

#2: *From a Confession of Sins to a Confession of Praise* [October 16, 2011]

We prepare ourselves to enter into the Sacred Mysteries of the Holy Eucharist by admitting that we have sinned and asking for the grace of forgiveness. The “I Confess” or *Confiteor* has been part of the celebration of Mass in a fixed way since 1570, although its presence is noted even before then. It contains two distinct parts: an honest acknowledgement of our sins and asking for the Church on earth and in heaven to intercede on our behalf. Since 1970, the *Confiteor* is said by both the priest and the assembly, who together confess humbly, “through my fault, through my fault, through my most grievous fault,” while striking their breast one time. Having properly disposed ourselves by repenting of our earthly sins, we may then, through God’s goodness, enter into the heavenly glory of the Sacred Liturgy.

From confessing our sins we move to confessing the glory and goodness of God in the *Gloria in excelsis Deo*. Borrowing the joyful song of the angels at the birth of Christ, the Church has been singing this great hymn of praise in one form or another since the fourth century. At one time, the *Gloria* could only be sung at Masses with the bishop who would intone these joyful words as the conclusion to his entrance procession. Since 1570, the priest intoned the *Gloria* on a regular basis. Today, the *Gloria* is sung on Sundays outside of Advent and Lent and is used for solemnities and feasts. Whenever it is sung, it marks the solemnity and festive nature of the celebration of the Holy Eucharist which enables us, having been washed clean of our sins by Christ, to worship the Triune God with all the angels and saints.

