

New and Corrected Translation of the Mass – Part 4

The *Confiteor* – Part 2

The first part of the *Confiteor* ends with our admission of guilt, accompanied by a heart-rending (literally what it is meant to be!) gesture of beating our breasts (striking the middle of our chests with a closed fist of the right hand). Just as Peter had denied Our Lord three times, so we admit our guilt three times. Beating the breast is the gesture of the publican who stood at the back of the Temple, not daring to raise his eyes to heaven, while saying ‘O God, be merciful to me a sinner’ (Luke 18.13). He went home justified, but the self-righteous Pharisee did not. Beating the breast is a deliberate gesture, not a muted brushing of our clothes with fingertips or a slapdash movement.

**Therefore I ask blessed Mary ever-Virgin,
all the angels and saints,
and you, my brothers and sisters,
to pray for me to the Lord our God.**

*John 19.26f; James 5.16
Heb 12.1,22-24; Rev 5.8; 8.3-4
1 Thes 5.25; 1 John 5.16
1 Sam 12.23; Bar 1.13*

We ask the prayers of Our Lady, the Angels and Saints, and of all our brothers and sisters worshipping alongside us. The Mass is never simply about the community that has gathered on a Sunday. Our earthly worship joins the eternal heavenly liturgy in its praise of God. The whole Church (in heaven and on earth) joined as the body to its head, Jesus, shares in Jesus’ eternal offering of himself to the Father, in the Spirit.

The Bible reminds us that we are ‘surrounded by so great a cloud of witnesses’ (Heb 12.1), and that we ‘are come to mount Sion, and to the city of the living God, the heavenly Jerusalem, and to the company of many thousands of angels, and to the church of the firstborn, who are written in the heavens, and to God the judge of all, and to the spirits of the just made perfect, and to Jesus the mediator of the new testament’ (Heb 12.22-24). It is in company with all these that we join in the worship of God at Holy Mass.

We ask also the prayers of all those around us. Look around at those in church with you. These are some of the brothers and sisters we ask to pray for us. We rely on their mercy too as we confess our sins. We sinners ask the prayers of sinners. Being Catholic means we are in communion with all Catholics, not simply the ones we like or agree with. And it means that we pray for them.