

## WHY IS THE GLORIA OMITTED DURING LENT?

Some may notice that during Lent the *Gloria* is not said or sung—and may begin to wonder why. This silence is not accidental; it is intentional, meaningful, and deeply rooted in the Church’s spiritual wisdom.

Lent begins with Ash Wednesday, with the solemn remembrance and observance of the days of our Lord’s Passion and the celebration of His Resurrection. It is a time set apart for penitence, self-examination, reconciliation, fasting, and renewal. Gradually, the atmosphere of worship shifts to one that is less celebratory—quieter, more reflective, and more disciplined in prayer, almsgiving to the poor, and care for creation.

Among the most noticeable changes is this: the *Gloria* falls silent. It is not omitted because it is unimportant, forgotten, or unnecessary. Rather, it is lovingly set aside—reserved like a treasured hymn waiting for its appointed hour. It is normally replaced with a penitential song such as the *Kyrie*. The exception is when solemn feast days that fall during Lent call for the *Gloria* to be said.

The *Gloria* is far older than the Book of Common Prayer; it comes from the worship of the early Church. Its opening line comes directly from the angels’ song in the Gospel of Luke 2:14, and the rest was composed as an early Christian hymn in Greek, probably in the 2nd or 3rd century. It is best understood as a

liturgical hymn of the early Church community.

It was included in Anglican worship (from 1549 onward) when the English liturgy was translated and compiled into the Prayer Book. The *Gloria* was retained as one of the most ancient Christian hymns. The Reformers did not compose it; they simply translated and positioned it within the service. The *Gloria* is one of the oldest surviving Christian hymns—rooted in Scripture, shaped by early believers, and preserved by the Church long before the Prayer Book existed.

### So why is it set aside for Lent?

Because the Church, in her wisdom, allows the character of worship to reflect the spiritual purpose of each season. Lent is marked by repentance, simplicity, self-examination, and preparation for Easter. To help us enter this discipline, the Church gently reduces the more festive elements of worship—not to diminish joy, but to deepen our longing for it.

*Lent is not a season of noise, but of listening.*

*Not a season of celebration, but of reflection.*

*Not a season of feasting, but of fasting.*

*Not a season of display, but of humility.*

In this holy restraint, the silence of the *Gloria* creates spiritual hunger. It nurtures longing, awakens expectation, and prepares the heart.

The Church is training the heart; in the words of the Lenten Collect, it guides us in our spiritual discipline:

*“Almighty and everlasting God, who hate nothing that thou hast made, and dost forgive the sins of all them that are penitent: Create and make in us new and contrite hearts, that we, worthily lamenting our sins and acknowledging our wretchedness, may obtain of thee, the God of all mercy, perfect remission and forgiveness; through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.”*

The invitation to confession in Lent aptly puts it:

“The sacrifice of God is a broken spirit; a broken and contrite heart God will not despise. Let us come to the Lord, who is full of compassion, and acknowledge our transgressions in penitence and faith.”

In simpler words, Lent calls us to cleanse the heart, humble the mind, reorder the soul, repent, return, and realign our lives with God.

In this sense, the omission of the *Gloria* is not emptiness; it is preparation. It teaches us that praise without repentance becomes noise, worship without conversion becomes routine, and song without surrender becomes performance.

And when the *Gloria* finally returns at Easter, it does not return as a habit. It returns as a resurrection sound. It returns as a victory cry. It returns as a redeemed song. It returns as purified praise—because silence has made it holy again.

The *Gloria* is not gone during Lent. It is waiting. Waiting for cleansed hearts. Waiting for humbled souls. Waiting for renewed minds. Waiting for resurrected lives.

Thus, the Church teaches us: before glory, there is repentance; before praise, purification; before celebration, conversion; before resurrection, the Cross.

That is why the *Gloria* is silent in Lent—not because joy has vanished, but because joy is being prepared

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## REFERENCE:

Church of England — *Holy Communion Service Guidance Notes*