

MAGNIFICAT® ROMAN MISSAL COMPANION



The Roman Missal Companion

The Order of Mass

MAGNIFICAT

The Introductory Rites

■ The grace of our Lord Jesus Christ,
and the love of God,
and the communion of the Holy Spirit
be with you all...

■ ■ Amen

Grace to you and peace from God our Father
and the Lord Jesus Christ...



...and the communion of the Holy Spirit: The word “communion” replaces “fellowship.” The word is a more exact rendering of the Latin *communicatio*, which suggests not simply a settled state of love, but the dynamic act of sharing or imparting that love. The Holy Spirit imparts to us the same love that is given and received by the Persons of the Trinity. We are called to enter that communion, that life of love. The blessing is taken word for word from the conclusion of Saint Paul’s second Letter to the Corinthians.



Grace to you and peace from God our Father and the Lord Jesus Christ: The precise words of Saint Paul, greeting the church at Philippi (Phil 1: 2). The order of the sentence is suggestive. The priest prays that we will be granted *grace*, which is the free gift of God’s love, and without which we can do nothing of genuine merit, nothing that makes manifest the theological virtues of faith, hope, and charity. It is this grace, if we accept it, that brings us into friendship with God, who alone can grant us *peace*. Therefore the emphasis of the blessing is first of all on that grace. It is as if there were a prime blessing within a blessing: “Grace to you!” exclaims the priest.

- The Lord be with you.

The people reply:

- ■ **And with your spirit.**



And with your spirit: Our reply is formal and sacral, and indeed a prayer that dates back to the earliest years of the Church. We pray that the Lord may uphold our priest, not because he is better than we are, but so that he, human though he be, may serve us in his priestly capacity as an embodiment of Jesus, wedded to his bride, the Church. Saint Paul often uses the word “spirit” to refer to the core of a person’s emotional being, what we might call the heart: so it is that to pray in tongues is to “pray with the spirit” (1 Cor 14: 15). We are asking, then, that the Lord will shower his gifts upon the spirit of the priest, so that he may help to build us up into one body. So Saint Paul bids farewell to all the churches of Galatia, “The grace of our Lord Jesus Christ be with your spirit” (Gal 6:18), and to his beloved disciple, the bishop Saint Timothy: “The Lord be with your spirit” (2 Tm 4: 22).

— • Penitential Act • —

Then follows the Penitential Act, to which the Priest invites the faithful, saying:

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

Brethren, let us acknowledge our sins, and so prepare ourselves to celebrate the sacred mysteries: An exact translation of the Latin. With the word “brethren,” the priest and the people are united in prayer to the Father of us all. We *acknowledge our sins*, not merely our failures, because a sin is more than a failure, it is a turn away from God. So we admit those sins, precisely that we may be prepared to celebrate the mysteries of forgiveness. The language is that of the powerful penitential Psalm 51, the *Miserere*: “For I acknowledge my offense, and my sin is before me always” (51: 5).



• Form A •

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,

We strike our breast during these two lines:

**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.

• Form B •

The Priest says:

■ **Have mercy on us, O Lord.**

The people reply:

■ ■ **For we have sinned against you.**

The Priest:

■ Show us, O Lord, your mercy.

The people:

■ ■ **And grant us your salvation.**

The absolution by the Priest follows:

■ May almighty God have mercy on us,
forgive us our sins,
and bring us to everlasting life.

...that I have greatly sinned: The addition of the word “greatly” is accurate and just. It is a paradox of the Christian life that the closer we draw to God, the more keenly we are aware of the terrible offense of sin. We wish to sharpen that awareness, just as we wish to whet our longing for God’s transforming love.



...through my fault, through my fault, / through my most grievous fault: We utter the humbling truth three times, as each of our sins is a rejection of the love of the Holy Trinity. Our prayer here prepares us soon to beg, three times, for God’s mercy. We may hear the words of Pontius Pilate, which do not befit us sinners, but do befit the Lord who died for us: “I find in him no fault at all” (Jn 18: 38, KJV).



Have mercy on us, O Lord. For we have sinned against you: Exactly as in the Latin. We the people complete the thought and the prayer that the priest begins, as if he and we form two parts of a single choir. We humble ourselves before God, because only they who know they are wounded will plead for the Physician: “I said, LORD, be merciful unto me: heal my soul; for I have sinned against thee” (Ps 41: 4, KJV).

• Form C •

The Priest, or a Deacon or another minister, then says the following or other invocations with Kyrie, eleison (Lord, have mercy):

■ You were sent to heal the contrite of heart:

Lord, have mercy. Or: Kyrie, eleison.

The people reply:

■ ■ Lord, have mercy. Or: Kyrie, eleison.

The Priest:

■ You came to call sinners:

Christ, have mercy. Or: Christe, eleison.

The people:

■ ■ Christ, have mercy. Or: Christe, eleison.

The Priest:

■ You are seated at the right hand of the Father to intercede for us:

Lord, have mercy. Or: Kyrie, eleison.

The people:

■ ■ Lord, have mercy. Or: Kyrie, eleison.

You were sent to heal the contrite of heart: The final phrase echoes again the *Miserere*, wherein the Psalmist cries out that his heart has been afflicted: “My sacrifice, O God, is a contrite spirit;/ a heart contrite and humbled, O God, you will not spurn” (Ps 51: 19). Just as David knew that God wanted not slain offerings but the holocaust of the heart, so now, as we prepare to celebrate the mystery of Christ’s sacrifice of love, we too bring to the altar “a heart contrite and humbled.” It is to stress that our sorrow for sin must emerge from the center of our being. So says Jesus (citing Dt 6: 5): “You shall love the Lord your God with all your heart, with all your soul, with all your mind, and with all your strength” (Mk 12: 30).



You are seated at the right hand of the Father to intercede for us: An echo of both the Gloria and the Creed to come, linking the three prayers. Jesus is seated at the right hand of the Father, not simply because he has been raised to glory, but so that we might have the great high priest in that temple not made by human hands, interceding with the Father on our behalf. He is a priest for ever, and “therefore, he is always able to save those who approach God through him, since he lives forever to make intercession for them” (Heb 7: 25). It is a fulfillment of the vision of the Psalmist: “The LORD said to my Lord: Sit at my right hand till/ I make your enemies your footstool” (Ps 110: 1), and declared by Jesus to the chief priests and the elders who put him to death: “From now on you will see ‘the Son of Man/ seated at the right hand of the Power’” (Mt 26: 64).

—• **Glory to God** •—

Glory to God in the highest,
and on earth peace to people of good will...

We praise you,
we bless you,
we adore you,
we glorify you,...



...and on earth peace to people of good will: As in the Latin, we repeat here the song of the angels at the nativity of Christ (Lk 2: 14). The song is like a verse of the Hebrew psalms, with a wise balancing of ideas: we give glory to God in the highest heavens, and we pray on earth for peace to people of good will. We are reminded that it rests in our freely given love whether we shall belong to God, and enjoy even on earth a measure of his peace that passes understanding.



We praise you,/ we bless you,/ we adore you,/ we glorify you: The spilling of verbs is like water flowing over the sides of a fountain. We exult in a multitude of ways of expressing our love for God. We acknowledge his greatness in our praise, we proclaim his holiness in our blessing. We adore him, meaning, literally, we seek his face, we long to look upon him with awe. We glorify him, that is, we rejoice in the radiance of his beauty: "Let them praise the name of the LORD,/ for his name alone is exalted;/ his glory is above earth and heaven" (Ps 148: 13, RSV).