

LITURGY BYTES

Elevating Your Experience of the Liturgy



After more than a year of dispensations from attending Mass, Catholics around the world are taking a look at the liturgy with fresh eyes. As the saying goes, “**Absence makes the heart grow fonder.**” This weekend’s Liturgy Bytes reflection centers on some of the prayers of the Mass that never change.

In recent months, many of us experienced the Mass on TV, or via a computer or tablet because of the pandemic. Most parishes are continuing to offer Mass via YouTube or live streaming because there are parishioners who are still not able to come to Church for Mass. Many offered comments of gratitude, and still do, to be able to “attend” Mass at their local parish using the technology available to us today.

No matter where technology takes us, and no matter how we use it, the most **basic principle about liturgy never changes.** Liturgy is a celebration of the Paschal Mystery. Over the years, we have been instructed to pray it well with reverence and dignity. In recent years (2011), we saw a few changes in the prayers of the Mass said by the Presider as well as a few changes in the people’s responses, too. Thus, we experienced the birth of the third edition of the Roman Missal. This edition reminds us that it closely adheres to the Latin official edition and includes more of the rich images and phrases not translated in previous English U.S. editions. In other words, now the prayers of the Mass are the same in all languages.

To return to the topic, and to also “whet your appetite” for our ***VIEW FROM THE PEW*** series beginning in September (see flyer on page 9), here are a few pointers about those Mass prayers that are said at each Mass.

Perhaps you too, like me, wash over them without paying much attention

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to what is being said. Take the COLLECT for example—the collect forms the final part of the Introductory Rites of the Mass which includes the Penitential Act, the Kyrie and the Gloria. The US Conference of Catholic Bishops describes the collect as follows: The priest calls upon the people to pray and everybody, together with the priest, observes a brief silence so that they may become aware of God's presence and may call to mind their intentions. It is addressed to God the Father, through Christ, in the Holy Spirit.

So, when you attend Mass the next time, be sure to listen for this prayer (at the beginning of Mass) and realize we are joining with the Presider in this prayer. Take a second or two to gather your thoughts and what you wish to pray for at this Mass. Give it a try, and you will be hooked and ready for it each time you attend Mass!

Here is an example of a Collect Prayer:

“O God, who causes the minds of the faithful to unite in a single purpose, grant your people to love what you command and to desire what you promise, that, amid the uncertainties of this world, our hearts may be fixed on that place where true gladness is found. Through our Lord Jesus Christ, your Son, who lives and reigns with you in the unity of the Holy Spirit, one God, for ever and ever.”

Notice how the language is very tender and warm as we prepare ourselves at the beginning of Mass. The wording reminds us of God's fatherly care, while also encouraging us towards dignity and reverence as we start the Mass.

Have a blessed, safe, and healthy week!!~*Michele Hahn*

