**Liturgy Matters Lesson #8**

**The Penitential Rite**

**By Bishop Chad Zielinski**

Thank you for joining me as we continue our lessons on “What Happens at Mass.”

Following the apostolic greeting is the penitential rite, the acknowledgment of our sins, "so that we may celebrate these sacred mysteries worthily." To better understand the inspired Word of God that is about to be read, we must first confess our sins before him and ask for mercy, so that our minds, heart, and souls may be open to hearing the wisdom of the scriptures. We must draw near to the Word and the altar with repentance. There are different formulas the priest may use for this, but the most common is the communal prayer, The Confiteor. What is beautiful in this prayer is that we confess not only our sins to God but also to one another. In addition, we ask Mary and all the angels and saints to pray for us. By praying, we are immediately brought to an awareness that the liturgy is not about just me and God. All of us together come into His presence together with angels and saints, and we ask Him to show us His mercy and grant us His salvation. It bears repeating, insistence, even a kind of stammering: "Lord, have mercy. Lord, have mercy. Christ, have mercy. Christ, have mercy. Lord, have mercy. Lord, have mercy."

Next, the Gloria is sung. We are singing now for the same reason that the angels first sang, namely, that God has sent His Son among us born in our same flesh. In the first part of the song, our words are addressed to God the Father, then we address Jesus Christ himself, acknowledging Him first as the "only Son of the Father." Then we cry out to Him as "the lamb of God who takes away the sins of the world." And so, in the midst of our praise, we beg him again for mercy. This hymn is meant to be an outburst of joy and praise with the additional wonder that the liturgy of the Word is about to begin, that God is about to share with us His wisdom through the scriptures.

May the Easter greeting of the Risen Christ fill you with renewed peace and continue to strengthen us as we grow closer to Him through our understanding and participation in the Holy Mass. Let us keep one another in prayer. May God bless you and your families.

Sincerely in Christ,

Bishop Chad Zielinski