up, for our salvation and the salvation of the whole world, and to God the Holy Spirit.

Questions of the Week:

➤ ***Is there ever occasion for the Gloria to be sung by the choir only?***

Yes. GIRM 53 says the following regarding who sings the *Gloria*: “The *Gloria* is intoned by the priest, or, if appropriate, by a cantor or the choir; but it is sung either by everyone together, or by the people alternately with the choir, or by the choir alone. If not sung, it is to be recited either by all together or by two parts of the congregation responding one to the other.”

➤ ***What are the appropriate occasions to sing the Gloria, versus the times to simply recite it?***

Whenever the *Gloria* is prescribed (that is, whenever the Mass of the day requires it), it is truly more fitting to sing this hymn than to recite it. We must acknowledge that not every parish and parish Mass will have the ability or musical leadership to sing this hymn, especially for those Masses on days designated as “feast days” that are on weekdays. Thus, while singing the *Gloria* is always more fitting than saying it, the hymn can be recited when the singing of the hymn is not feasible.