

THE ROMAN MISSAL 3RD EDITION

October 30, 2011

Festivals and Seasons

The Church's liturgical year is an unbroken circle of fasts and festivals. Thus is the psalmist's prophecy fulfilled for us again and again: "You crown the year with your goodness" (Ps 64:11). At the beginning of the year, Christmas and Epiphany celebrate Christ's coming in the flesh. "Conceived by the Holy Spirit and born of the Virgin Mary," Jesus Christ enters fully into the weakness and poverty of our human condition. The Church, gathered from every nation on earth, rejoices in the radiance of his light.

Lent is a forty-day period of intense listening to the Word of God and of penance. Fasting, almsgiving, and prayer prepare us to enter through the Cross of Christ into the joy of his resurrection. The heart of the liturgical year pulsates in the Three Days that commemorate Christ's death, burial, and resurrection: Good Friday, Holy Saturday, and Easter Sunday. The Paschal Vigil in the night of Holy Saturday draws us together in the light of the Risen Christ to listen to the Word of God and to celebrate the communication of his life in the sacraments of Baptism, Confirmation, and Eucharist.

Easter, traditionally called *Pascha* in both East and West, is prolonged for fifty days; Pentecost marks the last day of Paschaltide and recalls the outpouring of the Holy Spirit in a mighty wind and tongues of fire (cf. Ac 2:2). The Easter cycle is followed by a series of summer festivals: solemnities of the Holy Trinity, the Holy Body and Blood of Christ, and the Sacred Heart of Jesus. With the end of summer the Church turns her prayer to the great harvest of the Kingdom where already the Virgin Mary assumed into heaven and all the saints intercede for us, pilgrims on earth. Throughout the year, feasts of the Virgin Mary and of the saints refract the light of Christ and reflect his beauty. Finally, every December the Church returns to the Advent season, putting all her hope in the word of Christ who says, "Surely I am coming soon" (Rev 22:20).

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#4: *The heavenly hosts lifting us up*

Sometimes the earthly reality of celebrating the Holy Eucharist can be overwhelmingly clear when, for instance, babies are crying or someone becomes ill or a musical note is missed. We have constant reminders that we celebrate Mass among real people and in real time. Yet, at the same time, we are challenged to look beyond the trappings of earth and enter more deeply into the Mystery of God. Whenever we begin the Eucharistic Prayer, “lifting up our hearts” to give God the thanks that is “right and just,” we participate in the praise of the angels in heaven singing, “Holy, Holy, Holy, Lord God of Hosts.” We are invited to cast aside the worries and distractions of the earth for the glory and joy of heaven. In the celebration of the Eucharist, we are reminded time and time again that we are no longer merely on earth, but we have entered into the mystery of heaven!

The dialogue that prefaces the Eucharistic Prayer dates back to Saint Hippolytus and his writing, *The Apostolic Tradition*, from the third century. Parts of it are found in the writings of Saint Cyprian in the fourth century and the entire dialogue is handed down in the late fourth century work *Apostolic Constitutions*. Together with the *Sanctus*, when we sing this ancient chant to the thrice-Holy God, we are taking onto our lips words and prayers that have formed the hearts of Christians for centuries, transporting them from the limitations of this earth to the eternal banquet of heaven with all the angels and saints..





WHAT'S 'OLD' & WHAT'S 'NEW'?

Look for a different example of the new translation of the Roman Missal in our bulletin each week!

DURING THE PENITENTIAL ACT:

We are used to hearing:

As we prepare to celebrate the mystery of Christ's love, let us acknowledge our failures and ask the Lord for pardon and strength.

-OR-

Coming together as God's family, with confidence let us ask the Father's forgiveness, for He is full of gentleness and compassion.

-OR-

My brothers and sisters, to prepare ourselves to celebrate these sacred mysteries, let us call to mind our sins.

With the new translation, we will soon hear:

Brethren (-OR- brothers and sisters), let us acknowledge our sins, and so prepare ourselves to celebrate the sacred mysteries.