

Organization of the Mass

Have you ever been to a play, a musical, an opera or any type of theater production? If so, you know there is a recognizable organization. There are large divisions called *acts*, with smaller divisions within each act called *scenes*. Knowing the act and the scene helps you see that particular part of the action within the context of the whole, which in turn helps you better understand the entire production.

Most people don't realize that the Mass is organized in the same way. There are four "acts": the Gathering Rite, the Liturgy of the Word, the Liturgy of the Eucharist, and the Concluding Rite. Within each of these acts there are several "scenes" that move the action along. They inform and involve you, and lead you more deeply into prayer. If you understand these acts and scenes the entire experience of the Mass makes a lot more sense.

Act 1: The Gathering Rite

- Scene 1: The Greeting
- Scene 2: The Penitential Rite
- Scene 3: The Gloria
- Scene 4: The Opening Prayer or Collect

Act 2: The Liturgy of the Word

- Scene 1: Reading from the Old Testament
- Scene 2: Responsorial Psalm
- Scene 3: New Testament Reading
- Scene 4: The Gospel
- Scene 5: Homily
- Scene 6: Creed
- Scene 7: Prayers of the Faithful

Act 3: The Liturgy of the Eucharist

- Scene 1: Preparation of the Gifts
- Scene 2: The Prayer over the Offerings
- Scene 3: The Eucharistic Prayer
 - Invocation of the Holy Spirit
 - The Lord's Supper
 - Memorial Acclamation
 - Memorial Prayer
 - Prayer for the Church
 - Prayer for the Dead
 - In Communion with the Saints
 - In Praise of God
- Scene 4: The Lord's Prayer
- Scene 5: The Rite of Peace
- Scene 6: The Lamb of God
- Scene 7: Fraction

Scene 8: Holy Communion

Act 4: *The Concluding Rite*

Scene 1: Prayer after Holy Communion

Scene 2: Announcements

Scene 3: Greeting

Scene 4: Blessing

Scene 5: Dismissal

Articles on the new translation of the Roman Missal

“And with Your Spirit” by Daniel Merz, SLL

Probably the most noticeable change for the laity in the revised translation of *The Roman Missal* will be the response to “The Lord be with you,” which restores the phrase “And with your spirit” in place of “And also with you.” This change is specifically called for by *Liturgiam authenticam*, the instruction from the Congregation for Divine Worship and the Discipline of the Sacraments regarding the translation of liturgical texts. It states that the Latin phrase, *Et cum spiritu tuo*, must be translated as literally as possible. English is the only major European language that does not mention the spirit in the current translation of this response; the Greek liturgy of the Eastern Churches also employs the equivalent of “And with your spirit.” So the new form has both tradition and widespread use on its side. Underlying the use are scriptural and theological reasons.

This ancient Christian use of “spirit,” in both Greek and Latin, was strange to the ancient world. “Nothing like it is known outside Christian writing” “With your spirit” was long thought to be a Semitic idiom meaning nothing more than “with you.” The Hebrew word *nephesh* means “soul” or “spirit,” but it can also mean “self.” But the Hebrew word behind “with your spirit” is not *nephesh* but rather another Hebrew term, *ruah*, which means “breath” or “spirit.” The Greek word for spirit, *pneuma*, is never used in the Old Testament to render *nephesh*, but only when translating *ruah*. Thus, it seems clear that the use of “spirit” in the liturgy is not intended merely as a euphemism for “you” but bears some other special theological significance.

Sometimes, Saint Paul calls the gifts of the Holy Spirit *pneumata* (see 1 Corinthians 14:12: “So with yourselves, since you are eager for *pneumaton*, spiritual gifts . . .” and 14:32, “The spiritual gifts of the prophets are subject to the prophets”; see similar usage in Revelation 22:6 and 19:10). The episcopal ordination prayer of *The Apostolic Tradition* (third or fourth century AD) asks God for the “*spirit* of leadership”: “And now also pour forth the power which comes from you, of the *spirit* of leadership which you gave to your beloved Child, Jesus Christ, and which he accorded to your holy apostles who have founded the Church in every place . . .” This Ordination prayer, then, specifically refers to a gift of the spirit that was given to Christ, which Christ in turn bestowed on the apostles, and which this prayer shows is bestowed upon bishops in the Church. The Ordination prayer for priests similarly asks, “Look upon your servant who is here and grant him the *spirit* of grace and of council of the presbytery so that he may aid and govern your people with a pure heart . . .” In the prayer for

deacons: “Grant the *spirit* of grace and zeal to your servant.”

Given the petitions employed in these ordination prayers, it is noteworthy that the phrase “And with your spirit” is used only in response to an ordained minister. The non-ordained member leading the assembly in prayer (for example, at a wake service, a Holy Communion service, the Liturgy of the Hours) would never say “The Lord be with you” because, at least in part, they do not receive the phrase in return “And with your spirit.” The “spirit” mentioned here refers specifically to the spirit received in Ordination. It is an affirmation by the assembly that the ordained minister has received the appropriate anointing with the spirit to make him the leader in sacramental ministry. This usage has a special beauty: it is less about the *person* of the priest than about the *office of the priest-hood*, which is supported and guaranteed by the Spirit of God given in ordination. Early Church Fathers, such as John Chrysostom, Theodore of Mopsuestia, Narsai of Nisibis, and Abraham bar Lipheh explicitly back this interpretation.

