

Praying the Mass Anew:

*The New Translation of
The Roman Missal
and Our Actual Participation at Mass*



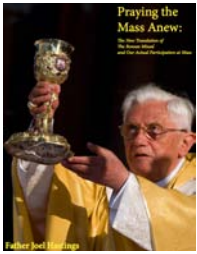
Father Joel Hastings

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Introduction



Over the last five years there has been a great amount of anticipation of the new English translation of the The Roman Missal. Included in this time of anticipation has been the brainstorming of ideas and subsequent development of resources to help Catholics throughout the English speaking world prepare for this new translation.

During the summer of 2008, I myself I had the opportunity to participate in a brainstorming session with colleagues at The Liturgical Institute in Mundelein, Illinois, toward answering the question of how we could aid in the implementation of the new translation in a truly effective and positive manner, continuing the liturgical renewal set in motion from

Vatican II. Among several good ideas that surfaced in this meeting was the use of parish bulletins as a means of reaching the “people in the pews” with information and resources for learning about the new translation. Aware of the potential that bulletin materials have toward reaching a significant number of people, and with the endorsement of Bishop Paul Sirba of Duluth, I have worked to prepare this series of bulletin inserts and accompanying resources, hoping that through short, yet substantial, teachings from week to week, all of the faithful in the Diocese of Duluth would truly be prepared to pray the Mass anew with the new translation.

Mindful of the need for resources across the United States, this bulletin insert series entitled “Praying the Mass Anew” is now given to a wider audience, offering basic catechesis on the Mass itself and the new English translation of The Roman Missal. The primary goal of each insert is to give catechesis on the Mass itself while introducing and explaining the new versions of the prayers in English. The series consists of two parts: the first part is given as catechesis on basic realities of liturgical participation itself, providing context for which to study and learn the prayers of the new translation. The second part takes a more specific look at the select parts of the new translation, especially the words and responses of the people. Each of these inserts explores a particular constitutive part of the Mass, explaining each of the new translations of the prayers in proper context.

It is my hope that through this series of bulletin inserts, given during this time of immediate preparation for the new English translation of The Roman Missal, all who read and reflect upon them will both grow in their desire to deeply encounter Jesus Christ in the Holy Eucharist, and in their ability to truly open themselves to Christ, through a more conscious and actual participation in the Mass.

*Fr. Joel Hastings
Proctor, Minnesota
Memorial of St. Gregory of the Great, 2011*



Praying the Mass Anew

*The New Translation of The Roman Missal
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1. Introduction: Welcoming the New Versions of the Prayers of the Mass.

The day will be Sunday, November 27, 2011. This day will likely seem as any other Sunday. Faithful Catholics will rise from sleep at their chosen times; each will carry out the normal Sunday morning preparations for Mass, arriving at the parish church at a fitting time. Some will enter a familiar pew, while others sit in a place that is new to them. Some will open the missalette or hymnal to preview the readings of this First Sunday of Advent; others may simply pray in silence before Mass. All will be as normal.

Mass will begin with a typical music selection, fitting for this Advent morn. The priest and the other ministers will process into church, going to their proper places. Finally, the priest will lead the people in the Sign of the Cross and greeting. All of a sudden, an entire parish congregation, on hearing the priest greet them with the words “The grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, and the love of God, and the communion of the Holy Spirit be with you all,” will respond “And with your spirit.” No longer will the Sunday routine be merely a routine; we will be praying the Mass anew. The people’s response, perhaps seeming unfamiliar or odd at first, will begin the praying of the Mass with words that will likely include

new musical settings for newly worded hymns like “Holy, Holy, Holy Lord God of hosts,” and new responses to such phrases as “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.” Everyone, aware of the change, will be ready to respond “Lord, I am not worthy that you should enter under my roof, but only say the word and my soul shall be healed.” Many will receive the Eucharist, aware that it is the same gift of Christ’s Body and Blood as on the previous Sunday, but with renewed understanding, as given through the words themselves, of who it is that they receive and how we are nourished in the offering of every Mass.

