

Ask, Father James:

Why are the Gloria and Alleluia Omitted During Lent?

The Lenten season is marked by two very distinct liturgical omissions. The hymn known as the Gloria (Glory to God in the Highest) and the Alleluia verse sung before the Gospel. Neither is permitted during the entire 40 days of Lent. Why is that? First of all, the Gloria is a hymn that celebrates the coming of the Lord using words from the angels at Christ's birth. The Church during Lent returns in spirit to a time when the people of God were in exile, waiting for the Messiah to come and save them. It is a similar season of expectation as is Advent, but instead of awaiting Christ's birth from the womb of Mary, the Christian people await Christ's second "birth" from the womb of the sepulcher - The Resurrection.

Concerning the Alleluia during Lent, we must know that the Alleluia is a Hebrew word, and it means "praise Yahweh (God)." It is the praise song of the choirs of angels, as they worship around the throne of God in Heaven. It is; therefore, a term of great joy, and our use of the Alleluia during Mass is a way of joining with the angels' in worship of God. The church removes the Alleluia from the Mass to allow us to acknowledge our sins and practice repentance at this season, so that we may, at the end of Lent, have the privilege of worshiping God as the angels do with the chanting of Alleluia at the resurrection.

During Lent, we, similar to the Israelite's leaving the painful experiences of Egypt, spending time struggling in the desert, and finally arriving at the promised land, we too are called to leave the painful experience of our predicaments where we struggled with sin and acknowledge that Christ is our spiritual bread and following the same spirit of exile, the Church, like Moses and the Israelite's who wandered in the desert for 40 years, we in the Lenten 40 days of fasting, prayer, and alms giving are brought to the place of repentance where we can once again sing Alleluia. We arrive at that place after the time of the agony of Jesus in the Garden of Gethsemane. Then, we the faithful will then join together in singing, the "Alleluia" a Hebrew expression which means "praise the Lord." Thus, during this time, the church and all the members invite us to be like the Israelite's in their journey through the desert; not a physical desert but a spiritual desert.

Please email/send your faith questions to Fr. James and he will answer them in our Sunday Bulletins



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