

WHAT'S NEW IN THE PEOPLE'S PARTS?

Why the People's Parts?

One of the most significant and far-reaching reforms enacted by the Second Vatican Council was the emphasis placed on the full, conscious, active participation of the people in the celebration of Mass, born of renewed awareness that in Baptism all receive a share in the priesthood of Christ. While differing from the priesthood of the ordained, the priesthood of the baptized makes it possible, indeed both a right and a duty, for the one who has been baptized to participate in the worship of the Church, the Mystical Body of Christ.

The Council in its *Constitution on the Sacred Liturgy*, tells us that the Mass lies at the heart of that worship, and is an action of Christ the priest and his body the Church. Hence we who have been baptized are called to participate in the Mass. Our participation is internal and external. Along with attentive listening to God's Word; joining heart and mind with the prayers of the priest; offering to the Father Christ and ourselves in union with Christ; taking part in the common song and postures of the gathered assembly, the People's Parts of the Mass are a vital aspect of the full, conscious and active participation to which the baptized are called.

What are the People's Parts of the Mass?

The Mass is ordered in such a way that there are parts that are designated to be prayed by the people, just as there are parts to be prayed or proclaimed by the priest-celebrant, the deacon and others. Specifically, the People's parts include the responses to the priest, the deacon, and other ministers at various points throughout the Mass: to the readings in the Liturgy of the Word, to certain acclamations such as the Alleluia before the Gospel and the Prayer of the Faithful in which our response in prayer for the whole Church constitutes a special exercise of our baptismal priesthood.

The Sanctus, Memorial Acclamation and Great Amen proclaim our thanksgiving and praise in the Eucharistic Prayer. The Creed is the affirmation of faith prayed by all present following the readings and the homily. The Our Father and the doxology which concludes its additional prayer for deliverance from evil also are specifically People's Parts of the Mass, as is the response to the *Lamb of God*. The *Lord, I am not worthy*, the act of humility before the reception of Holy Communion is a prayer that belongs to all the faithful as is our response to the invocations *the Body of Christ* and *the Blood of Christ* at the reception of Holy Communion.

What's New in the People's Parts of the Mass?

The parts of the Mass prayed by the people remain essentially the same in structure, apart from the option of using the Apostle's Creed in place of the Nicene Creed, particularly during the Lenten and Easter Seasons. Some changes have been made in the language used in the responses, acclamations and prayers of the people. It is important to realize, however, that such changes have been kept to a minimum and made only when necessary to insure that the translation follows the Latin original more closely than the former version. While these changes will require an initial adjustment and close attention to the new texts, past experience has shown that people quickly grow used to new language and adapt readily to it. Subsequent bulletin inserts will address changes to specific texts in greater detail.