The given scene, while it may not be a replica of every experience to be had, serves as a means to begin answering the question “why?” Some may recall the first time that they prayed the Mass in English. Others may have never known prayers for Mass other than the English versions that have been prayed over the last 40 years. Some may be hesitant to accept what appears on the surface as nothing more than change “for change’s sake.” Yet, all deserve to know why such a change is happening, and why it is happening now.

These new prayer settings, the fruits of new English translations of the venerable and time-honored Latin prayers for Mass, are given as a further implementing of the use of the common or “vernacular” languages in the liturgy of the Church. In the 1960s, the Second Vatican Council sought to reform the liturgy of the Church so that all of the faithful would more easily and fruitfully be able to enter into liturgical prayer, actually participating in the saving mysteries of Christ with a greater sense of prayer and deeper awareness of God’s presence in the rituals of the Church. An expression of this fruitful participation envisioned at Vatican II was through the fitting use of the common languages of peoples throughout the world. In addition to using Latin, such opportunity for the use of vernacular was set forth by the Council to aid the people in praying the Mass with more complete understanding. For the last 40 years, English speaking countries have already prayed most, if not all of the Mass parts in their own language, using English versions translated from original Latin prayer texts. However, the work of translating necessarily continues from generation to generation, as language continues to evolve and change, and new words with more definite meaning come to be.

Currently, we have received a renewed and revised English translation of these Latin prayers. Within this new translation, specific goals and guidelines for translating prayers, as set forth by the Church, have been more

fully accomplished. This new translation portrays in English the more literal meaning of the Latin prayers, restoring words that convey the truths of faith more properly, and reconnecting these texts more clearly to their biblical sources and roots. While the learning of the new versions will take time and practice, this learning process invites us to open our minds and hearts to being renewed in the Catholic faith that we have received and truly love, encouraging us to grow in knowledge of the faith itself, deepening our love for God.

In the weeks ahead, pages like this one will be inserted in your parish bulletin, both to explain the new versions of the prayers, and to give answers to real questions and concerns as we prepare to pray the Mass anew, beginning on that historic First Sunday of Advent, November 27, 2011. Each insert will seek to invite all of us to go beyond simply knowing the new words to a deeper and more complete understanding of the great gift of the Holy Mass.

As we begin this journey toward praying the Mass anew, may we commend ourselves to the care of the Blessed Virgin Mary, Mother of the Word Incarnate, who responded “Let it be done according to thy word,” that Jesus Christ, the Word made flesh, may lead us to love and understand the renewed words through which we will approach the Father in heaven at every Mass.



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2. Who Translates the Prayers?

We have already been introduced to the new translation of the prayers of the Mass in general. We are mindful of how some use of the common languages (called “vernacular”) was desired in the reform of the liturgy that was initiated by Vatican II, and are aware of the ongoing task of translating, as language continues to evolve and change. The new translation has been carried out in keeping with renewed goals and guidelines for translating Latin prayer texts. Among these goals are the need to be more literal in translating and to more clearly reflect the biblical sources and the traditional formulas of many of the prayers that we pray. Today, let us look at who carries out this work of translating.

Prior to Vatican II, when the liturgical prayers of the Church were in Latin, no official structures were necessary for translating official prayer texts. While the approval of official prayer texts has always belonged to the highest levels of the Church, the new post-Vatican II reality of translating Latin prayer texts into other languages has resulted in new bodies of Church leadership to carry out this work. For the numerous English speaking countries, the translating of Latin into English is an endeavor that is only fittingly

accomplished as a collaborative effort of all these major English speaking countries. Hence, in 1963, bishops from these countries established “The International Commission on English in the Liturgy” (ICEL). As found on their website, ICEL is “a mixed commission of Catholic Bishops’ Conferences in countries where English is used in the celebration of the Sacred Liturgy according to the Roman Rite. The purpose of the Commission is to prepare English translations of each of the Latin liturgical books and any individual liturgical texts in accord with the directives of the Holy See.”

