

THE MASS AS YOU KNOW IT IS ABOUT TO CHANGE

Last week, I discussed the change of "*And with your spirit.*" Continuing on through the Mass, the focus this week is the Penitential Rite, where we recall our sins so that we may beg for God's mercy and more worthily participate in the Holy Sacrifice of the Mass. There are three forms of the Penitential Rite: one form is very common, another form is fairly common, and the last form is pretty unknown to nearly all.

The most common form of the Penitential Rite involves the priest or deacon making three acclamations ending with "Lord, have mercy," "Christ, have mercy," and "Lord, have mercy" (or "*Kyrie eleison,*" "*Christe eleison,*" "*Kyrie eleison,*" which is Greek and can also be used). Of course, we respond with those same words. The acclamations that precede the "Lord, have mercy" will have new translations, but the responses will not have any new translations. In other words, you do not have to worry about any new response.

The next most common form is known as the Confiteor. That is originally a Latin word meaning, "I confess." This makes sense since this is the prayer that begins with "I confess to almighty God." There is a new translation for this, but it is similar enough to create confusion. The best way for me to show the difference is to simply write out the new translation (be sure to read through all of this very carefully): "I confess to almighty God and to you, my brothers and sisters, 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, *through my fault, through my fault, through my most grievous fault; therefore* I ask Blessed Mary ever-Virgin, all the Angels and Saints, and you my brothers and sisters, to pray for me to thee Lord our God."

There are three significant changes. The first change is the order in which words occur: "*through my fault, through my fault, through my most grievous fault*" now occurs later in the Confiteor than before. The second change is the addition of "greatly" before the word "sinned." The most noticeable change is the addition of "*through my fault, through my most grievous fault.*" For some, this is really not a new change; in the Extraordinary Form of the Mass (also known as the "Tridentine Mass" or the "Latin Mass"), the Confiteor contained the same phrase in Latin: "*mea culpa, mea culpa, mea maxima culpa.*" The purpose of this addition, then, is to maintain a stricter following to the Latin; the change is not meant to make us look more sinful than before.

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 human-ness, 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.