

THE NEW TRANSLATION OF THE HOLY MASS: AN INTRODUCTION

TALK #1 – WEEKEND OF OCTOBER 8-9, 2011

On the First Sunday of Advent this year, the weekend of November 26-27 English-speaking Roman Catholic communities around the world will begin using a new English translation of the Roman Missal. The Vatican's Congregation for Divine Worship and the Discipline of the Sacraments gave its *recognitio*, or approval, to the new translation in late April. However, the delivery of the final texts and the announcement of an implementation date were delayed until now, largely in order to incorporate concluding edits recommended by the eleven different English-speaking conferences of bishops that have been working on this project.

The Roman Missal is the ritual book that contains the prayers and instructions for the Holy Mass. The word “missal” is derived from “missa,” the Latin word for Mass. In recent years, we have often called this book the “Sacramentary,” which is a historical title as well. But the term “Roman Missal” more properly conveys the important fact that we are part of the Roman Rite of the universal Catholic Church. Just as a Byzantine Catholic, for example, has a distinctive manner of worship, so our Roman Rite identity should be integral to how we pray.

This identity helps keep the new translation of the Mass in perspective - the Mass is our central act of Christian worship, which has developed from an apostolic tradition over the course of two millennia. Therefore, it is extremely important to make certain that we pray it well, in a way that gives fitting glory to God and maintains continuity with the Church's worship in centuries past.

These new English texts are the culmination of a discernment process that has lasted many years. Our existing English edition of the Mass is based on the hasty initial translation of the “new Mass” in the 1970s, which then underwent some relatively minor adaptations in a 1985 edition. Still, the need to prepare an improved and more careful translation was commonly understood, and a completely revised translation was in fact developed and proposed by the late 1990s. However, a fresh start was necessitated by two developments: the announcement of an updated Latin edition of the Roman Missal in 2000 (the Latin editions remain the authoritative versions of the Missal even today), and the subsequent release of a Vatican instruction entitled *Liturgiam Authenticam* (“authentic liturgy”).

Begun in 1997 at the request of Blessed John Paul II, *Liturgiam Authenticam* was published in 2001. Having observed major discrepancies in liturgical books during his travels, and being an accomplished linguist himself, the Holy Father recognized a need to provide a guide to ensure that all the vernacular translations of liturgical texts throughout the world would more closely correspond to the original Latin. Often, entire phrases of the original prayers were being lost in translation! With *Liturgiam Authenticam*'s renewed emphasis on faithful adherence to the Latin, the respective translations would carry more accurate theological and scriptural content, and also maintain greater universality.

The International Commission on English in the Liturgy (ICEL) was the organization charged with preparing our current translation, according to the principles outlined under Blessed John Paul II and affirmed under Pope Benedict XVI. In addition, a special committee of bishops, called Vox Clara (“a clear voice”), regularly convened in Rome to advise the Holy See on the English

translations. The present translation effort will have taken almost a full decade to complete, and has involved many phases. The national conferences of bishops would examine initial drafts of parts of the Missal, offering recommended changes. Then, ICEL would make revisions and send a new draft to the bishops. Once each section was approved by the conferences, it would be sent to Rome for the *recognitio*.

Over the next several weeks, we will examine the many reasons for the new translation, as well as the tremendous benefits it offers. It will also be important to address the misconceptions or information that have been promoted in the media and by some outspoken critics of the effort. It is essential to keep in mind that the words we pray at Mass will be different, but the Mass itself is not changing. This is not like the dramatic changes after the Second Vatican Council, nor is it a reversal of the liturgical reforms.

The motto offered on the United States Conference of Catholic Bishops' Roman Missal website is "New words: a deeper meaning, but the same Mass." That is an apt description, and as we all prepare for the arrival of the new Missal, the faithful are also encouraged to look over the texts and resources available on that website (<http://usccb.org/romanmissal/>) - including comparisons of some current and forthcoming versions of Mass prayers.

Although this adjustment from a set of prayers with which we have grown familiar over forty years will not be easy, it will nonetheless present a great opportunity for the English-speaking Church. We wish to show how the new translation makes possible an increased sense of beauty and reverence in the sacred liturgy, which will hopefully contribute to our common vocation to holiness. Let us pray that the effects of this renewal will be far-reaching, and ultimately enable us to experience a more profound encounter with Christ.

We now begin looking at the "Order of Mass" - that is, those parts of the Mass that we pray every week, with only slight variations. For instance, the priest always begins Mass by saying, "In the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit." We respond, "Amen." By the way, these familiar words will not change with the new Missal!

The Mass will begin with the Entrance Chant...notice I did not say Entrance Hymn! In the dioceses of the United States, there are various options for the Entrance Chant: The singing at this time is done either alternately by the choir and the people or in a similar way by the cantor and the people, or entirely by the people, or by the choir alone.

Immediately after the Sign of the Cross, the celebrant extends one of three different liturgical greetings to the people, the most common of which is simply, "The Lord be with you." That, too, will remain the same. However, our new response will be the first major change in the Order of Mass. Instead of "And also with you," we will now be saying, "And with your spirit." This new response will also be made at the four other times during Mass when this dialogue occurs: at the reading of the Gospel, at the beginning of the Eucharistic Prayer, during the Our Father, and at the conclusion of Mass.

Why the change? At the most basic level, "and with your spirit" is the proper translation of the original Latin text: "*Et cum spiritu tuo*." By correctly expressing this dialogue in English, we are actually aligning our translation with that of all the other major language groups, which have long been translating the Latin properly. For example, in Spanish, the response is "*Y con tu espíritu*."