Simply stated, ICEL has the duty and task of carrying out the work of translating the Church’s Latin prayers into English. ICEL’s translated texts are then reviewed and approved by all of the national bishops’ conferences of these English speaking countries. Upon receiving the approval of these bodies of bishops, the Vatican itself reviews the proposed translations, giving final approval of the translated texts through its “*recognitio*,” of the texts. It is only after the granting of this *recognitio* by the Vatican that a translated text is able to be officially used in the liturgy. Since ICEL members are spread throughout the world, they have one central office (which is in Washington, D.C.) through

which they carry out their work and coordinate their ongoing efforts in translating texts.

Today, as we prepare for a new translation of prayers for Mass, perhaps the first change to note is how the new translation includes a new title for the book itself. Maybe you have seen the “red book that Father uses for the prayers at Mass,” and noticed that it has the word “Sacramentary” on the binding. This title will no longer be used, as the more literal name of the book is “Roman Missal.” Hence, whenever you see or hear the title *The Roman Missal*, this is the name of the book that contains the prayers for Mass. Using this example, it is important to note the ICEL has always been guided in their work by particular goals for translation set by the Church – which have also been adjusted at times.

Forty years ago, an early set of guidelines was given for translators to follow, which gave them great liberty to interpret the Latin words through the use of more common and recognizable expressions. Their reasoning was that the general meaning of the text was more important than a literal translation. In 2001, a revised set of guidelines that values literal translation was given. ICEL’s work since 2001 has been carried out accordingly, with the reasoning that such literal translations will yield prayer texts that are not simply “everyday” in their language, but will be rooted in tradition, with an elevated or even “sacred” style as is fitting for prayer. In weeks ahead, we will see examples of how the recent standards for translations are accomplished in the new English versions.

Questions of the Week:

➤ ***How is this change in the translation a legitimate change – for it seems like the Church usually resists change?***

As we seek to implement the new translation of *The Roman Missal*, perhaps we might reflect on the reality of “change” itself. Life is always changing – our moods, our knowledge, our relationships, and so on. The Church, the Body of Christ, as a living reality, made up of living beings, is no different. While the core teachings of faith do not change, the way the faith is articulated at times does change.

Over the 2000 years of the Church, the liturgy has developed and undergone many moments of legitimate change. While some changes have been very noticeable, others have been much smaller. In fact, just prior to Vatican II (a time that many today judge the liturgy as having been very strict and rigid), the liturgy of the Church underwent several changes. In fact, in 1962 (the same year Vatican II started), a new version of *The Roman Missal* was issued by Pope John XXIII. These truly legitimate and proper changes, small as they may seem, give us a good example that “the only thing constant is change.”

➤ ***Will this translation be permanent?***

While we can confidently say that this translation will be used for years to come, we must avoid calling it “permanent.” Truly, this one English version of the prayers will be used in all Masses offered in English – replacing the previous version. However, that does not mean that the work of translating is ever complete or permanent. Just as forty years ago we received the first English translation and we receive another today, so in the future (perhaps in another 40 years, or more...), new translations, or edited translations, will likely be proposed and implemented.



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3. Our Words of Prayer Increase our Love of God.

At the heart of the question of “why do we need new translations” is the simple truth that *words have power*, beyond the simple acts of speaking them and hearing them; they have the capacity to form us, to uplift us, to draw us into higher truths.

Think for a moment of your own use of words in different relationships. The words you might speak to your own mother will reflect your relationship with her, as much as your words with a co-worker while on the job will reflect that relationship. Likewise, *the way you speak* will be different when speaking to a person whom you deeply love, than with a group of people to whom you simply need to communicate information or address a point of view.

The same principles are true when we think of our relationship with God. Certainly, each and every one of us is encouraged to pray “from the heart,” speaking words to God as we might be so moved. Yet, in the more formal setting of the liturgy of the Church, wherein we not only speak onto God, but above all we open ourselves to him in seeking a deeper encounter with his living presence, our words are not chosen lightly. Some words, such as those meant to convey the real circumstances in the lives of the

people, as used in the General Intercessions (or what is also called “The Prayer of the Faithful”) will be more expressive of real needs. Other words, such as those prayed by the priest during the Consecration, are meant as a proper representation of the words that Jesus himself, the Son of God, expressed in his instituting of the Eucharist at the Last Supper. In each and every part of the Mass, by no means do we offer words only for their own sake; each word is spoken for a specific purpose and with a particular meaning.

