



My Dear Brothers and Sisters,

This week, we'll be looking at the *Gloria*. Again, we get the names of our prayers from the first word or words in Latin. This is prayed after the Penitential Act on all Sundays not in Advent or Lent, on Feast Days and Solemnities:

Glory to God in the highest, and on earth peace to people of good will.

We praise you, we bless you, we adore you, we glorify you, we give you thanks for your great glory, Lord God, heavenly King, O God, almighty Father.

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; 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.

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.

The *Gloria* begins with the song of the angels on Christmas: as they sang of the new-born King to the shepherds. The fact that we get to participate in the song of the angels should blow our minds! Angels are not cutesie-tootsie babies with wings that we see in so much art. Angels are purely spiritual beings (they don't have a body nor have they ever, though, for their mission, they may take on the semblance of a body in order to interact with humans). By their nature, they are vastly more intelligent and more powerful than any creature on earth. If God commanded it, your guardian angel could single-handedly destroy the entire physical universe. ... and we get to join them in singing praise to God!

The *Gloria* shows us that the purpose of this hymn is to praise, bless, adore, glorify and thank Almighty God. In the midst of this selfish generation that looks for spirituality to "complete me," we lose track of the truth that authentic spirituality is about worshiping God... not ourselves. At the beginning of Mass, we are reminded to do this – to worship God. This is important to remember when: the music is off-key, the preaching is bad, the servers are fooling around, and your own kids (or those around you) won't stop fighting with each other. Mass is about worshipping God, not about getting some ethereal feeling.

After this worship of the Father, the rest of the hymn is in praise of Jesus, the Son. He is called "Lamb of God," which hearkens to later in the Mass when we invoke Jesus as Lamb of God just before receiving Communion. Jesus is called the Lamb of God in the Gospel of John and the book of Revelation (John 1:29, 36, and in many places in Revelation). The whole book of Revelation is moving toward the eternal wedding feast of the Lamb – and so are we. The *Gloria* helps to remind us of this truth. Mass is a participation in this wedding feast. While we cannot see it clearly (we're in an "already/not-yet" space), at Mass, all the angels and saints are present, and we are brought before the throne of God and of the Lamb.

We sing (or speak) this praise of God to prepare our hearts to receive our God – in the Sacred Scriptures and in the Eucharist. May we truly praise God from our hearts so that we may receive all His gifts and graces!