There is an oft-told story of how Blessed Pope John Paul II initiated this new English translation. John Paul II was renowned as a world traveler, and he was also a very accomplished linguist, fluent in eight languages. During his trips abroad, he prayed from many different translations of the Roman Missal, and he began to notice discrepancies. So, he examined multiple books side by side - such texts as the Latin, Italian, German, French, Polish, and English. What he discovered was that our existing English translation was in need of considerable improvement. It is likely that the Holy Father's attention was particularly drawn to the fact that the English did not say, "And with your spirit."

But even beyond the linguistic, the recovery of the word "spirit" also carries Scriptural meaning. One form or other of "The Lord be with you" appears multiple times in the Bible, including the greeting given by the Archangel Gabriel to Mary at the Annunciation: "Hail, favored one! The Lord is with you" (Lk 1:28). Then, in the Pauline epistles, multiple variations of "The Lord be with your spirit" are employed as parting words to different church communities. Understood together, this liturgical dialogue in the Mass is an exchange whereby all present - both priest and congregation - ask that the Holy Spirit (whom we call "the Lord, the giver of life" in the Nicene Creed) establish a stronger communion among us.

In addition, for the congregation to answer the priest, "And with your spirit," is actually a theological statement about what we Catholics believe regarding ordained ministers. The *Catechism* (#367) speaks of how "spirit" can refer to an elevation of the soul, whereby the soul "is raised beyond all it deserves to communion with God." Through Holy Orders, Christ has forever configured the priest's soul to Himself in a special way, by the power of the Holy Spirit. By specifically referencing the priest's spirit, we can affirm this transformation and pray for his ministry.

This new response of "And with your spirit" will be a difficult change to remember - perhaps one of the most difficult for us laity. Although it is a seemingly minor adjustment, our current response has become second nature to us. However, it will not take long to grow accustomed to the new wording, especially given its frequency. Above all, we should reflect on how it conveys the content of Sacred Scripture, as well as the work of the Holy Spirit in the Church.

For those of you who would like to read this information on your own, it can be found on our parish web site. In addition a limited number of hard copies are available in the narthex for you to take along this evening/morning.

Next week we will discuss the Penitential Rite, in particular the Confiteor as well as the Gloria. Thank you.

THE NEW TRANSLATION OF THE HOLY MASS: AN INTRODUCTION

TALK #2 – WEEKEND OF OCTOBER 15-16, 2011

Last week, we began looking at the Introductory Rites in the Order of Mass by focusing on the change in the greeting from “And also with you” to “And with your spirit.”

Now, we will turn to the Penitential Act, which immediately follows the greeting dialogue. The major changes occur in the first form of the Penitential Act, which is the commonly used formula called the Confiteor. “*Confiteor*” is Latin for “I confess,” and comes from the first line of the prayer. Here is the full text of the newly translated Confiteor:

I confess to almighty God
and to you, my brothers and sisters,
that I have **greatly sinned**
in my thoughts and in my words,
in what I have done
and in what I have failed to do,
through my fault,
through my fault,
through my most grievous fault;
therefore I ask blessed Mary ever-Virgin,
all the Angels and Saints,
and you, my brothers and sisters,
to pray for me to the Lord our God.

Most of this text remains the same as the version we presently use. However, there are two key modifications. The first replaces our current wording of “I have sinned through my own fault” with “I have greatly sinned.” This is another instance of the new text reflecting the Latin wording, which includes the adverb “*nimis*,” meaning “very much.”

The second set of changes occurs about halfway through the Confiteor, and is more significant. The words removed from the first section, “through my own fault,” are being returned to their proper place here, but with the expression’s full content. “Through my fault, through my fault, through my most grievous fault” is a direct translation of the Latin phrase “*mea culpa, mea culpa, mea maxima culpa*.” As a well-known line from the old Latin Mass, “*mea culpa*” has even become a familiar part of our secular parlance, by which one admits having made a mistake. Some might wonder, why this seemingly heavier emphasis on sin in the revised English Confiteor? Looking beyond simple fidelity to the Latin, language that calls to mind our fallen human nature is actually very important in the sacred liturgy. It is good to acknowledge our sinfulness at particular times, just as we should do at sacramental Confession. This Penitential Act is akin to the Act of Contrition, whereby an individual pledges remorse for not loving God and neighbor as he or she ought.

Unlike Reconciliation, we are not sacramentally absolved of our sins at this point during the holy Mass. Nevertheless, it is an appropriate way to “prepare ourselves to celebrate the sacred mysteries,” as the priest says at the beginning of the Penitential Act. We must strive to approach the

altar of God with humble dispositions, and should receive the Most Holy Body and Blood of Christ free from grave sin, and in a worthy fashion, as St. Paul exhorts us in 1 Cor. 11:23-29.

There is an element of the Confiteor that is often neglected, and that is the fact that the faithful are supposed to “strike their breast” while saying, “through my fault, through my fault, through my most grievous fault.” This prescribed “striking” is a symbolic tapping of the chest with a clenched fist over one’s heart, signifying remorse. This is part of the beauty of our Catholic liturgy – sacramental words are complemented by sacramental actions.

The striking of the breast is supposed to be done even now, within the current translation of the Confiteor. Hopefully, it will become more natural with the new translation, especially since a threefold striking was the universal practice during the “*mea culpa...*” of the old Latin Mass, and remains ingrained in the memories of many.

