

## “Show Us, O Lord, Your Mercy”: Invoking the Mercy of God in the Order of Mass

With the forthcoming Extraordinary Jubilee Year of Mercy, beginning December 8, 2015 through November 20, 2016, Pope Francis has invited the Church to rediscover and to celebrate the centrality of God’s mercy in our world and our lives. In his announcement of the Holy Year of Mercy the Holy Father declared, “I am confident that the whole Church, which is in such need of mercy for we are sinners, will be able to find in this Jubilee the joy of rediscovering and rendering fruitful God’s mercy, with which we are all called to give comfort to every man and every woman of our time.... Let us henceforth entrust this Year to the Mother of Mercy, that she turn her gaze upon us and watch over our journey” (Homily at the Celebration of Penance, March 13, 2015).

In the celebration of the Mass, the critical role of God’s mercy frequently comes to the fore. As imperfect human beings, we encounter in the Mass God’s merciful offer to raise us up and to give us hope and strength despite our weaknesses. In order to prepare for the upcoming Jubilee of Mercy, as well as to assist delving deeper into the content of the Mass itself, there follows a concise list of moments in the Order of Mass when the mercy of God is explicitly acknowledged or sought. Those who preach on the theme of mercy might wish to draw their hearers’ attention to some of these passages, both to help strengthen their appreciation for God’s mercy and to help them pray the Mass with greater devotion.

In addition to the texts from the Order of Mass, there are innumerable references to God’s mercy which are encountered both in the proper prayer texts for the various Masses, as well as in the Scripture passages proclaimed in the Liturgy of the Word. Furthermore, there are numerous other moments in the Mass when mercy is sought, even if not mentioned explicitly by name. For example, the silent prayer of the deacon or priest who has just read the Gospel is clearly reliant on God’s mercy: “Through the words of the Gospel, may our sins be wiped away” (Order of Mass, no. 16). Whether or not the very word is used, God’s mercy is truly never far from the many liturgical elements of the Mass.

### **Penitential Act**

“Have mercy on us, O Lord. / For we have sinned against you.  
Show us, O Lord, your mercy. / And grant us your salvation” (Form B, no. 5).

“[invocation], Lord, have mercy. / Lord, have mercy.  
[invocation], Christ, have mercy. / Christ, have mercy.  
[invocation], Lord, have mercy. / Christ, have mercy” (Form C, no. 6).

“May almighty God have mercy on us, forgive us our sins, and bring us to everlasting life” (Priest’s concluding prayer, nos. 4-6).

### ***Kyrie eleison***

“Lord, have mercy. / Lord, have mercy.  
Christ, have mercy. / Christ, have mercy.  
Lord, have mercy. / Christ, have mercy.”  
or “Kyrie, eleison. / Kyrie, eleison.  
Christe, eleison. / Christe, eleison.  
Kyrie, eleison. / Kyrie, eleison” (no. 7).

### **Rite for the Blessing and Sprinkling of Water**

“Grant, O Lord, in your mercy, that living waters may always spring up for our salvation, and so we may approach you with a pure heart and avoid all danger to body and soul” (Appendix II, no. 2 [second option]).

“Lord our God, in your mercy be present to your people’s prayers... You also made water the instrument of your mercy: for through water you freed your people from slavery and quenched their thirst in the desert...” (no. 2 [third option]).

### ***Gloria in excelsis Deo***

“...you take away the sins of the world, have mercy on us; you take away the sins of the world, receive our prayer; you are seated at the right hand of the Father, have mercy on us” (no. 8).

### **Eucharistic Prayer I (The Roman Canon)**

“To you, therefore, most merciful Father, we make humble prayer and petition through Jesus Christ, your Son, our Lord...” (no. 84).

“To us, also, your servants, who, though sinners, hope in your abundant mercies, graciously grant some share and fellowship with your holy Apostles and Martyrs...” (no. 96).

### **Eucharistic Prayer II**

“Remember also our brothers and sisters who have fallen asleep in the hope of the resurrection and all who have died in your mercy: welcome them into the light of your face. Have mercy on us all, we pray, that with the blessed Virgin Mary, Mother of God, with blessed Joseph, her Spouse, with the blessed Apostles, and all the Saints who have pleased you throughout the ages, we may merit to be co-heirs to eternal life, and may praise and glorify you through your Son, Jesus Christ” (no. 105).

### **Eucharistic Prayer III**

“...in your compassion, O merciful Father, gather to yourself all your children scattered throughout the world” (no. 113).

### **Eucharistic Prayer IV**

“For you came in mercy to the aid of all, so that those who seek might find you” (no. 117).

“To all of us, your children, grant, O merciful Father, that we may enter into a heavenly inheritance with the blessed Virgin Mary, Mother of God, with blessed Joseph, her Spouse, and with your Apostles and Saints in your kingdom” (no. 122).

### **Eucharistic Prayer I for Reconciliation**

“For you do not cease to spur us on to possess a more abundant life and, being rich in mercy, you constantly offer pardon and call on sinners to trust in your forgiveness alone” (Appendix to the Order of Mass [AOM], Eucharistic Prayer I for Reconciliation, no. 1).

“...we offer you, who are our faithful and merciful God, this sacrificial Victim who reconciles to you the human race” (no. 7).

“Help us to work together for the coming of your Kingdom, until the hour when we stand before you, Saints among the Saints in the halls of heaven, with the blessed Virgin Mary, Mother of God, the blessed Apostles and all the Saints, and with our deceased brothers and sisters, whom we humbly commend to your mercy” (no. 7).

### **Eucharistic Prayer II for Reconciliation**

“In a similar way, on that same evening, he took the chalice of blessing in his hands, confessing your mercy, and gave the chalice to his disciples, saying...” (AOM, Eucharistic Prayer II for Reconciliation, no. 5).

### **Eucharistic Prayer for Various Needs**

“Therefore, Father most merciful, we ask that you send forth your Holy Spirit to sanctify these gifts of bread and wine, that they may become for us the Body and ✠ Blood of our Lord Jesus Christ” (AOM, Eucharistic Prayer for Various Needs, no. 3 [I-IV]).

### **Eucharistic Prayer for Various Needs (IV)**

“It is truly right and just, our duty and our salvation, always and everywhere to give you thanks, Father of mercies and faithful God” (AOM, Eucharistic Prayer for Various Needs IV, no. 1).

**Embolism after the Lord's Prayer**

“Deliver us, Lord, we pray, from every evil, graciously grant peace in our days, that, by the help of your mercy, we may be always free from sin and safe from all distress, as we await the blessed hope and the coming of our Savior, Jesus Christ” (no. 125).

***Agnus Dei***

“Lamb of God, you take away the sins of the world: have mercy on us.  
Lamb of God, you take away the sins of the world: have mercy on us.  
Lamb of God, you take away the sins of the world: grant us peace” (no. 130).

**Priest's Prayer before Communion**

“May the receiving of your Body and Blood, Lord Jesus Christ, not bring me to condemnation, but through your loving mercy be for me protection in mind and body and a healing remedy” (no. 131 [second option]).

*This article can also be found in the USCCB's Committee on Divine Worship's publication, Newsletter, volume 51, April-May 2015.*