

Number Seven: Why the Changes to the *Gloria*?

If we examine the previous text of the Gloria alongside the new version, we note that although the wording has been expanded, it does not sound very different. There are changes but it does not seem as if we are praying something altogether new. The new version makes it clear at the beginning of Mass that we are gathering to do something utterly different from whatever else we do during the week. We are participating with heaven and earth in the Divine Liturgy, blending our voices with those of angels and saints. The Gloria's opening words repeat the message of the angels to the shepherds at the birth of Christ: "Glory to God in the highest and on earth peace to people of good will" (Luke 2:14). Though human, we are privileged to join the angels in praising God and participate in the heavenly liturgy. The Gloria possesses rhetorical devices, such as repeating a word or a phrase, that reflect speech patterns from early Christianity. They highlight the reality that this is no ordinary "thank you" we are expressing to a friend or loved one. Instead, we are joining angelic choirs in adoring the Trinity.