

PREPARING FOR THE NEW TRANSLATION

THE PENITENTIAL RITE



In the order of the Mass, the Penitential Rite follows the greeting. The Roman Missal provides for several options here from which the priest is free to choose.

PENITENTIAL RITES

Sprinkling Rite: The blessing of holy water and the sprinkling of the faithful as a reminder of their Baptism is most fittingly used during the Easter Season but may rightfully be used at other times. Given the length of the prayers involved and its infrequent usage, however, we will skip over this option.

Each of the other Penitential Rites begins with an introduction by the Priest.

COMMENTARY

When we approach the Holy Sacrifice of the Mass, we enter into Christ's unique self-sacrifice on the Cross and his victory over sin and death, i.e. the Paschal Mystery. This is an entry into the holiest of actions, and as Proverbs 24:16 reminds us *The just man falls seven times a day*. All sin damages our relationship with God, and, in the case of mortal sin, it severs that relationship of friendship. The penitential rite offers forgiveness for all *venial* sin. The penitential rite is not a substitute for the confession for mortal sin (the willful and knowledgeable violation of God's law concerning a something of a serious nature), which we are required to confess and receive penance and absolution.

The single option in the New Translation, which follows the only introduction given in the official Latin text, is closest to option "C" in the Current Translation. The Order of the Mass then continues:

Current Translation	New Translation
<p><i>Then the priest, facing the people, extends his hands and greets all present with one of the following greetings:</i></p> <p>A. As we prepare to celebrate the mystery of Christ's love, let us acknowledge our failures and ask the Lord for pardon and strength</p> <p>B. Coming together as God's family, with confidence let us ask the Father's forgiveness, for he is full of gentleness and compassion.</p> <p>C. My brothers and sisters (friends, dearly beloved, brethren, et al), to prepare ourselves to celebrate the sacred mysteries let us call to mind our sins.</p>	<p><i>Then follows the Penitential Act, to which the Priest invites the faithful, saying:</i></p> <p>Brethren (brothers and sisters), let us acknowledge our sins, that we may prepare ourselves to celebrate the sacred mysteries.</p>

Current Translation	New Translation
<p><i>A pause for silent reflection follows. After the silence, one of the following three forms is chosen:</i></p> <p>I confess to almighty God and to you, my brothers and sisters, that I have sinned in my thoughts and in my words, in what I have done and in what I have failed to do,</p> <p><i>They strike their breast:</i></p> <p>through my fault. And I ask the Blessed Virgin Mary, all the Angels and Saints, and you, my brothers and sisters to pray for me to the Lord our God.</p>	<p><i>A brief pause for silence follows. Then all recite together the formula of general confession:</i></p> <p>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,</p> <p><i>And, striking their breast, they say:</i></p> <p>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</p>

COMMENTARY

In the New Translation, we see notice the addition of several items found in the official Latin texts but omitted in our Current Translation. There is a greater reflection of the Latin prayer's teaching on the sinfulness of mankind, of our personal responsibility before God for our actions, and a greater recognition of our need for mercy.

The absolution of the priest follows the "I confess".

Current Translation	New Translation
<i>The priest says the absolution:</i>	<i>The absolution of the Priest follows:</i>
May almighty God have mercy on us, forgive us our sins, and bring us to everlasting life.	May almighty God have mercy on us, forgive us our sins, and bring us to everlasting life.
<i>The people reply:</i> Amen.	<i>The people reply:</i> Amen.

Alternatively, following the brief moment of silence, the following Penitential Rite may be chosen:

Current Translation	New Translation
<i>The priest says:</i> Lord, we have sinned against you: Lord have mercy	<i>The Priest then says:</i> Have mercy on us, O Lord
<i>The people answer:</i> Lord, have mercy.	<i>The people answer:</i> For we have sinned against you.
<i>Priest:</i> Lord, show us your mercy and love.	<i>Priest:</i> Show us, O Lord , your mercy.
<i>People:</i> And grant us your salvation.	<i>People:</i> And grant us your salvation.

The priest then gives the absolution listed above with the People responding, "Amen."

COMMENTARY

This option for the Penitential Rite now reflects the approved Latin text much more faithfully. Notice that the first People's response has changed entirely. Following the "I confess" or the "Have mercy on us" options for the Penitential Rite, a series of *Kyrie eleison-Christe eleison-Kyrie eleison* (or their English equivalents: Lord, have mercy...) are sung

or said. Here we find the last part of the Mass that is still preserved in Greek, the common language for the Mass even in the West before it switched to Latin in the third or fourth century. This is sung or recited by the deacon, if present, or by the priest, or, if sung, intoned by the cantor. The faithful respond to each invocation.

Current Translation	New Translation
∇: Kyrie eleison R. Kyrie eleison ∇. Christe eleison R. Christe eleison ∇: Kyrie eleison R. Kyrie eleison	∇: Kyrie eleison R. Kyrie eleison ∇. Christe eleison R. Christe eleison ∇: Kyrie eleison R. Kyrie eleison

The final option for the Penitential Rite, following the brief moment of silence, involves a series of invocations lead by the priest, a deacon, or another suitable minister. These may be sung or recited. They end with *Kyrie eleison* or its English equivalent: Lord, have mercy.

Current Translation	New Translation
<i>Deacon:</i> You were sent to heal the contrite, Kyrie eleison	<i>Deacon:</i> You were sent to heal the contrite, Kyrie eleison
<i>People:</i> Kyrie eleison	<i>People:</i> Kyrie eleison
<i>Deacon:</i> You came to call sinners, Christe eleison	<i>Deacon:</i> You came to call sinners, Christe eleison
<i>People:</i> Christe eleison	<i>People:</i> Christe eleison
<i>Deacon:</i> You plead for us at the right hand of the Father, Kyrie eleison	<i>Deacon:</i> You are seated at the right hand of the Father to intercede for us, Kyrie eleison
<i>People:</i> Kyrie eleison.	<i>People:</i> Kyrie eleison.

The priest then gives the absolution listed above and the faithful respond, "Amen."

COMMENTARY

Only the deacon/priest's part of the final invocation changes in the new translation and this not substantially. The change, however, brings out the Biblical sense of the power that comes from being **seated** at the right-hand of the King. This is the language that St. Paul uses to describe the glory the Risen Christ has received and from which He makes his intercession for us to the Father (cf. Eph. 1:19-20; Col. 3:1; Heb. 1:3).