

## A "New" Response at Mass for the Lent and Easter Seasons

by Fr. Augie

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. God's mercy is truly never far from the many liturgical elements of the Mass.

In practice, the second form of the Penitential Act seems to be one least chosen for the celebration of Mass in many parish settings. The obvious reason is our familiarity with the *Confiteor* (I confess...) (option 1) and the simple response to the recited or sung tropes (option 3): "Lord have mercy... Christ have mercy... Lord have mercy."

In the case of the second form of the Penitential Act, the text is inspired by the psalms and prophets:

Form 2 (Dialogue)

Priest: Have mercy on us, O Lord.

People: For we have sinned against you.

Priest: Show us, O Lord, your mercy.

People: And grant us your salvation.

Form B is completed by singing or reciting the threefold repetition of the *Kyrie, eleison* (Lord, have mercy).

The prophet Baruch was the secretary to the prophet Jeremiah and it is from him we have the first part of this dialogue. He expresses the penitential spirit that has fallen upon the Babylonian captives: "*Hear, O Lord, for you are a God of mercy; and have mercy on us, who have sinned against you*" (*Baruch* 3:2). Part two of the dialogue echoes *Psalms* 85:8: "*Show us, Lord, your love; grant us your salvation*"

This brief, Biblical dialog expresses that we are sinners, which is a truth of our human condition in world, but also that we have hope in the mercy and salvation that God always desires for us. As the Catechism of the Catholic Church (#214) says:

"God, "HE WHO IS", revealed himself to Israel as the one "*abounding in steadfast love and faithfulness*". (Ex 34:6) These two terms express summarily the riches of the divine name. In all his works God displays, not only his kindness, goodness, grace and steadfast love, but also his trustworthiness, constancy, faithfulness and truth. "*I give thanks to your name for your steadfast love and your faithfulness.*" (Ps 138:2; cf. Ps 85:11.) He is the Truth, for "*God is light and in him there is no darkness*"; "*God is love*", as the apostle John teaches. (1 Jn 1:5; 4:8.)

Christopher Carstens and Douglas Martis, *Mystical Body, Mystical Voice: Encountering Christ in the Words of the Mass*, Chicago, IL: Liturgy Training Publications, 2011, p. 139.

"Show Us, O Lord, Your Mercy": Invoking the Mercy of God in the Order of Mass

United States Conference of Catholic Bishops-Committee on Divine Worship, *Newsletter*, volume LI, April-May 2015, p.18

"Biblical Allusions in the Order of Mass: Penitential Act" United States Conference of Catholic Bishops-Committee on Divine Worship; *Newsletter* Volume XLVII July 2011, pp. 26-7.