



Thirtieth Sunday in Ordinary Time October 23, 2011 A

THE REVISED TRANSLATION OF THE GLORIA

Last weekend, we introduced you to some of the revised texts of the Mass, i.e., “And with your spirit,” the Gloria and the Nicene Creed. In my column last week, I commented on the assembly’s response, “And with your spirit” and on the revised translation of the Creed. This week, we will look at the revised translation of the Gloria.

The Gloria has been part of the Catholic Mass since the fifth century. The word *glory* translates from the Hebrew word *kabod*. When *kabod* is used about people, it is intended to communicate honor and importance. The Gloria is a joyful hymn of praise and honor to God. When we sing it or say it, we honor God’s importance. We extol God because God is worthy of praise and honor.

Begins with the song of the angels at Jesus’ birth

The Gloria is a song of praise to God the Father, God the Son, and God the Holy Spirit. It begins with the words the angels sang when Jesus was born:

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

(Lk 2:14)

The Gloria reminds us that although we are mere mortals, we are privileged to join immortal angelic hosts in praising God, thereby participating in the heavenly liturgy. This prayer is no ordinary “thank you” to a friend or loved one. Rather, we are joining angelic choirs in adoring the Trinity.

After the opening verse, the revised Gloria continues with the following acclamation:

*We praise you,
we bless you,
we adore you,
we glorify you,
we give you thanks
for your great glory,
Lord God, heavenly King,
O God, almighty Father.*

In the previous translation of the Latin text, the above words of praise to God were reduced to:

*We worship you,
we give you thanks,
we praise you for your glory.*

Scholars point out that such translation lacks the effusiveness, the going-overboard in the praise of God. This is restored in the new translation.

Honoring Jesus

The next or second part of the Gloria focuses on Jesus, beginning with his different designations: “**Only Begotten Son,**” “**Lamb of God,**” “**Son of the Father.**” In both the Creed and the Gloria, “Only Son of God” is replaced with “**Only Begotten Son**”—to stress that Jesus is not just any son but one of a kind—there is no one like him. Jesus is not adopted. He has the same nature as the Father. In contrast, in and through Baptism, we are made *adopted* children of God. The Latin uses only one word—*Unigenite*—for **Only Begotten**, which is always written in the upper case to signify the sanctity of this title of Jesus.

The Gloria goes on to recognize the central work in the ministry of Jesus:

*You take away the sins of the world,
have mercy on us;
You take away the sins of the world,
receive our prayer.*

The previous translation speaks of Jesus as taking away the sin (singular) of the world whilst in Latin, the word *peccata* translates to *sins* (plural). In the revised version, we believe that Jesus takes away not just generic sin from the world, but also individual sins. The Gloria not only praises God the Father but also thanks him for his mercy that comes to us through his Son, Jesus Christ.

The final stanza of the Gloria which remains unchanged, turns toward the Holy Spirit, placing him alongside the Father and the Son, and giving him equal status with God.

Commenting on the style of the *Gloria*, Bishop Prendergast of Ottawa says:

The rhetorical style of the Gloria uses an ancient technique called anaphora, a speech pattern whereby part of a phrase is repeated so as to emphasize its importance. We do not use this technique in ordinary conversation, but we are familiar with its use—as in Martin Luther King, Jr.’s repetition of “I have a dream” in his famous speech. The use of anaphora in the Gloria reminds us that something very special is taking place in this prayer.

Rachel’s last fundraiser — love in action

In this Sunday’s Gospel, Jesus speaks about the Great Commandment of Love which involves love of God and love of neighbor as ourselves. The following piece by Jay Cormier is a beautiful example of how one young girl named Rachel loved the Great Commandment.

Rachel Beckwith did a lot of great stuff in her nine years.

When she was five, she learned about the organization Locks of Love, which uses hair donations to make wigs for children who have lost their hair because of cancer or other diseases. Rachel asked her parents if she could have her long hair shorn off and sent to Locks of Love. After the haircut, Rachel announced she would grow her hair long again and donate it again after a few years to Locks of Love. And that’s what she did.

Then when she was eight, her Bellevue, Washington, church began raising money to build wells in Africa through the organization charity: water. Rachel was stunned to learn that there were children who had no clean water, so she asked her Mom and Dad if she could skip having a ninth birthday party; instead, she asked her friends to donate \$9 each for water projects in Africa. Rachel’s ninth birthday was this past June 20 and she set up a birthday web page with a target of \$300. She was able to raise only \$220—which left her just a bit disappointed.

Then on July 20, the Beckwith’s car was hit by a truck in a 13-vehicle pileup on a Washington interstate. The rest of the family was unhurt, but Rachel was critically injured. Friends and church members showed their support for Rachel by donating to her birthday page, raising almost \$50,000.

But Rachel would never regain consciousness. Her parents donated her hair a final time to Locks of Love and her organs to other children. She died three days later. But donations continue to pour into Rachel’s page at charity: water. To date, 51,000 donors from around the world have donated more than \$1 million for

Rachel’s work. Next year on her birthday her Mom and Dad plan to travel to Africa to see some of the wells drilled in Rachel’s name.

“It will be overwhelming to see Rachel’s wells,” her mother says, “to see what my 9-year-old daughter has done for people all over the world, to meet the people she touched.

“In the face of unexplainable pain [there is] undeniable hope.”

[From “Rachel’s Last Fundraiser” by Nicholas D. Kristof, **The New York Times**, Aug 10, 2011, and “Rachel Beckwith’s Legacy: \$1 million for charity” by Amy Harris & J.B.Wogan, **The Seattle Times**, Aug 12, 2011.]

Rachel Beckwith’s legacy is the manifestation of today’s Gospel. Every word of Jesus’ Gospel comes down to love — love that is simple enough to articulate but so demanding that we shy away from it. The mystery of God’s love is that the Being of Supreme and Omnipotent Power should love his creation so completely and so selflessly — and all God seeks in return is that such love be shared by his people throughout his creation. Rachel, in her visionary generosity, models the great love and compassion of the God who spares nothing to bring us to him. Let Rachel lead us in following the great commandment of the Gospel: to love with the same selfless compassion, care and completeness of God.

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Have a blessed week,