The Confiteor ends with the individual asking for the prayers of the Saints and the rest of the congregation, led by the Blessed Virgin Mary, whose sinlessness by the grace of God is the perfect model for our own Christian lives.

The conclusion of the entire Act of Penitence remains the same, with the Confiteor always being followed by the invocation, “Lord, have mercy...Christ, have mercy...Lord, have mercy.” This supplication may also be said in the original tongue: “*Kyrie, eleison...Christe, eleison...Kyrie, eleison.*” The *Kyrie* is actually not Latin, but Greek, which is a still more ancient liturgical language.

Please consider using the new English text of the Confiteor as a regular prayer of contrition with your family (perhaps after a traditional nightly personal examination of conscience), so that we will be ready to enter into it wholeheartedly at Mass next Advent.

We continue our study of the Order of Mass by examining parts of the Gloria, which the *General Instruction of the Roman Missal* describes as “a very ancient and venerable hymn in which the Church, gathered together in the Holy Spirit, glorifies and entreats God the Father and the Lamb.” The Gloria dates back to the early Church, and should be sung on all Sundays outside Advent and Lent, as well as on feasts, solemnities, and certain special celebrations. One thing to note is that, because the new translation of the Holy Mass can not be used until the First Sunday of Advent, with the exception of the Solemnity of the Immaculate Conception on December 8, we will not pray the Gloria until Christmas!

The following is the full text of the newly-translated Gloria:

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.

Lord Jesus Christ, Only Begotten Son,
Lord God, Lamb of God, Son of the Father,
you take away the sins of the world, have mercy on us;
you take away the sins of the world, receive our prayer;
you are seated at the right hand of the Father, have mercy on us.
For you alone are the Holy One,
you alone are the Lord,
you alone are the Most High,
Jesus Christ,
with the Holy Spirit,
in the glory of God the Father. Amen.

Much of the text of the Gloria comes from Scripture: we previously noted how the first lines are derived from the angels heralding the glad tidings of Christ's birth in Luke 2:14 - "Glory to God in the highest and on earth peace to those on whom His favor rests." The opening words of "Glory to God in the highest" also correspond to the Latin, "*Gloria in excelsis Deo*" (a phrase universally familiar from the popular Christmas carol, "Angels We Have Heard on High").

There are clearly substantial differences between this new text and the Gloria translation that we have been using. The current text reads, "peace to His people on earth," which the new liturgical text expands to "on earth peace to people of good will." It helps to know that certain translations of the Bible render Luke 2:14 as "...on earth peace, good will toward men" or "...peace among those in whom He is well pleased." The new translation of the Gloria is a richer reference to the fact that the Messiah's coming brings the world a higher order of divine peace that only the incarnate Son of God can bestow. Those who live in accordance with God's will and receive His grace shall experience the fullness of this peace.

Turning to the second sentence of the new Gloria, we notice something striking – the new translation recovers entire phrases that were left out of the current translation. Right now, we sing, "we worship you, we give you thanks, we praise you for your glory." However, the Latin text of the hymn offers five successive ways in which we should pay homage to God: "We praise you, we bless you, we adore you, we glorify you, we give you thanks for your great glory." In a general sense, it is true that these all convey the same idea of worshiping God. But liturgical prayer is enhanced by poetic repetition, and these five descriptions of worship do hold distinct connotations if examined closely. Together, they combine to express the extent to which it is our Christian duty to give "glory to God."

The first half of this hymn is addressed to God the Father, whereas the remainder is addressed to God the Son. Right at the beginning, we notice a change, with "only Son of the Father" being replaced by the title, "Only Begotten Son." The phrase "Son of the Father" is moved to after "Lord God, Lamb of God."

The addition of "Only Begotten Son" recovers a key phrase from the Latin text – "*Fili Unigenite*." This is a venerable title of Jesus Christ, which speaks of the fact that the Son of God comes forth from the Father, yet is no less an eternal Person of the Divine Trinity. We may draw a connection to the Nicene Creed, in which we profess that Jesus Christ is "begotten, not made."

The subsequent lines contain the final changes in the new Gloria. Unlike our current translation, this text includes two lines (rather than one) that begin with “you take away the sins of the world,” thereby reflecting the Latin text. By regaining this line and an additional “have mercy on us” in the next line, the new translation features a classic threefold structure of supplication: “have mercy on us...receive our prayer...have mercy on us.” We also see this sort of structure in the Kyrie and Lamb of God.

In addition, there is a slight change within the phrase, “you take away the sins of the world” (which comes from John 1:29). The current translation has “sin of the world,” while the new translation will have the plural, “sins” (in Latin, “*peccata*”). Though a seemingly minor change, it does give greater emphasis to the fact that Christ does not just conquer sin in general, but also forgives all our individual sins.

Having examined the text of the Gloria, it is appropriate to say a few words about the musical implications. The new translation of the Order of Mass will, of course, necessitate that new sung settings be written for the parts of the Mass. Due to substantial changes in wording, the Gloria will be the most challenging piece for sacred music composers to render in English. For instance, the fivefold description of worship – “We praise you, we bless you, we adore you, we glorify you, we give you thanks for your great glory” – is quite different from the current phrasing. It is important to recognize that the Gloria really should be sung whenever possible – it is a hymn, after all. The text of the Gloria is also most clearly expressed when it is sung straight through (“through-composed”) without refrains (i.e., repetition of the opening line). This maintains its overall structure and flow. Recall again that the first half is addressed to the Father, and the second half to the Son – interjecting lines from one part into another disrupts the content. It is also noted that the opening line of the Gloria should be intoned by the celebrant: (chanted) “Glory to God in the highest,” and then continue with the congregation singing it.

