

Gathering Rite

Week Two Bulletin Insert: New Translation of the Roman Missal

The *Ecumenical Council of Trent* (1562 AD) encouraged teaching at Mass: “Lest Christ’s flock go hungry . . . the Holy Synod commands pastors and all others having the care of souls to give frequent instructions during the celebration of Mass, either personally or through others. . . . Among other things, they should include some explanation of the mystery of this most holy Sacrifice, #11.” We will now fulfill this command as we introduce the New Translation of the Roman Missal. This weekend we will focus on the **Gathering Rite**. The **Gathering Rite** consists of *Your Preparations at Home before Coming to Church*, your *Gathering at the Church before Mass*, the *Opening Hymn*, the *Sign of the Cross*, the *Greeting*, the *Penitential Act*, the *Gloria*, and the *Collect Prayer*.

Your Preparations at Home Before Coming to Church - Before we come to Mass there should be a general preparation of desire to enter into the great sacrifice of Jesus on the Cross. Going to Mass is a sacrifice and takes time and effort. But this sacrifice is nothing compared to the sacrifice of Jesus on the Cross. Jesus loved us so much that he was willing to die for us. We make the effort to go to Mass as an obligatory response to that love. Because we love Jesus we want to spend time with Him at Mass. Preparation begins when we wake up. Begin the day with a prayer, such as “Lord, by Your Holy Cross You have redeemed the world.” Please remember that part of our preparation includes fasting at least one hour before Mass.

Gathering at the Church before Mass - When you enter the church, do not forget that Jesus is there! As stated in the General Instruction of the Roman Missal, #27, “Christ is really present in the very liturgical assembly gathered in his name . . .” For Jesus said, “Where two or three are gathered in my name, there am I in their midst” (Matthew, chapter 18, verse 20). Christ is also present . . . “in the person of the minister, in His Word [Sacred Scripture], and indeed substantially and continuously under the Eucharistic species.” So acknowledge Christ’s presence in those gathered. But please be respectful in how you do this. Those already in the church are preparing for Mass by spending time in silent prayer. The General Instruction of the Roman Missal, #45, makes very clear the importance of silence before Mass. “Before the celebration itself, it is commendable that silence be observed in the church, in the sacristy, in the vesting room, and in adjacent areas, so that all may dispose themselves to carry out the sacred action in a devout and fitting manner.” Respect the Lord’s presence in the people gathered by allowing them time to pray before Mass. There is plenty of time to visit after Mass. Acknowledge the Lord’s presence in the priest by not talking business or trying to schedule appointments with him before Mass. Appreciate the Lord’s presence in His Word by spending time reading over the scripture for the day. Honor the Lord’s Real Presence in the Eucharist

by genuflecting to the Tabernacle before entering your row to sit down. Once Mass has started you then reverence the altar with a solemn bow whenever you pass in front of it.

Opening Hymn - According to the General Instruction of the Roman Missal, #47, “The purpose of this chant is to open the celebration, foster the unity of those who have been gathered, introduce their thoughts to the mystery of the liturgical season or festivity, and accompany the procession of the priest and ministers.”

The Sign of the Cross - The *Sign of the Cross* is a prayer which honors the Blessed Trinity; God the Creator, Jesus the Redeemer, and the Holy Spirit the Sanctifier. Catholics begin their public worship and private prayers with the *Sign of the Cross*. This gesture forms a cross, a reminder of the manner in which Christ died. The Mass celebrates Christ’s death on the cross.

The Greeting - The General Instruction of the Roman Missal, #50, explains that the priest “signifies the presence of the Lord to the community gathered by means of *The Greeting*. By this *Greeting*, [“The Lord be with you,”] and the people’s response, [“And with your spirit,”] the mystery of the Church gathered together is made manifest.” The response “And with your spirit” acknowledges that Christ is present in the person of the priest. It also brings us to a deeper realization that we are not just at a social gathering encountering people but are at a Sacred Gathering encountering the Lord.

The Penitential Act - During this time the priest reminds us that we must express sorrow for our sins before we continue the rest of the celebration. We spend this time asking the Lord for forgiveness and mercy. The repetition in praying “Through my fault, through my fault, through my most grievous fault,” helps us to realize the seriousness of our sins and the harm it brings to ourselves and others.

The Gloria - The General Instruction of the Roman Missal, #53, reminds us that “The *Gloria* is a very ancient and venerable hymn in which the Church, gathered together in the Holy Spirit, glorifies and entreats God the Father and the Lamb.” In the new translation of the *Gloria* there is a noticeable build-up of intensity through repetition and the more poetic use of language. This is intended to help us to lift up our minds and our hearts in truly glorifying God.

The Collect Prayer - The General Instruction of the Roman Missal, #54, directs that “the priest invites the people to pray. All, together with the priest, observe a brief silence so that they may be conscious of the fact that they are in God’s presence and may formulate their petitions mentally. Then the priest says the prayer which is customarily known as the collect and through which the character of the celebration is expressed. . . The people, uniting themselves to this entreaty, make the prayer their own with the acclamation, *Amen*.”