Might we also consider God’s Word, by which we think not only of the Bible itself, but more fittingly of Jesus Christ himself, who is “the Word made flesh [who] dwelt among us.” (John 1:14). The Word made flesh, in “speaking” to us, offers us not merely teaching and encouragement, but the life of God himself, who is love. The power of the Word made flesh is found in his self-sacrificing love, by which sin and death are conquered. Jesus Christ “speaks” to us in the most eloquent and sincere way possible: by humbly giving himself up for our sake out of love for us. Such is the power of the Word of God, made flesh.

As love is the motive of Jesus Christ's saving work, so too our response to Jesus' offering of self, of which we are privileged to partake at each and every Mass, ought to be words of true love. In applying this truth to the new translation, we once more return to our relationships with other persons. Just as your words to your mother would not be those in addressing a co-worker on the job, so too the language we use to address God ought to be all together unique. Taking it further, to be in communication with God is to communicate with the Creator, to whom we owe our whole existence. Hence, why would we not want to approach He who made us and loves us, even onto death, with the most noble, humble, and

meaningful of words? Likewise, it is more than proper that these words ought to convey God himself in the most powerful and awe-inspiring way as is His nature – so that our own faith in Him and our desire to encounter Him in all of His beauty in heaven may only increase.

In implementing the new translation, such understanding of the power of words is truly invited. In answering “why” we need these new translations, might we keep this reflection of the power of words in mind, aware that words have the power to uplift and inspire, and above all, to love – and that God himself is worthy of the most noble, majestic, and loving words that we could ever hope to speak.

Questions of the Week:

➤ ***Where do the official prayers for Mass come from?***

As we look closely at the prayers of the Mass, we discover that the prayers have primarily two sources: the Bible and the Tradition of the Church. The greetings, many of the responses, and even the acclamations are either direct quotes from the Bible, or are based on biblical words. Other prayers have their roots in the 2000 year life of the Church and her formulations of our faith teaching (such as in the Creed), or in the natural development of the liturgy through the centuries, that includes prayers written by popes or those designated by the pope or other bishops to aid in making the liturgical prayer of the Church more consistent.

➤ ***Why do we need such strict ways of praying? (Wouldn't more spontaneous words be more sincere and meaningful?)***

One of the main characteristics of liturgical prayer is “ritual.” Just as each of us has rituals or consistent routines in everyday life by which necessary tasks are completed, so the liturgy of the Church is “ritual prayer,” through which the consistent and predictable routine of actions and of words opens us to a renewed encounter with God, who comes to us. As in God's creative work, that had order and harmony in its beginning, so ritual has the capacity to place order and harmony in life. Through the ritual of the liturgy, such order and harmony is offered to us, that we might open our hearts to a very deep and real encounter with the Lord, who gives life its true harmony.

The words that we use in the liturgy should not be a disruption to such order – rather, they ought to facilitate it and make it more recognizable. Hence, while there are always some prayers in the liturgy that change from one day to the next (as the calendar of the Church presents to us), most of them are the same each and every time. Through such order and harmony, we can become less concerned about “what” we are to do, and more open to Jesus Christ, “who” we encounter in the order and harmony of liturgical ritual.



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4. **Body Language: The Connection of Words and Actions at Mass.**

To fully understand the nature of Catholic worship in the liturgy, we must always be mindful of one extremely important truth: Liturgy involves our whole being. In other words, true worship of God will not only be in mind and heart, nor only in words. Rather, true worship involves our whole person – body and soul. Hence, it is only proper that in our continuing overview of the new translation of the *words* for Mass, we ought to consider our *actions* with our bodies, and how these work together in the liturgy of the Church.