Having musical settings that are simple to learn, yet very beautiful, will contribute greatly to making Mass more reverent and giving proper glory to God. The best-known Latin chant version of the “*Gloria in excelsis Deo*” is both simple and sublime, allowing the singer to linger gracefully upon such phrases as the aforementioned five descriptions of worship, all within the fluid rhythm of Gregorian chant. Official, intuitive English chant versions of the Gloria and other Mass parts have also been developed, drawing inspiration from various traditional Latin settings.

Next week, we continue our study with the new translation of the Nicene Creed. Once again, as in the past, for those of you who would like to read this information on your own, it can be found on our parish web site. In addition a limited number of hard copies are available in the narthex for you to take along this evening/morning. Thank you.

THE NEW TRANSLATION OF THE HOLY MASS: AN INTRODUCTION

TALK #3 – WEEKEND OF OCTOBER 22-23, 2011

Our look at the new translation of the Order of Mass continues with the Nicene Creed, which is a profession, or "symbol," of the truths of the Christian faith. This Creed was originally adopted at the Council of Nicaea in 325 A.D. and then updated at the Council of Constantinople in 381 A.D., during times in which clarifying right doctrine was especially important for the Church. It is therefore also referred to as the "Niceno- Constantinopolitan Creed." (The "*Filioque*" clause, by which the Catholic Church affirms that the Holy Spirit "proceeds from the Father *and the Son*," was recognized later.)

The Nicene Creed is used at all Masses on Sundays and Solemnities (although the older, shorter Apostles' Creed will also be an option with the new Missal), and it may be recited or even sung, just as the Latin text was chanted. The following is the complete new English text of the Nicene Creed. Listen as I read it for the various changes:

I believe in one God, the Father almighty, maker of heaven and earth, of **all things visible and invisible**.

I believe in one Lord Jesus Christ, the Only **Begotten** Son of God, **born** of the Father **before all ages**. God from God, Light from Light, true God from true God, begotten, not made, **consubstantial** with the Father; through him all things were made. For us men and for our salvation he came down from heaven,

and by the Holy Spirit **was incarnate** of the Virgin Mary, and became man.

For our sake he was crucified under Pontius Pilate, **he suffered death** and was buried, **and rose again on the third day** in **accordance** with the Scriptures. He ascended into heaven and is seated at the right hand of the Father. He will come again in glory to judge the living and the dead and his kingdom will have no end.

I believe in the Holy Spirit, the Lord, the giver of life, who proceeds from the Father and the Son, **who** with the Father and the Son is **adored** and glorified, **who** has spoken through the prophets.

I believe in one, holy, catholic and apostolic Church. **I confess** one Baptism for the forgiveness of sins **and I look forward** to the resurrection of the dead and the life of the world to come. Amen.

The first major change is difficult to miss: the Creed will now say "I believe" instead of "We believe." Other language groups have been using "I believe" in the vernacular, because it is a straightforward translation of the ancient Latin text, which begins with "*Credo in unum Deum*" ("I believe in one God"). The *Catechism of the Catholic Church* offers a reflection on this phrase: "Whoever says 'I believe' says 'I pledge myself to what we believe'" (no. 185). It is a recurring opportunity to reaffirm one's personal faith, just as when individuals respond, "I do," if there is a renewal of baptismal promises during Mass.

The next change is the line, "all things visible and invisible," which is currently "seen and unseen." The Latin "*visibílium*" and "*invisibílium*" convey a more specific demarcation

between the bodily and the spiritual realms. For instance, a child playing hide-and-seek may be unseen yet is still considered visible, whereas one's guardian angel is indeed invisible by nature.

In addition, the new Creed translation recovers Christ's title, "Only Begotten Son" ("*Fili Unigenite*"), which we also saw in the revised Gloria. To say the Son is "born of the Father before all ages" is a very profound theological truth, for the Son is not "born" in the human sense of beginning one's life, but eternally proceeds from the Father while being always fully God.

This observation leads us to a major wording change: from "one in being" to "consubstantial with the Father." "Consubstantial" ("*consubstantialem*" in the Latin text) is an unusual word that will require some catechesis, but it is a crucial early theological term, asserting that the Son is of the "same substance" with the Father – meaning He equally shares the Father's divinity as a Person of the Holy Trinity.

Although it carries the same basic meaning as "one in being," the more precise use of "consubstantial" is an acknowledgement of how the Greek equivalent of the word was so important for safeguarding orthodoxy in the Early Church.

In looking at the Creed as a whole, we recognize a definite structure: the first section speaks of God the Father, the second focuses on the Son, the third on the Holy Spirit, and the fourth on the Church. The portion on God the Son is by far the longest, for as we have seen previously, the need to affirm right doctrine about Jesus Christ was of utmost importance in the Early Church.

Let us turn to the phrase that stands alone in the middle of the Creed: "and by the Holy Spirit was incarnate of the Virgin Mary, and became man." Our current translation reads, "by the power of the Holy Spirit he was born of the Virgin Mary, and became man." This simple change from "born" to "incarnate" is perhaps the most important amendment in the new text of the Creed, because it more accurately conveys the truth of the Incarnation – when the Son of God took flesh.

