

## The Ordinary of the Mass

---

The Ordinary of the Mass i.e. Lord Have Mercy (Kyrie), Glory to God (Gloria), Creed (Credo), Holy (Sanctus), The Lord's Prayer (Pater Noster), Lamb of God (Agnus Dei) and The Dismissal (Ite Missa Est) have a long and varied liturgical history in our church. Both forms of the Roman Rite, Ordinary (English) and Extraordinary (Latin), other rites within the church and other Christian denominations share the Ordinary as a common liturgical bond.

I thought it would be useful to closely examine the parts of the Ordinary that are sung in Masses at St. Anthony's Parish so as to have a better understanding of the source material for the musical settings and an understanding as to their origin and role in liturgy.

The **Lord Have Mercy (Kyrie)** is a prayer that predates Christianity. In Rome, the liturgy was first celebrated in Greek, and then eventually in Latin. However, the original Greek has been preserved in both forms of the Roman Rite, a tradition that continues today.

The General Instruction of the Roman Missal § 52 states:

*"After the Penitential Act, the Kyrie, eleison (Lord, have mercy), is always begun, unless it has already been part of the Penitential Act. Since it is a chant by which the faithful acclaim the Lord and implore his mercy, it is usually executed by everyone, that is to say, with the people and the choir or cantor taking part in it. Each acclamation is usually pronounced twice, though it is not to be excluded that it be repeated several times, by reason of the character of the various languages, as well as of the artistry of the music or of other circumstances. When the Kyrie is sung as a part of the Penitential Act, a "trope" precedes each acclamation. "*

The **Glory to God (Gloria)** was adopted into the Roman Rite for use in Mass from the Byzantine Rite where it was used in morning prayers. The opening of the Gloria recalls the Angels singing to the Shepherds announcing the birth of our Lord (Luke 2:14). Other words of praise and pleadings for supplication were added forming a Great Doxology. The Gloria was added to the Liturgy in the 4<sup>th</sup> century, and it is believed that Saint Hilary of Poitiers (c. 300–368) may have been the first to translate it into Latin from Greek.

The General Instruction on the Roman Missal § 53, states:

*"The Gloria in Excelsis (Glory to God in the Highest) is a most ancient and venerable hymn by which the Church, gathered in the Holy Spirit, glorifies and entreats God the Father and the Lamb. The text of this hymn may not be replaced by any other. It is intoned by the Priest or, if appropriate, by a cantor or by the choir; but it is sung either by everyone together, or by the people alternately with the choir, or by the choir alone. If not sung, it is to be recited either by everybody together or by two choirs responding one to the other"*

The **Holy (Sanctus)** was added to the liturgy in the middle of the 5th century. However, the text is considerably older and passed from the Jewish faith to the Catholic faith fairly early on, as it is referred to in the Book of Revelation. The first half of the text is from Isaiah (6:3) while the second half "Blessed" (Benedictus) is taken from Matthew 21:9, and describes Jesus' Palm Sunday entry into Jerusalem, which is in turn based on the first half of Psalm 118:26. Sometimes in the Extraordinary form of the Roman Rite (Latin) the Benedictus can be sung after the consecration, particularly at a Solemn High Mass.

The General Instruction on the Roman Missal §74 (b) States:

*"The acclamation, by which the whole congregation, joining with the heavenly powers, sings the Sanctus (Holy, Holy, Holy). This acclamation, which constitutes part of the Eucharistic Prayer itself, is pronounced by all the people with the Priest."*

The **Lamb of God (Agnus Dei)** arose from the Syrian custom of a chant addressed to the Lamb of God and was introduced into the Roman Rite Mass by Pope Sergius I (687–701), this supplication is based upon John the Baptist's reference in John 1:29 to Jesus ("Behold the Lamb of God that takes away the sin of the world..") and is repeated by the priest in its original form just prior to Communion with the congregation responding ("Lord, I am not worthy that you should enter under my roof, but only say the word and my soul shall be healed.")

