

# THEOLOGIA PRIMA

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## #11 GLORIA IN EXCELSIS DEO!

We all have our favorite hymns that we sing at Mass. I grew up as part of the *Glory and Praise* generation, so a lot of my favorite music was composed by the St. Louis Jesuits. I used to wake up singing “Here I am Lord” by Dan Schutte almost every day. This song had a special place in our parish life. We sang it for many festive celebrations. I can still hear the sound of the Church’s voice wafting through that tiny church. This particular song always reminds me of the community that nurtured my vocation, picked me up when I fell, and rejoiced with me during life passages. As I reflect on these experiences today, I can honestly say, it’s not really about the song, but the experience of the risen Christ which united my little parish.

The Eucharist contains a “very ancient and venerable hymn” (*GIRM* 53), which unites us in praise and thanks. The assembly sings the *Gloria* on Sundays outside of Advent and Lent and on all solemnities and feasts. This hymn of praise for God’s glory was adopted for the Christmas Papal liturgies of the fifth or sixth century and, by the 11<sup>th</sup> century, was widely used in parish life. We know that this text has an important place in our Eucharistic celebrations because the *GIRM* is insistent that it cannot “be replaced by any other text”(53) and *Sing to the Lord* states the *Gloria* cannot replace another part of the Mass like the entrance chant or the sprinkling rite (150). The *Gloria* “is a hymn of praise to the Father, in which he is thanked for his glory, and his peace is proclaimed to human beings, who are the object of his good will. The hymn also contemplates the Son as he sits at the Father’s right hand” (Robert Cabié).

The new translation of the *Roman Missal* seeks to recapture the richness of the Latin text. Right from the beginning, we will notice some slight changes. Here’s a taste of what’s coming (changes in bold):

Glory to God in the highest, **and on earth peace to people of good will. We praise you, we bless you, we adore you, we glorify you, we give you thanks for your great glory, Lord God, heavenly King, O God, almighty Father.**

The first line of the text, taken from the angels’ announcement to the shepherds (Lk 2:14), still proclaims for us how the Church, gathered in celebration and ministry, is an incarnation of Christ in the world today. As we prepare for the new *Missal*, let us recapture the beauty of this hymn. Let the “Gloria” become our communities’ favorite song.