The current wording can easily be interpreted to mean that Christ did not actually become man until the moment He was born. Of course, the reality is that the Son of God took on human nature from the moment of His conception in the Blessed Virgin Mary's womb, at the Annunciation. The Lord's birth in Bethlehem is certainly a profound, public epiphany; but Mary's "yes" to the Archangel Gabriel in Nazareth is understood as the moment when the Son first "came down from heaven" to dwell among us. In using the term, "incarnate," the new translation leaves no ambiguity.

The significance of this line is also underscored by the fact that the faithful are supposed to make a "profound bow" (that is, a bow of the body from the waist) while reciting it, as an expression of reverence towards the great mystery of the Incarnation. This gesture is not something new with the coming translation – we all should be doing it even now whenever the Creed is recited, though many are unaware of this.

Although it is not a change, there is an interesting significance to the subsequent mention of Pontius Pilate in the Creed. It functions to affirm and profess the authenticity of the events surrounding Christ's Passion by situating them within a definite historical context – when Pilate was Roman governor of Judea.

There are a handful of remaining minor changes in the new Creed translation. Describing the Resurrection as being “in accordance with the Scriptures” speaks inclusively of the New Testament, in addition to “fulfillment” of Old Testament prophecy surrounding Christ’s rising. Towards the end, “I *confess* one baptism” carries more conviction than “acknowledge.”

And by saying, “I *look forward* to the resurrection of the dead,” one expresses a sincere desire, rather than simply “looking for” the resurrection. The Latin “*expecto*” conveys a sense of anxious waiting and expectation!

Next week we begin our study of the Liturgy of the Eucharist. As in the past, for those of you who would like to read this information on your own, it can be found on our parish web site. In addition a limited number of hard copies are available in the narthex for you to take along this evening/morning. Thank you.

THE NEW TRANSLATION OF THE HOLY MASS: AN INTRODUCTION

TALK #4 – WEEKEND OF OCTOBER 28-29, 2011

Last week, we began looking at the new translations we shall encounter in the Nicene Creed. Now we begin to look at the Liturgy of the Eucharist in particular the Sanctus and the Eucharistic Prayers. At the conclusion of the Preface comes the Sanctus, which in Latin means “Holy.” The Sanctus, like the Gloria, is intended to be sung – in fact, many different settings of the Latin text exist even in Gregorian chant. Here is the English translation we will begin singing this Advent:

Holy, Holy, Holy Lord God of hosts.
Heaven and earth are full of your glory.
Hosanna in the highest.
Blessed is he who comes in the name of the Lord.
Hosanna in the highest.

The only textual difference from our current version is that “God of power and might” becomes “God of hosts.” The word “hosts” refers to a great gathering or multitude, and speaks here of God’s command over the heavenly host of angelic armies. This reference has a Biblical foundation in Isaiah 6:1-3, where the prophet writes, “I saw the Lord seated on a high and lofty throne...Seraphim were stationed above... ‘Holy, holy, holy is the Lord of hosts!’ they cried one to the other. ‘All the earth is filled with his glory!’” And in Luke 2:13, a “multitude of the heavenly host” also announced the birth of Jesus to the shepherds.

The words of the final three lines can be found in the Gospel of Matthew, during the entry of Jesus into Jerusalem before His Passion, as the people shouted, “Hosanna to the Son of David; blessed is he who comes in the name of the Lord; hosanna in the highest” (Mt 21:9). Versions of this acclamation appear in the other Gospels, and the “Blessed is he...” line comes from Psalm 118, amidst a passage that became understood as a reference to Christ.

The Sanctus reminds us that all creatures on “heaven and earth” owe thanksgiving to God (“Eucharist” actually means “thanksgiving”). And if we truly believe that the angels are also present and worshipping with us as we celebrate the Holy Eucharist, then every fiber of our being should reflect the utmost reverence. Therefore, immediately after the Sanctus, we kneel. Kneeling is a sign of respect and humility that is distinctly human and bodily – it is something that even the angels, being pure spirit, cannot do.

There are four main Eucharistic Prayers used during the Mass. Eucharistic Prayer I (the Roman Canon) was formerly the only Eucharistic Prayer used in Roman Catholic worship. As the name suggests, it came from Rome, and invokes many early Roman Popes and Martyrs (“We honor Linus, Cletus, Clement, Sixtus...”). After the Second Vatican Council, we received Eucharistic Prayers II, III, and IV – all of which also have origins in regional liturgies of the Early Church.

The Eucharistic Prayers are rich texts, but here we will examine just a couple of noteworthy translation changes. The first is in Eucharistic Prayer II, when the priest asks God, “Make holy, therefore, these gifts, we pray, by sending down your Spirit upon them like the dewfall.” This new mention of “dewfall” may sound odd, but it is actually a powerful Biblical image. In Exodus 16, the

Lord tells Moses that He will rain down a daily portion of bread, which would appear as “dew” in the morning. Numbers 11:9 says, “When the dew fell upon the camp in the night, the manna fell with it.”

The Eucharistic connection between manna and the dew becomes even more profound when we consider that the Our Father, which we pray before Holy Communion, also speaks of our daily bread. The manna was only to be gathered as a daily portion, in order to cultivate complete trust in the Lord. The Eucharist, as the fulfillment of the manna, is our constant recourse and sustenance.

The second example comes in Eucharistic Prayer III. There is a familiar line that currently reads: “from east to west, a perfect offering may be made to the glory of your name.” This will instead become a more faithful rendering of Malachi 1:11: “from the rising of the sun to its setting a pure sacrifice may be offered...” While the geographic east-west imagery is beautiful in its own right, it does not carry the full cosmic scope of both space and time implied in the rising and setting of the sun. The new imagery conveys the sense that the Holy Mass and the one Sacrifice of Jesus Christ have a truly eternal quality.