The General Instruction of the Roman Missal § 83, states:

*"The supplication Agnus Dei, is, as a rule, sung by the choir or cantor with the congregation responding; or it is, at least, recited aloud. This invocation accompanies the fraction and, for this reason, may be repeated as many times as necessary until the rite has reached its conclusion, the last time ending with the words dona nobis pacem (grant us peace)."*

Here at St. Anthony's in both the English and Latin Masses we change the musical settings of the Ordinary based on the liturgical time of the year with proper due given to feast days and funerals.

At the English Mass we use the following settings:

**Advent/Christmas Mass for Advent** This setting uses Advent themed chant and carols for the Lord Have Mercy, Memorial, Acclamation, Holy and Lamb of God. Each musical setting of the Ordinary is familiar to the ear and in keeping with the spirit of the quiet preparedness for the coming of our Lord. There is no Gloria sung during Advent and Lent so once Christmas is upon us this musical setting uses the Christmas Tune "Angel's We Have Heard on High" as a Christmas Gloria.

**Lent:** During the penitential Lenten Season we use the "Chant Mass" designated by the Canadian Conference of Catholic Bishops. It is from a collection called the "Gregorian Ordinary", more on that later. The Chant Mass has been assembled using the revised English translation in keeping with the revisions of the Roman Missal in 2012. The Chant Mass can be found starting at page 74 in the Red Celebrate in Song book.

**Eastertide through Pentecost and Funerals:** During the Easter season we use the well-known Mass of Creation setting. This setting received a revised text along with the updates to the Roman Missal. The other Ordinaries from this Mass setting are almost completely unchanged and will be very familiar. You can find the Mass of Creation in Breaking Bread pages 879-883.

**Ordinary Time** Ordinary Time is so called because the weeks are numbered. The Latin word *ordinalis*, which refers to numbers in a series, stems from the Latin word *ordo*, from which we get the English word *order*. Thus, Ordinary Time is in fact the ordered life of the Church. During this time we sing the Mass of the Parishes written in Memoriam to Fr. Jerry Dowling OMI who was pastor here at St. Anthony's Parish. This Mass setting was approved for use in the diocese by Bishop Henry and has been sent to the National Liturgy Office for potential inclusion in a national hymnal. Mass of the Parishes can be found at on the front and inside covers of the Breaking Bread hymnal.

**Latin Mass Ordinary:** The Extraordinary Form of the Roman Rite or "Latin Mass" uses Gregorian chant as its primary source for Ordinary musical settings. Many of these settings are combined into what is often called the Kyrie and contains eighteen Gregorian chant settings of the Ordinary. Each setting is meant for a different liturgical time or feast, and the title of the setting indicates as much. As we enter this Lenten season we will be singing Mass XVII (Sundays of Advent and Lent). While the Extraordinary Form does not have an Ordinary Time, we commonly use Mass XI (Orbis Factor), for Sundays throughout the Year). At feast days in the year we sing Mass VII (De Angelis). The Creed (Credo) was added much later to the Liturgy than the rest of the Ordinary and as a result there are fewer sung Creeds to choose from. Here at St. Anthony's Parish we sing Credo I and III. On occasion we sing the Polyphonic Masses of the great Renaissance composers, i.e Palestrina and Victoria as well as a modern setting by Nicholas Wilton. All of the chant settings of the Mass can be found in several sources including the Liber Brevior, Liber Usualis, and the Tradition Roman Hymnal available at the back of the church before a sung high mass.

At both the English and Latin Masses the congregation will find the hymn numbers for the Ordinary on the board to the left of the church, meanwhile hymns can be found on the board on the right hand side of the church.

If you have any questions or comments about the Ordinary or anything related to music here at St. Anthony's I would be happy to hear from you at [sacredmusic@stanthonyscalgary.com](mailto:sacredmusic@stanthonyscalgary.com)

John Morgan  
Director of Music – St. Anthony's Parish

**Sources:** General Instruction on the Roman Missal, Introduction to Medieval Christian Liturgy in the West, The Breviary Online, Catholic Encyclopedia, Wikipedia