

“FOUR-FOR-FOUR”
CATECHESIS ON THE *ROMAN MISSAL*

Introductory Rites: Gloria (November 27–28, 2011)

You’ll remember that the purpose of the **Introductory Rites** is to gather the Church—a word that means “assembly”—for the celebration of Mass.

Today we’re going to focus on the Gloria.

The purpose of the **Gloria** is, quite simply, to praise God—for Who He is, and for what He has done for us.

We often talk about Mass in terms of “what I get out of it.”

While that’s important,
we also need to remember that we are here to render worship, and to honor God.

Really, these two things go together.

Vatican Council II teaches that the glorification of God *is* the sanctification of men and women (*Sacrosanctum Concilium*, 10).

That’s the key point: our *worship* of God makes us *holy*.

The Gloria is the Church’s ancient hymn of praise sung in worship of God.

The Gloria is sung on Sundays except during Advent and Lent.

During these times, we suppress this hymn as an expression of anticipation and repentance, so that the Church can then “explode” with joy at Christmas and Easter.

(The Gloria is also sung during the week on solemn or important feasts.)

The first “Gloria” was sung by the angels to the shepherds in Bethlehem at Christ’s Birth:

“And suddenly there was a multitude of the heavenly host with the angel,
praising God and saying:
‘Glory to God in the highest and on earth peace to those on whom his favor rests.’
When the angels went away from them to heaven,
the shepherds said to one another,
‘Let us go, then, to Bethlehem to see this thing that has taken place,
which the Lord has made known to us’” (Lk 2:13–15).

This is what the Church is doing.

She acknowledges Who God is.

“Father,” “Son,” and “Holy Spirit”; “Lord”; “King”; “Holy One.”

She praises God for what He has done.

“You take away the sins of the world.”

Like the shepherds, the Church proclaims this message to all men and women.

The translation of the Gloria is undergoing a significant revision in the new *Roman Missal*.

Therefore new musical settings are being composed;
the Gloria will sound different.

There are three major changes:

1. Rather than sing “peace to his people on earth,”
we will sing “on earth peace to people of good will.”

The change is a more faithful rendering of the Latin text:
et in terra pax hominibus bonae voluntatis.

And it echoes more clearly the angels’ proclamation of the Birth of Christ.

2. You will notice that the revised Gloria is much longer.

The current translation removed whole sections because they seemed excessive. Yet that is very much the point—God is so great, and His works so wonderful, that we need multiple, overlapping phrases to describe Him.

“We praise you, we bless you, we adore you, we glorify you,
we give you thanks for your great glory...”

3. The phrase “Only Son of the Father” will become “Only Begotten Son...
Son of the Father”

This is a better rendering of the Latin phrase *Fili Unigénite*, which includes the word “begotten,” and stresses Christ’s eternal relation to the Father (thereby anticipating the use of the same phrase in the Creed).