The Confiteor by D. Todd Williamson

In the Introductory Rites, the individual people who have come to the church are gathered into the one Body of Christ in order that they might enter into the great prayer of thanks and praise, that is the Eucharist. Part of this first movement of the Mass is the Penitential Act, that part of the Mass which helps prepare us “to celebrate the sacred mysteries.” It happens right after the Sign of the Cross and the priest’s greeting of the people.

The Penitential Act takes one of three forms. The first form is most commonly known as the Confiteor, a Latin word that, when translated into English, gives us the well known beginning of the prayer, “I confess...” The Confiteor is a communal statement which acknowledges our brokenness and calls upon the whole Church to pray for one another, asking for God’s mercy and forgiveness.

“I confess to almighty God /and to you, my brothers and sisters” Notice the communal nature of this prayer. This acknowledgement of our individual brokenness is made to God and to the rest of the assembly. Each of us, one to the other, takes a humble stance and, in the face of the great mercy and love of God, admit and acknowledge our human frailty, without pretense or presumption. Beginning with this communal acknowledgement of our common sinfulness, the Confiteor helps to remind us, among other things that God is God, and we are not.

Closely following the Latin text, the English translation continues: “I confess . . . that I have greatly sinned, / in my thoughts and in my words, / in what I have done and in what I have failed to do” Some may notice the addition of the word “greatly,” in reference to our sinfulness. This might be seen, not so much as an emphasis on our sinfulness, as much as it is on the simple fact that any sin is a threat to our relationship to God and to our brothers and sisters.

The English translation of the Confiteor continues: “through my fault, through my fault, / through my most grievous fault.” This, too, will sound different from the previous translation, in which our “fault” is mentioned once (“that I have sinned through my own fault”). The English translation of the third

edition of The Roman Missal maintains the original poetic repetition found in the Latin text. We see this literary tool in other texts of the Mass. For example, following the Confiteor we enter into the threefold prayer of “Lord, have mercy; Christ, have mercy; Lord have mercy.” In the “Holy, Holy, Holy” and before Holy Communion, at the Fraction Rite, we repeat, three times, the invocation, “Lamb of God, you take away the sins of the world.”

Striking the Breast: It is not new gesture (it has always been a rubric in the English translations of The Roman Missal), the words above (“through my fault . . .”) are said while the person strikes his/her breast. This is an ancient gesture expressing sorrow and is a sign of our contrition (see Jeremiah 31:19, “I turn in repentance . . . I strike my breast”).

The remainder of the Confiteor, in the English translation of the third edition of The Roman Missal, remains as we now know it: “therefore I ask blessed Mary ever- Virgin, / all the Angels and Saints, and you, / my brothers and sisters, to pray for me to the Lord our God.”

The most important thing for us to remember is that the Penitential Act is a communal recognition of our sinfulness and an act of praise for God’s mercy and forgiveness. Yes, as human beings we are sinful. It is part of our nature—we are broken; we fail; we willfully choose wrong; we sin. Yet, in spite of that, in as much as we are broken in our humanness, thankfully—our God is a God who wants nothing more than to make us whole! And this is where our hope takes us as together, in one voice; as one body, we confess in the Confiteor.

“Glory to God in the Highest!” by D. Todd Williamson

The Introductory Rites serve the wonderful purpose of gathering individual Christians as one body and one voice offering the great prayer of praise and thanksgiving that is the Eucharist. This happens throughout the Introductory Rites: the Entrance Chant joins our voices as one; the Sign of the Cross and the greeting help us to enter into the ritual of the Mass; and the Penitential Act reminds us how much we are in need of God’s great love and mercy—both as individuals and as a community of faith. Then, as the liturgy continues to form us into one body, the whole liturgical assembly raises its voice in the great hymn of praise that is the Gloria.

The Gloria, an ancient hymn dating to the early centuries of the Church, is prayed every Sunday outside of Advent and Lent, and on solemnities and feasts of the Lord. The text of this hymn is a collection of images and phrases from Scripture and Tradition. It begins with the words of the angels who sung their praise at the birth of Christ. The previous translation began “Glory to God in the highest, / and peace to his people on earth.” In the English translation of the third edition of *The Roman Missal*, these words are much closer to those of the angels as recorded in Luke 2:14: “Glory to God in the highest / and on earth peace to people of good will.”

From there the hymn launches into a beautifully poetic doxology that was added to the Latin very early in our history. We will sing, “We praise you, / we bless you, / we adore you, / we glorify you, / we give you thanks for your great glory.” This is a literal translation of the Latin text, *Laudámus te, /*

benedícimus te, / adorámus te, / glorificámus te, / grátias ágimus tibi propter magnam glóriam tuam . . .
. and a good example of the poetic rhythm the revised English translation seeks to capture from the original Latin text. These phrases are a wonderful building of praise. So much is the praise that we seek to offer God that it cannot be contained in only one attempt— not only do we “*praise*” the Lord, but we also *bless* the Lord! Not only do we “*bless*,” but we also “*adore*” him! Not only do we *adore*, but we also “*glorify*” him . . . and so the hymn goes! These phrases then lead to a crescendo of titles for God: “Lord God, heavenly King, / O God, almighty Father.”

