

Kyrie

"Lord have mercy. Christ have mercy. Lord have mercy."

After the Penitential Rite, the Kyrie is always begun, unless it has already been included in the Act of Penitence. Since it is a chant by which the faithful acclaim the Lord and implore his mercy, it is ordinarily done by all of the participants in the Mass. This short litany was traditionally a prayer of praise to the risen Christ. He has been raised and made "Lord" and we beg him to show his loving kindness.

The presence of the Kyrie has a long and complex history. It was used in the East as long ago as the fourth century as the people's response to every petition in a litany. An intention was announced by the deacon or priest and the congregation gave this standard response until the end of the litany. At the end of the 5th century the pope substituted this Eastern Greek form for an older type of prayer of intercession at the conclusion of the Liturgy of the Word. It was later transferred to the beginning of the Mass. When not included in the Act of Penitence itself, the *Kyrie Eleison* and *Christe Eleison* serve as an acclamation after the Act.

Gloria

The Gloria is known as the "greater doxology". Some call it the Angelic Hymn, since its first words are those of the angels in Bethlehem. It is a very ancient and venerable hymn that has come down to us from the treasury of early Christian hymns, modeled upon the psalms and canticles of the Bible. This Song of Praise, first found in Greek and Syrian sources, was used as an Easter hymn of dawn and gradually placed at the conclusion of morning prayers in the East.

It entered the West and by the beginning of the sixth century was a part of the Pope's Christmas Mass in Rome. By the eleventh century it was sung at Masses on Sundays and festive occasions. At present it is sung or said on Sundays outside the seasons of Advent or Lent, on feasts and at special celebrations of a more solemn character.