

Column

There are a number of texts we say in church which, if we are regular worshippers, come trippingly off our tongues. These texts would include the Doxology (“Praise God from Whom all blessings flow”), the Apostles’ Creed; and that acclamation of praise known by its Latin first words, the *Gloria Patri*.

If we participate in classical Christian worship, we know the words of these texts, but have we ever thought about what they mean? Let’s look closer at the last of these – the *Gloria Patri*.

Some years ago a cartoon appeared in a church publication depicting two older ladies sitting in a pew. One is scowling and pointing to her bulletin. The caption underneath reads, “Just who does this Gloria Patri think she is, always getting her name in the bulletin?”

That’s a joke, but no doubt there are many who say the words of the *Gloria*, but who have yet to see the depth and grandeur of these words. What thoughts come to mind when you say or hear sung:

“Glory be to the Father, and to the Son, and to the Holy Ghost; as it was in the beginning, is now, and ever shall be, world without end. Amen”?

The first thing I hope you see is that scene recorded in Matthew 28:19 in which Jesus gave his disciples what has come to be known as the Great Commission. They are to go out to teach the faith and to baptize in the three-fold name of the one God. In the first part of this acclamation, we renew our allegiance to the Father, the Son and the Holy Ghost (Spirit) pledged in our baptism, offering Him our worship and praise.

In the second half, we affirm the eternity of each person of the Godhead. We are pointed back to the time before creation. Our three-personed God was there.

Likewise, we affirm His presence at this very moment when we say, ‘is now’. Whatever is going on in our lives, He remains on the job. Knocked down, but not knocked out of the game. Our triune God has reservoirs of help from which we may draw out even in the darkest hour No, never alone; no, never alone!

And finally, we affirm and give praise for the promise of God's abiding presence in the future . . .
. . . "is now and ever shall be, world without end!
Wherever this crazy world takes us, our Triune God will meet us there.

All this and more contained in this acclamation of praise going back to 2nd century. Let us say it for all it's worth.

Almighty and everliving God, since it is of thy mercy, O gracious Father, that another day is added to our lives; We here dedicate both our souls and our bodies to thee and thy service, in a sober, righteous, and godly life: in which resolution, do thou, O merciful God, confirm and strengthen us; that, as we grow in age, we may grow in grace, and in the knowledge of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ. Amen.

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