

PRACTICAL ARRANGEMENT OF THE INTRODUCTORY PART OF THE MASS

The following elements constitute the introductory part of the Mass: entrance hymn — sign of the cross — greeting — introduction into the Mass of the day — penitential act — petition for forgiveness — Kyrie — Gloria — collect. The complexity of these various elements can endanger the clarity and simplicity demanded by the Constitution on the Liturgy (art. 34). If one element simply follows the other, there can exist the danger that the introduction of the Mass becomes longer and more elaborate than the first of the two main parts, the service of the Word.

We may ask: is it possible to combine some of the different elements of the introduction in the Mass? We have to keep in mind that the new guidelines do not foresee any longer a rigid order of sequence or of the parts themselves. Both the general instruction of the Missal and the order of the Mass give us some hints of combining these parts. One may combine the penitential act with the "Kyrie" (third form of the penitential act). Some elements can be entrusted to different ministers or to the congregation. According to the Instruction on particular calendars the entrance antiphon of the Mass — in this article often called "motto" of the Mass — should be so structured that it can be used by the priest as the basis of his introduction into the Mass of the day (Instruction "Calendaria particularia" of June 24, 1970, n. 40,a). There exists a variety of possibilities.

Of particular importance is the musical presentation of some of the elements on this introductory part. A wrong use of them can unduly prolong the Mass. An intelligent use can shorten the rite and combine elements which have an affinity to one another. The time of the liturgical year or of a special occasion may inspire us to stress the one or

the other element of the introductory rites: for instance, on important feasts an introductory hymn is very appropriate; on certain occasions the greeting may be more elaborate (for example, graduation Mass); during penitential seasons the penitential act should be more stressed.

The various possibilities of arranging these elements of the introductory rites are now set out.

First Plan

SIGN OF THE CROSS — GREETING — MOTTO OF THE MASS (OR SHORT INTRODUCTION) — PENITENTIAL ACT WITH KYRIE (FORM C) — PETITION FOR FORGIVENESS — COLLECT.

This plan is recommended for a Mass where there is no signing and the priest has no other ministers to assist him. In this case he may combine the entrance antiphon of the Missal (without psalm and Gloria Patri) with the introduction into the Mass of the day.

Second Plan

ENTRANCE HYMN WITH KYRIE — SIGN OF THE CROSS — GREETING — PENITENTIAL ACT ACCORDING TO FORM A OR B — PETITION FOR FORGIVENESS — COLLECT.

A cantor (organist) begins the hymn, and if possible alternates with the people if they are singing a responsorial psalm. Also if it is possible, the entrance hymn should include the Kyrie. For instance, there are some hymns where each stanza ends with "Kyrie eleison" or "Lord, have mercy." During penitential times of the ecclesiastical year one may sing as the entrance song the Kyrie according either to a Gregorian melody or to a vernacular melody. But if the Kyrie can not be included into the entrance hymn, it should be inserted after the prayer for forgiveness. It may be recited or sung. Simple melodies are preferable.

Third Plan

ORGAN MUSIC DURING ENTRANCE OF THE PRIEST — SIGN OF THE CROSS — GREETING WITH THE MOTTO OF THE MASS (ENTRANCE ANTIPHON) — (INTRODUCTION TO THE MASS OF THE DAY) — PENITENTIAL ACT WITH KYRIE (FORM C) — PETITION FOR FORGIVENESS — (GLORIA) — COLLECT.

If a cantor (organist) is available, organ music may take the place of the entrance hymn. After the greeting, the "motto" of the Mass

is presented in combination with the introduction. The invocation of the Kyrie may be recited or sung after each short motive for contrition given by the priest or other minister. If the Gloria is part of the Mass, one may recite or sing it. If one wishes the Gloria to be sung then the penitential act should possibly contain the Kyrie (form c). In order to shorten in this case the introductory rites, one may dispense with the entrance song and insert into the greeting or introduction the "motto" of the Mass.

Fourth Plan

OPENING HYMN — SIGN OF THE CROSS — GREETING — CONFESSION — PETITION FOR FORGIVENESS — KYRIE — (GLORIA) — COLLECT.

Here every element of the introductory rites is being used as it is found in the order of the Mass; each stands independent of the other. It is not advisable to use this plan when the Gloria has to be recited or sung; otherwise the introduction becomes too long and appears as one of the main parts of the Mass. It is advisable to omit a proper introduction into the Mass of the day and instead insert short introductory remarks before the readings instead.

Fifth Plan

On all Sundays of the year and on some other occasions during the Church year (Presentation of the Lord; Ash Wednesday; Palm Sunday) the penitential act of the Mass may be omitted. The plan for Sundays is then the following: entrance hymn (or better: organ music) — sign of the cross — greeting — blessing and sprinkling with holy water — (Gloria) — collect.

While formerly the rite for blessing and sprinkling of Holy Water was not part of the Missal, but of the Roman Ritual, it has now been incorporated into the massbook of the Church (Missale Romanum, ed. 1970, pp. 889-892).

This rite may be performed at all Sunday Masses and also at the evening Masses on Saturdays (in all churches and oratories) which

take the place of the Sunday Mass for the faithful. After the greeting, the priest remains standing and facing the people. With the vessel of water before him he invites the people to pray with him, with these or similar words:

My brothers and sisters, let us humbly pray to the Lord our God that he may bless this water which he has created and which will be sprinkled over us as a reminder of our baptism. May the Lord God help us to remain faithful to the Spirit whom we received in baptism.

After a short time for silent prayer, the priest, with his hands joined, continues:

All-powerful and everlasting God,
 water is essential for life and the means for cleanliness.
 It was your will that it should also serve for the purification of souls,
 to allow them to enter eternal life.
 We ask you: kindly bless + this water
 because we want to be strengthened by it today.
 Renew in us the living font of grace.
 Protect us by this water from all evil of soul and body
 so that we may come to you with a pure heart
 and may receive worthily your salvation.
 This we ask you through Christ our Lord.

All: Amen.

There are two more, optional prayers for the blessing of holy water in the new Missal; one is to be used during Eastertide. The blessing and the addition of salt is in future optional. For the blessing of the salt a special formula has been provided.

The priest sprinkles himself first and then the ministers, and finally the people. In the meantime one of the following antiphons may be sung. But any other suitable chant may take its place: *Sprinkle me with hyssop ...* (Ps 50,9); *I will sprinkle clean water upon you ...* (Ez 36,25 f); *Blessed be the God and Father of Our Lord Jesus Christ ...* (cf. 1 Pt 1,3-5); *Behold, water was issuing ...* (cf. Ez 47,1-2.9); *You are a chosen race ...* (1 Pt 2,9); *From your side, O Christ, a fount of living water gushes forth which washes away the sins of the world and restores life, alleluja.* The last three antiphons are reserved for Eastertide.

Upon his return to the seat and after the chant, the priest says, with his hands joined and facing the people.

May the almighty God cleanse us from our sins.
May he make us worthy through the celebration of this Eucharist
to share in the heavenly banquet.

All: Amen.

Then the Gloria is recited or chanted, if it is prescribed, and the collect concludes, as usual, the introductory part of the Mass.

H. J. Graf, S.V.D.