The words of John 1:14 once more can serve us well: “And the Word became flesh, and made his dwelling among us.” These words of truth express how God, who is “pure spirit,” wills to take on our human nature. In this topic of how our bodies are involved in worship, what can be taken from the truth of God becoming flesh (which is a mystery of faith that is referred to as the “Incarnation”) is that our bodies are integral to who we are. Hence, to worship God fully truly requires our whole being – body and soul. In fact, if we do not acknowledge the necessity of our bodies in worshipping God fully, none of the sacraments of the Church would have any meaning, as the sacraments use *material* realities (bread and wine, for example) to communicate and offer us *spiritual* gifts or graces – the divine life of God.

Certainly all are clearly aware that the celebration of Mass contains times of standing, sitting, and kneeling. These actions are not by chance. Each action or gesture seeks to place us in proper frame of mind and heart to encounter God’s presence. For example, during the times that we stand, we use our bodies to help keep our minds attentive to the sung or spoken words of prayer or Sacred Scripture. When we are to kneel, we invite ourselves to become humble of heart, making ready to receive the Lord’s Real Presence in the Eucharist. Sitting, for its part, offers us a way of making our bodies comfortable, that we might listen and meditate with greater ease. Each of these postures, taken alone, has a depth of purpose. When understood in connection with each other and within the whole Mass, they can facilitate our entrance into an encountering of God *with all our being*.

Where do the words of the prayers fit into this praying with our bodies? Consider those prayers that are prayed at the given moments. We stand for the beginning of Mass, uniting ourselves and our intentions with all who are present (and with the whole Church). We kneel during those most sacred of words, spoken first by Jesus himself at the Last Supper, through which bread and wine become his own sacred flesh and blood. In these, or any of the parts of Mass, we

will find that the outward action fits the importance or the intentions of the words, so that *our bodies help our minds and hearts to receive what we hear, and to express what we say.*

Similarly, the gesture of “bowing” is frequent at Mass, as another way of showing reverence. Truly, all are to make “a bow of the head” not only before receiving Jesus in the Eucharist, but for each and every speaking of the holy names of Jesus and Mary, and on the feasts of saints, the name of the given saint – once more connecting our bodies to the spoken word. In addition, all are to make a profound bow,” that is, a bow “from the waist” in praying the words of

the Creed that refer to the mystery of the Incarnation. In the new translation, these words are: “and by the Holy Spirit was incarnate of the Virgin Mary, and became man.” In this way, *we do not simply say the words*, but our whole being, body and soul, word and action, takes part in our worship of God.

In our continuing exploration of the new translation, might we all keep in mind these truths: that liturgical prayer is not only in words – but it involves our whole being. Our bodies truly do help us to worship God properly, opening us up to a deeper encounter the Word, “who gives his flesh for the life of the world.”

Questions of the Week:

➤ *What is the point of bowing and genuflecting?*

While both acts of bowing and genuflecting, as signs of reverence and adoration, signify how God in heaven came down to earth, and literally touched earth by taking on our human nature, genuflecting is more properly an act of adoration. A bow (of which there is the deep bow from the waist called the “profound bow” and the lesser “bow of the head”) causes us to lower our bodies toward the ground, mindful of Jesus who became “lower than the angels” (Hebrews 2:9). By genuflecting, or in touching our right knee to the ground, while we once more acknowledge God’s loving act of taking on our human nature (literally touching the earth), we more properly give adoration to Jesus, who is our Savior and at whose name “every knee shall bend” (Philippians 2:10). Genuflecting is thus used in adoration of the Eucharist, both on the altar and when reserved in the tabernacle, as an act of adoration toward our Savior and true King, present in the Eucharist.

➤ *What about standing, sitting, and kneeling?*

These postures have varied purposes and histories. Standing is a posture of attentiveness and respect, while kneeling can convey either a disposition of humility and adoration, or of penance (or both together). We sit during times of meditative listening or moments of silent, private prayer.

