



Welcoming the
ROMAN MISSAL THIRD EDITION
Deepen. Nurture. Celebrate

78
 days before
 implementation on
 November 27, 2011

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**DO YOU
 REMEMBER**

***“MEA CULPA,
 MEA CULPA,
 MEA MAXIMA
 CULPA?”***

**PENITENTIAL ACT
 (FORM A)**

New Translation:

I confess to almighty God
 and to you, my brothers
 and sisters, that I have
greatly sinned, in my
 thoughts and in my
 words, in what I have
 done and in what I have
 failed to do,

**through my fault,
 through my fault,
 through my most
 grievous fault;**

therefore I ask blessed
 Mary ever-Virgin, all the
 Angels and Saints, and
 you, my brothers and
 sisters, to pray for me
 to the Lord our God.

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So, we talked last week about claiming our sin. Why? Well, let's take a few steps back even further. Remember we said the first thing the priest says to us after we make the sign of the cross is "The Lord be with you" and we respond "And with your spirit." It's not just a "hello" - it's the priest proclaiming the truth that Christ is present because two or more (the assembly) are gathered in his name (Matthew 18:20). What happened in the bible when people had an encounter with God? They fell forward with their faces to the ground because they realized they were not worthy to be in his presence. Read some of the stories in Isaiah 6:5, Ezekiel 2:1, Daniel 7:15, Job 42:6 and even with our patron, St. John the Evangelist in Revelation 1:17. In the perfect light of God, we see our sins all too clearly and we want to be free from them!

In the re-translation of the Confiteor in the Penitential Act, we will say "through my fault, through my fault, through my most grievous fault" as we strike our breast three times. Striking or beating the breast with the hand, and bowed head, is an ancient sign of sorrow and penitence (read Luke 18:13 and 23:48 for examples). By doing this as we truly claim our sin, we express our repentance physically, in bodily language.

St. Augustine says we do this "to bring to light what is concealed in the breast (heart), and by this act to cleanse our hidden sins." St. Jerome says we do this "because the breast (heart) is the seat of evil thoughts: we wish to dispel those thoughts, we wish to purify our hearts." In Psalm 51:19 we hear "My sacrifice, God, is a broken spirit; God, do not spurn a broken, humbled heart." This then, is an appropriate way to "prepare ourselves to celebrate the sacred mysteries," as the priest says at the beginning of the Penitential Act. We approach the altar of God with humble hearts, so we can receive the Most Holy Body and Blood of Christ free from grave sin, and in a worthy fashion, as St. Paul urges us in 1 Corinthians 11:23-29.

We have mentioned several times that this will now be called the Penitential "Act" instead of the Penitential "Rite." Here too we see the subtle but important difference that this act of penitence at the beginning of Mass is not the Sacrament (rite) of Penance.

Then the Penitential Act concludes with the pleas "Lord, have mercy. Christ, have mercy. Lord, have mercy." It's penitential, yes, but we thank and praise God for his great mercy because we remember that Christ "is always able to save those who approach God through him, since he lives forever to make intercession for them" (Hebrews 7:25).

Wow! So few words convey quite a lot of scripture and tradition... and we've barely begun the Mass!