We continue our overview of the new translations in the Eucharistic Prayer by looking at the revised texts for the words of consecration, also known as the words of institution. At every Mass, the priest repeats these words by which Christ instituted the Holy Eucharist at the Last Supper, and by which the bread and wine become the true Body and Blood of Christ for us today.

The following are the words of consecration over the bread and wine, respectively.

Take this, all of you, and eat of it,
for this is my Body,
which will be given up for you.

Take this, all of you, and drink from it,
for this is the chalice of my Blood,
the Blood of the new and eternal covenant,
which will be poured out for you and for many
for the forgiveness of sins.
Do this in memory of me.

The changes at the consecration of the bread are minor, but there are a few changes in the text for the consecration of the wine that are worth explaining. First is the replacement of "cup" with "chalice." Both refer to vessels from which we drink, and both terms appear in the Bible. However, "chalice" implies a special kind of cup – one that is precious and set aside for a noble purpose (in this case, the "new and eternal covenant"). This is part of the dignified language brought out by the new translation: just as we do not refer to the altar of sacrifice as merely a "table," so saying "chalice" at this moment emphasizes that the Blood of Christ is no ordinary drink. Such language can help foster greater reverence at the Holy Mass.

A significant change is the revision of the current phrase, "shed for you and for all so that sins may be forgiven," to "poured out for you and for many for the forgiveness of sins." The imagery of Blood being "poured out" is more vivid than "shed" - it portrays His Blood as true drink (Jn 6:55) and accentuates that Jesus entirely emptied Himself (Phil 2:7) out of love for us.

However, the most noticeable revision in those same lines is the replacement of "for all" with "for many." At the most basic level, "for many" is a faithful translation of the original Latin phrase, "*pro multis*." Moreover, Isaiah 53:12 prophesied that the Messiah would take away "the sins of many," and Christ Himself also said His Blood would be shed for "many" (Mt 26:28, Mk 14:24). This does not mean that Christ did not die for the sake of all humanity, for that is indisputable from Scripture. Rather, it upholds the reality that each individual must also accept and abide in the grace won by Christ in order to attain eternal life. The recovery of the wording, "for many," affirms that salvation is not completely automatic.

Nonetheless, it should not be interpreted as overly restrictive, either. The fact that Jesus was addressing only the Apostles in the Upper Room while saying, "for you and for many," implies far-reaching inclusion – that many more besides the Twelve would benefit from this new covenant.

So, the revised translation of "*pro multis*" is important, but may require some of the most careful catechesis, due to potential misunderstandings.

Then, after the consecration, the priest will simply announce, "The mystery of faith" ("*Mysterium fidei*") – a declarative statement about the Eucharist now present. Blessed Pope John Paul II reflected on these words in his encyclical, *Ecclesia de Eucharistia*, writing that the very thought of the mysterious gift of the Holy Eucharist should fill us with "profound amazement and gratitude."

In response, the people shall make one of these acclamations:

We proclaim your Death, O Lord,
and profess your Resurrection
until you come again.

When we eat this Bread and drink this Cup,
we proclaim your Death, O Lord,
until you come again.

Save us, Savior of the world,
for by your Cross and Resurrection
you have set us free.

All three are rooted in Scripture (1 Cor 11:26, Jn 4:42). But what is conspicuously absent is the popular current acclamation, "Christ has died, Christ is risen, Christ will come again." This line, although powerful, is not found in the Latin. In addition, it does not directly address Christ made present in the Blessed Sacrament, nor does it speak of our relationship with Him, as the others do.

Next week, we will continue our study of the new translations with the Preparation of the Gifts.

As always, for those of you who would like to read this information on your own, it can be found on our parish web site. In addition a limited number of hard copies are available in the narthex for you to take along this evening/morning. Thank you.

THE NEW TRANSLATION OF THE HOLY MASS: AN INTRODUCTION

TALK #5 – WEEKEND OF NOVEMBER 4-5, 2011

We continue our review of the upcoming translation changes in the Order of Mass by continuing the Liturgy of the Eucharist, which begins with the Preparation of the Gifts. When the gifts of bread and wine are placed upon the altar and raised by the priest as an offering to God, we often hear two prayers spoken aloud over each element (they can also be spoken quietly by the priest).

The current versions of these two prayers are very familiar, so it is easy to see that the differences are relatively minor. The following is the new translation of the prayer spoken when the priest lifts the paten (the sacred vessel that holds the unleavened bread):

Blessed are you, Lord God of all creation, **for** through your goodness we have **received the bread we offer you: fruit of the earth** and **work of human hands**, it will become for us the bread of life.

And this will be the new prayer at the lifting of the chalice:

Blessed are you, Lord God of all creation, **for** through your goodness we have **received the wine we offer you:** fruit of the vine and work of human hands, it will become our spiritual drink.

The people's response to both prayers remains, "Blessed be God for ever."

These prayers over the bread and wine are very important, because they express the sacramental reality of the sacred liturgy. Through our human work amidst creation, we offer back to God what is already His (the new translation highlights that we first "received" these gifts from Him), and He brings it to its heavenly fulfillment. In an overarching sense, this applies to our entire Christian lives on earth. Just as the bread and wine become Christ's Body and Blood, we look forward to our resurrection in glorified bodies (as we profess in the Creed), and also to the perfection of all creation in the heavenly Jerusalem.