The next stanza will also sound somewhat different than the previous translation. In our adoration of Christ, we first acclaim Christ’s identity through various titles: “Lord Jesus Christ, Only Begotten Son, / Lord God, Lamb of God, Son of the Father.” The hymn then uses a pattern of repetition found in the Latin text, as we acclaim what Christ has done for us: “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.” These phrases are similar to a litany, as we entreat the Lord to have mercy and to receive the prayer of praise we offer him.

The final stanza of the Gloria remains the same as the previous translation: “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.”

Notice, in these last two stanzas, how the hymn uses multiple phrases from Scripture: In the Gospel according to John, Saint John the Baptist refers to Christ as “the Lamb of God who takes away the sin of the world” (John 1:29, NRSV); and this evangelist declares in the book of Revelation that Christ “alone [is] holy” (Revelation 15:4, NRSV); and the psalmist asserts that “you alone, / whose name is the LORD, / are the Most High over all the earth” (Psalm 83:18, NRSV). The hymn gathers all of these titles, images, and phrases to vocalize the praise and glory we offer to God!

With this, the liturgical assembly is now ready to continue its prayer of praise and thanksgiving with the Collect, or Opening Prayer; But not without first having raised, with one voice, the great song that the angels themselves sang. Using the words of Scripture and Tradition our voices are joined to those from across the ages in the first moments of the liturgy, as we call out, “Glory to God in the highest!”

For Many by Daniel Merz, SLL

In the previous translation of *The Roman Missal*, the Eucharistic Prayer proceeds as follows: Take this, all of you, and drink from it: / this is the cup of my blood, / the blood of the new and everlasting covenant. / It will be shed for you and *for all* / so that sins may be forgiven.

In the revised translation of *The Roman Missal*, the words “for all” have been changed as directed by Pope Benedict XVI. With the revised translation, the priest will pray: Take this, all of you, and drink from it, / for this is the chalice of my Blood, / the Blood of the new and eternal covenant, / which will be poured out for you and *for many* / for the forgiveness of sins.

Although this change may seem surprising at first, the Holy Father has expressed strong and sound

reasons for this change:

1. The synoptic accounts of the Gospel (Matthew 26:28; Mark 14:24) make specific reference to the “many” for whom the Lord is offering the sacrifice, and some biblical scholars have emphasized this particular wording as a connection with the words of the prophet Isaiah (53:11–12). It would have been entirely possible in the Gospel texts to have said “for all;” instead, the formula given in the institution narrative is “for many” and the words have been faithfully translated thus in most modern versions of the Bible.
2. The Roman Rite in Latin has always said *pro multis* (for many) and never *pro omnibus* (for all) at the consecration of the chalice.
3. The anaphoras (Eucharistic Prayers) of the various Oriental rites, whether in Greek, Syriac, Armenian, various Slavic languages, etc., employ the verbal equivalent of the Latin *pro multis* in their respective languages.
4. “For many” is a faithful translation of *pro multis*, whereas “for all” is rather an explanation that belongs properly to catechesis.
5. The formula “for all” certainly corresponds to a correct interpretation of the Lord’s intention expressed in the scriptures. Even more, it is a dogma of faith that Christ died on the Cross “for all” men and women (see John 11:52; 2 Corinthians 5:14–15; Titus 2:11; 1 John 2:2). However, the expression “for many” is scriptural, historical, and ecumenical, and has a solid theological interpretation: “for many” is a reminder that, while salvation is *offered* to all, there are some who do not accept it. Salvation is not imposed in a mechanical way, against one’s free will or voluntary participation. It is freely offered to all to accept in faith, and many do indeed accept it. Some do not. As for those who apparently reject the gift, the Church entrusts them to the mercy of God. But in doing so they place themselves outside the Church’s liturgical offering. Christ’s death on the Cross was certainly intended “for all,” but it can only help those who respond to it freely and willingly. The holy sacrifice of the Mass may well be offered or intended “for all,” but it can be fruitful only for those who accept it. The Eucharistic Prayer thus refers to those who accept it, in whatever form that acceptance takes.
6. Lastly, in line with the Instruction *Liturgiam authenticam* (the document issued in 2001 by the Congregation for Divine Worship and the Discipline of the Sacraments to regulate liturgical translations), translations should be more faithful to the actual prayer of the Church the Latin text as given, and not as interpreted. It is intended and understood that further catechesis will explain that God our savior, wills everyone to be saved and to come to knowledge of the truth (1 Timothy 2:4, NRSV).

Given the reasons above, the hope of the Church is that when the faithful hear the words over the chalice “for many” they will be inspired to make a personal affirmation of their faith in and desire for the gift of salvation freely offered in Christ Jesus to the whole world.