Through the Middle Ages, and even to this day in parts of Europe, church buildings rarely were built with pews – hence, standing for the whole Mass was/is the normal posture. Sitting has only become an accepted posture because of the presence of pews. Kneeling, as witnessed by the custom of recent centuries of having the people kneel to receive Holy Communion, has entered into the Mass according to further invitation to express adoration and humble receptivity in approaching and partaking of the Eucharist.

Today, we stand for such parts of Mass as the Introductory Rites, the Gospel, the Creed and Prayer of the Faithful, the Lord’s Prayer, and the Concluding Rites as an expression of reverence and attentiveness to the spoken words and responses. Kneeling is reserved for times that are distinguished by the call for adoration (the Eucharistic Prayer, and during Holy Communion), while sitting is used during the readings, the homily, and preparation of the gifts, as these are moments of meditation and listening.



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5. Praying According to the Words Requires Listening Well.

In preparing for the new translation of *The Roman Missal*, we will necessarily focus on the words themselves. However, our preparation for the new versions of the prayers would not be complete unless we consider *how we are to prayerfully listen*.

Surely in our own human relationships, we all know that listening is *not always the same as hearing*, and that not listening well has consequences – ask any parent if you need proof of this point. In the liturgy, a key element in our *active participation* is the capacity not simply to hear, but to truly listen to all that is to be heard, whether spoken, sung, or made by sounds of musical instruments, bells, etc. Though many parishes have hymnals or missalettes that contain written versions of most, if not almost every word of prayer, such written resources can not claim to convey the full value of the sung or spoken sound meant to be heard by listening. How important is it that we listen well? How can good listening lead us to a deeper encounter with God?

One of the most useful ways to consider listening at Mass is to consider the Mass itself as a dialogue. In this dialogue, those who are speaking include God himself (especially in the Gospel), the priest, other ministers, and the people

in the congregation. We can even identify how each individual recipient of Holy Communion contributes words. The spoken words may be directed toward God, to one particular person, to a particular set of people, etc. As our words are meant to communicate with others, it is essential that the intended audience of the words is not only able to hear them, but is ready to take in their full meaning by listening well. Here is an example:

At the very beginning of Mass, the Sign of the Cross (both in words and as a gesture) initiate the Mass as an act of prayer offered unto God himself. The greeting of the people by the priest is meant directly for the people, who, having listened to the words of greeting, give the fitting response to the priest (this very dialogue will be covered in some detail in a later article). The greeting is followed by the invitation to “acknowledge our sins” so that we are ready to celebrate the sacred mysteries of the Eucharistic sacrifice. The tone of these words, meant as they are for the whole congregation (including the ordained minister/s), serves more as a directive to act than as a prayer in itself. Conscious listening to these words will effect whether or not each person acts

accordingly – by silently calling to mind any sins that they may have recently committed. The prayer that follows (“The Confiteor” [“I confess to almighty God...”]), or the invocations followed by the words “Lord, have mercy”) are spoken unto God himself, mindful of how each individual says the words, as members of the one body, the Church, in public worship. *Through our proper listening to all of the words that lead to this moment of prayer, we are made ready to pray the words with their proper intention.* When there is a failure to listen, the intent of the words risk being lost all together, or being less than what their full value invites. Hence, it is by way of listening that we are able to actively participate in

this prayer (and any prayer or response at Mass) to their fullest degree. Listening well can (and does) lead us to encounter God more fully and consciously in the Mass.

As we continue to prepare for praying the Mass anew with the new translation, we can already begin and continue to *practice listening*, properly focusing our attention on every spoken word in listening and in responding to each word in the most fitting manner. By our ability to listen well, our participation in the Mass, especially through the new prayers, can be raised to a higher level, opening ourselves to a deeper, more meaningful encounter with Jesus Christ.

Questions of the Week:

➤ ***Why doesn't every parish have the same hymnal or missalette?***

While the practice of the people using a “missal” or “missalette” dates back to days prior to Vatican II, the last 40 years have witnessed an increase in these types of books, both in the number of different companies producing them, along with varied features in each company’s versions. Each different missalette or hymnal has its own strengths and weaknesses, often discerned and chosen by individual parishes according to their sense of what will be most useful, not to mention cost effective.