After reciting a couple quiet prayers for humility and purity, the priest then washes his hands, and extends this invitation to prayer:

Pray, brethren (brothers and sisters), that **my sacrifice and yours** may be acceptable to God, the almighty Father.

Whereas the current translation has "our sacrifice," the new translation is changed to "my sacrifice and yours." This seemingly slight distinction, found in the original Latin, actually conveys the reality that those who are gathered offer the holy sacrifice of the Mass in different ways. The priest offers it on our behalf in a special manner, *in persona Christi* (in the person of Christ), by virtue of his ordination.

But those of us in the pews are not idle spectators. The Second Vatican Council's *Constitution on the Sacred Liturgy* no. 48 says that the faithful should be "conscious" participants "by offering the Immaculate Victim, not only through the hands of the priest, but also with him, they should learn also to offer themselves."

This call to join ourselves to the action of the priest is answered when the people stand and make the following response:

May the Lord accept the sacrifice at your hands for the praise and glory of his name, for our good and the good of all his **holy** Church.

The addition of "holy" reminds us that the Church belongs to Christ, and is founded on His grace. Afterwards comes the priest's "Prayer over the Offerings" – part of the proper prayers that change depending on the liturgical day. Just as with the Collects at the beginning of Mass, many of these will feature richer and fuller content.

The Eucharistic Prayer itself then begins with this dialogue:

Priest: The Lord be with you.

People: **And with your spirit.**

Priest: Lift up your hearts.

People: We lift them up to the Lord.

Priest: Let us give thanks to the Lord our God.

People: **It is right and just.**

Of the two changes, we have already seen "And with your spirit." The phrase, "It is right and just," is a simple rendering of the Latin, "*Dignum et iustum est*," emphasizing the fact that it is fitting and fair ("just") to give thanks to God, since He is both our Creator and Redeemer.

This dialogue is followed by the Preface, a more lengthy prayer that can vary depending on the liturgical occasion. Most Prefaces in the new translation expand upon the words of the preceding dialogue by beginning, "It is truly right and just, our duty and our salvation, always and everywhere to give you thanks."

Next week, we shall examine some of the final parts of the Order of Mass as we wrap up our introduction of the new translations. For those of you who would like to read this information on your own, it can be found on our parish web site. In addition a limited number of hard copies are available in the narthex for you to take along this evening/morning. Thank you.

THE NEW TRANSLATION OF THE HOLY MASS: AN INTRODUCTION

TALK #6 – WEEKEND OF NOVEMBER 11-12, 2011

This week, we review the Communion Rite as it appears in the new Roman Missal. Following the people's "Amen" at the end of the Eucharistic Prayer, we begin the Communion Rite with the recitation or singing of the Our Father.

Most will be pleased to hear that the text of the Lord's Prayer itself (as well as our familiar English chant setting) will remain unchanged. Not only is the prayer a sufficient translation of the Latin "*Pater noster*," but the devotional language of the Our Father (complete with phrases like "Who art in heaven" and "hallowed be Thy name") has also become a deeply ingrained and rich part of our vernacular prayer. Every English-speaking Christian knows this prayer, and it is used a great deal outside of the Holy Mass.

However, the priest's words before, during, and after the Our Father will feature some changes. For instance, the current translation offers three options for the priest's introduction to the Our Father, but the new translation will match the single Latin line in saying, "At the Savior's command and formed by divine teaching, we dare to say..." To address our almighty, transcendent Creator as "Father" is actually an incredible thing, for it affirms a tender and personal aspect to our relationship with Him. And we do this at the direction of His Son – this is why we "dare to" use the name, "Father."

After the sign of peace (which should always be shared in a dignified fashion, for it is Christ's peace – not our own – that we impart here), we sing the Agnus Dei ("Lamb of God") as the priest breaks the sacred host. The Agnus Dei text remains unchanged as well, though it is always good to recall its origin in the words of John the Baptist, as he heralds Christ's arrival at the River Jordan: "Behold, the Lamb of God, who takes away the sin of the world" (Jn 1:29).

That passage from the Gospel of John is also embedded in the subsequent line spoken by the priest, while he holds the host over the chalice. Here is the new text:

Behold the Lamb of God,
behold him who takes away the sins of the world.
Blessed are those called to the supper of the Lamb.

The new translation recovers the word, "behold," which also evokes the words of Pilate to the crowd in presenting the scourged Jesus: "Behold, the man" ("*Ecce homo*" – Jn 19:5). The Holy Eucharist is a re-presentation of that same sacrificial Victim, and our partaking in it is a foretaste of the heavenly wedding banquet of the Lamb (Rev 19:9).

Then come the words we pray in response, before the distribution of Holy Communion begins:
Lord, I am not worthy
that you should enter under my roof,
but only say the word
and my soul shall be healed.

The replacement of our current, relatively terse “not worthy to receive you” with “that you should enter under my roof” is a significant change. The new line comes directly from the Gospels, particularly Matthew 8:8, in which the faith-filled centurion begs Jesus to heal his paralyzed servant: “Lord, I am not worthy to have you enter under my roof; only say the word and my servant will be healed.” It is therefore a Biblical text that conveys humanity’s unworthiness on account of sin, and our need for sincere humility before receiving the Holy Eucharist.

