

# Preparing the Way for the Roman Missal

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## Penitential Rite – Form A

In Form A of the Penitential Rite in the *Roman Missal – 3<sup>rd</sup> Edition*, (the *Confiteor*) we will encounter essentially three changes. [The new text is highlighted in **bold letters** below for clarity.]

In the new translation, we will say, *I have **greatly sinned** in my thoughts and in my words, in what I have done and in what I have failed to do, **through my fault, through my fault, through my most grievous fault.***

When we sin, by definition, we turn as an act of the will *against the Lord* whom we will soon proclaim in the Mass to be *Holy, Holy, Holy*.

God is Thrice Holy because He is three Divine Persons in One - Father, Son and Holy Spirit. Our every sin, therefore, is an offense against all three Persons of the Godhead, and the new text with its threefold proclamation reflects this reality well.

We continue our prayer saying, **Therefore**, *I ask Blessed Mary Ever Virgin, all the angels and saints...*

A small change to be sure, but the word **therefore** better reflects the polarity that exists between the sins that we just confessed and the prayers of forgiveness that we now offer and seek.

The *Catechism* quotes St. John Chrysostom as saying, “For it is impossible, utterly impossible, for the man who prays eagerly and invokes God ceaselessly ever to sin” (CCC 2744).

In addition to making the incompatibility of sin and prayer more explicit, the word **therefore** also better reflects a sense of true contrition; i.e., it expresses that our heartfelt sorrow for having sinned is *the reason* we now seek forgiveness.

This sense of *repentance* is absolutely crucial. This is, after all, the *Penitential Rite*. It is not enough just to confess with the lips; rather, we must also cry out from the depths of a contrite heart in order to be considered truly penitent.

## Penitential Rite – Form B

The Penitential Rite can also take place in what is called Form B, in which we would formerly pray:

Priest: *Lord, we have sinned against you: Lord, have mercy.*

People: *Lord, have mercy.*

The Priest would then continue, *Lord, show us your mercy and love.*

And the people replied, *And grant us your salvation.*

If Form B is used in the *Roman Missal – 3<sup>rd</sup> Edition*, it will be prayed as follows:

Priest: **Have mercy on us, O Lord.**

People: **For we have sinned against you.**

Notice the shift in accountability that has been affected by this change; now it is *all of the people* – not just the priest - who says, **we have sinned**.

This may seem rather insignificant, but it is actually very important. The Penitential Rite is a *personal* admission of sin. It’s not enough for the priest – who stands in the Person of Christ – to see our sin.

Of course the Lord sees our faults, but *we* need to see them; *we* must call them to mind and seek forgiveness for them with true contrition in order to express the necessary sense of penitence.



Following the Penitential Rite is the *Kyrie*, (*Lord have mercy. Christ have mercy. Lord have mercy.*)

After the *Kyrie* the priest will pray the Absolution, “May Almighty God have mercy on us...”

This leads to the next series of changes that we’ll encounter in the prayers of the people at Holy Mass in the *Gloria*.

## The Gloria

*Glory to God in the highest, and peace to his people on earth*, in the new translation becomes, *Glory to God in the highest, and on earth peace to people of good will*.

Not only does this newly translated text represent a correction, but also a return to the Scriptural roots of the liturgical text - the angel announcing the birth of the Savior to the shepherds used words such as these as recorded in Luke 2:14.

Does this mean to say that the Lord doesn't really offer tidings of peace to all *people on earth*, but rather only to those of good will? Well, not exactly.

To be among the people of *good will* – those who will know God's peace - we must *first* recognize our sinfulness and our need for forgiveness. Why? Because it is only in the forgiveness of sin that true peace can exist, as such it is no mere coincidence that the *Gloria* follows the Penitential Rite at Holy Mass.

We continue, *we praise you, we bless you, we adore you, we glorify you, we give you thanks for your great glory...*

This faithful translation now includes the words *adore, bless* and *glorify*, and though *worship* is no longer said, the entire acclamation clearly *is* an act of worship. In fact, it's a rather substantial outpouring of worship, and why shouldn't it be?

We just acknowledged our sins before God and one another; we tasted the Lord's mercy and forgiveness and the peace that comes with it. If this doesn't merit an abundant outpouring of praise and thanksgiving, nothing does!

That said, however, we offer this outpouring of praise, not so much in response the Lord's gifts; but rather as we say, *for your great glory*. You see, our God *is worthy* of every outpouring of praise that we can muster simply because of *who He is*; a God of great and eternal glory!

### ***Lord God, heavenly King, O God, almighty Father***

Notice how the exclamation ***O God*** seems to well-up almost spontaneously. We are awestruck in the Lord's presence! We are moved to glorify Him from the very depths of our being, and so we cry out almost without effort or forethought, ***O God!***

***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...***

Notice that we now speak of Jesus as both ***only begotten Son*** and ***Son of the Father***. In so doing we are not truly being redundant; rather, we are affirming a great mystery of the Blessed Trinity.

You see, Jesus is indeed ***Son of the Father***, but then again, I too am the son of my father. Unlike me, however, Jesus is not *born* of His Father; rather, He is *begotten* of Him.

Why is this so important? To be born is to have a beginning, but neither does the eternal Son have a beginning, nor does the Fatherhood of God, and we express this more clearly than ever in the new text.



This also gives us an occasion to reflect upon the fact that we call God *Almighty Father* in the Gloria, not exactly as we do in the Our Father - as one adopted in Christ – but rather in recognition of the truth that God has *always* been Father – yes, even before He created us human beings.

From here the only other change in the text is an additional plea for mercy that in the new translation is associated with the phrase “You are seated at the right hand of the Father;” the place from which our Lord – as we will soon profess in the Creed - “will come again in glory to judge the living and the dead.”

All glory, praise and honor to Almighty God!