Nonetheless, speaking of “my roof” may seem strange before Holy Communion, since Christ is coming to us in the form of food – not literally entering into our houses. Certainly the clear association with Matthew Chapter 8 has a figurative intent, but it may also be helpful to recall that Saint Paul says, “your body is a temple of the Holy Spirit within you” (1 Cor 6:19).

We are therefore to make our bodies into fitting homes for God’s grace to dwell within our souls. The Eucharist is true food that provides spiritual nourishment, which is why we will refer more specifically to “my soul” in the last line. But this sacramental strength for our souls in turn informs both our mental and physical deeds (recall the Confiteor also incorporated both types of action), such that the totality of our bodies, souls, and lives may become suitable instruments of the Lord.

For the distribution and reception of Holy Communion, the words shall all remain the same: “The Body (or “Blood”) of Christ” with a response of “Amen” making sure we bow before each species as we approach to receive it.

The Communion Rite ends with the Prayer after Communion - the prayer said by the priest after a period of meditative silence following Holy Communion. Like the Collect Prayer at the beginning of the liturgy, the Prayer after Communion is a part of the Proper of the Mass, changing from day to day.

After we have stood and the priest has recited or sung the Prayer after Communion, we arrive at the Concluding Rites. For the final time during the Mass, the priest begins with "The Lord be with you," and we respond, "And with your spirit."

Then comes the final blessing (sometimes preceded by a prayer or three-fold solemn blessing on special occasions, or by the pontifical blessing if a Bishop is celebrant): "May almighty God bless you, the Father, and the Son, and the Holy Spirit." While the wording for the final blessing is not changing, it should be noted that the priest does not bestow the blessing by saying, "*in the name of the Father...*" Rather, by virtue of his ordination, the priest simply invokes the Holy Trinity, and God grants the blessing through His ordained minister. After all, it would not make sense for God to bless us in His own name.

Following our response of "Amen" to the final blessing, Mass is concluded with the dismissal, said by the priest (or a deacon, if one is present). With the new Missal, our three current dismissal formulas will be replaced by these four:

- Go forth, the Mass is ended.
- Go and announce the Gospel of the Lord.
- Go in peace, glorifying the Lord by your life.

- Go in peace.

The first corresponds to the actual Latin dismissal, which is familiar to many: "*Ite, missa est.*" In fact, this is where the word "Mass" comes from - "*missa est*" - which at its most fundamental level means "it is sent" or "it is the dismissal." More than a mere declaration that it is time to leave, this has the function of emphasizing our Christian call to "mission" (a word with the same Latin origins).

Pope Benedict XVI spoke of this in *Sacramentum Caritatis*, the document he released after the Bishops' Synod on the Holy Eucharist. Our participation in the Eucharistic liturgy should translate into a life in imitation of Christ, such that from the sacred liturgy springs forth the "missionary nature of the Church." He wrote that it would be helpful to "provide new texts" for the final blessing "in order to make this connection clear."

Therefore, the Holy Father himself selected the three other beautiful dismissal formulas we have just heard, and they were added to the Latin text of the Missal. Our response at the dismissal remains the same: "Thanks be to God." What else can we do except give thanks to God? He has provided us with an inestimable gift in the Holy Mass, and a means by which He draws us and the entire world into closer communion with Him.

So ends our exploration of the newly translated Order of Mass. There is much more that could be said, but for the moment, let us consider one clear consequence of the new translation: our priests will have to adapt to far more textual changes than we laity in the pews. Aside from all the prayers in the Order of Mass (including the entirety of the Eucharistic Prayers and a number of priestly prayers we have not examined in detail, some of which are prayed quietly), priests must prepare to offer new prayers from the Proper of the Mass every day.

It will be fascinating to listen attentively to the new translations of these proper prayers, which promise a depth and richness that may not have always been apparent in our current translation. This richness will help priests pray for us with even greater focus and intensity, but priests will also need our prayers, encouragement, and understanding as they strive to adjust to the new words of our beloved Mass. And, in order to help you, the faithful, we will project the responses onto our overhead screen for the next seven weeks, in addition to having pew cards available. This will allow you to look up at the actions taking place here in the sanctuary while getting familiar with the new translations.

In a very real way, this new Missal should help foster the full, active, and conscious participation of the faithful – especially with respect to renewed interior participation at Mass. The rituals and actions of the Mass are not changing; rather, we are receiving richer translations of the original Latin words of the Mass. The new words will require priests and laity alike to be even more attentive to the deep meaning of the prayers.

As we have seen, the new translation will reveal the Scriptural origins of the Mass more powerfully. And although some of the prayers may be longer or more complex than those we use right now, they would not be terribly different in length or style from many sentences among the Pauline readings that we currently hear in the Lectionary.

The new texts also demonstrate the evolution of the Church's understanding of how to use the vernacular most effectively in prayer. In fact, many aspects are a recovery of the devotional language that is familiar from private prayer books. It is an effort to cultivate a "sacred vernacular" – an elevated style of speech that illustrates the significance of the occasion, and helps us enter a context of divine worship. As Pope Paul VI urged in 1969, the language used in the sacred liturgy "should always be worthy of the noble realities it signifies, set apart from the everyday speech of the street and the marketplace."

In conclusion, as the new Collect Prayer for Mass on the First Sunday of Lent will say in 2012, may we "grow in understanding of the riches hidden in Christ and by worthy conduct pursue their effects."

Thank you for your attention over the past six weeks. For those of you who would like to read this information on your own, it can be found on our parish web site. In addition a limited number of hard copies are available in the narthex for you to take along this evening/morning.