Hymnals, because of their permanence (and hopefully higher quality of materials used in publishing) are truly more fitting than missalettes, which are replaced seasonally or yearly. Since different companies produce these books, a real problem is that the collections of hymns are not always consistent. In the future, there is hope that consistent versions of hymns will be published by ALL publishers, leading to a more consistent selection of music that all parishes can use.

In considering the use of missalettes or hymnals, it is important to keep in mind that these books are “tools” to *aid in the participation of the people*, and should never be seen as a necessity for parishes. Truly, all people, with time and consistent participation in Mass, are able to learn the proper prayers and responses by memory and learn to listen well to the prayers spoken by the priest. Such a standard of knowing our prayers and knowing how to listen is truly of highest value when it comes to entering into the Mass in the most proper way (along with a way to save parishes from the expense of purchasing missalettes).

➤ ***What advice is there for those who do not hear so well, or when the priest may be difficult to understand?***

One of the great blessings of the liturgy is that it is meant to be celebrated in a consistent way in each and every place. Hence, even though some do not hear well anymore, the ritual itself can still have an effect since it will remain familiar. Likewise, if one is having difficulty understanding the priest’s words, the consistency of other priests with whom they have participated in the Mass can help to provide the words.



Praying the Mass Anew

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6. Sacred Silence.

First Kings 19, recounts the story of the prophet Elijah as he flees from Israel and takes refuge at Mount Horeb. Having arrived at this “mountain of God” after forty days and forty nights of walking, he is told to stand on the mountain as the Lord is to pass by. While the story is properly understood in connection to God’s presence to Moses on this same holy mountain in times past, there is also a unique teaching to be found on how God is able to reveal himself through what is ordinary, or even unimpressive. For, as Elijah stands on the mountain, there is a strong, rock crushing wind, an earthquake, and a fire; none of these perhaps overwhelming or fear-inspiring happenings serve to reveal God’s presence. Finally, in a fourth moment, God makes his presence known in “a tiny whispering sound.” Elijah is moved at the whispering sound to hide his face in holy reverence for God in his midst, who addresses him with the commands that include going to anoint Elisha as prophet.

In thinking about the “happenings” of the liturgy, it is likely very easy for us to remember particular words that are spoken at every Mass, and the ritual movements that take

place, each in their proper time. Yet, there are also deliberate moments of silence that are meant to take place. Are we aware of when each of these moments of silence are to be found?

In the words of the Church from the *General Instruction of the Roman Missal*, (GIRM) or the “how to” document regarding the celebration of the Mass, we are told of the ritual moments of silence. During the readings, moments of silence are fitting after the first reading, the second reading and the homily, as the way to aid and promote meditation on the spoken word. Later, the GIRM indicates that for the Prayer of the Faithful, there are options beyond the typical peoples’ response of “Lord, hear our prayer,” including the option of the people simply praying silently for a moment at the end of each prayer intention. Finally, silence is invited for a time after the priest returns to his chair after Holy Communion. These moments of silence, as defined as part of the ritual, offer individual worshipers times to pray and reflect during the Mass itself on the works of God that are being accomplished, or for any fitting meditation that they may have based on the prayers or readings of the Mass.

Like the more noticeable parts of the Mass, silence is meant to aid us in becoming open to encountering God more fully. An earlier article has already considered how the reality of listening well can aid us at Mass. Likewise, the moments of silence which are built into the Mass are able to serve us in coming to know God's presence more fully, that we may be more perfectly drawn into his divine life.

Silence also affects words – for it is clear that without proper silence, words can not be understood. As we begin praying the Mass in the new translation, we are encouraged to make the greatest use of all of the silent

moments that are offered. In particular, those silent moments that are given within which we are specifically invited to meditate on the very words of prayer as they are being spoken (such as during the Eucharistic Prayer itself, when the people are to “listen...with reverence and silence”), can serve us to not only hear and respond well, but to be caught up in an encounter with God. For God himself has revealed in Scripture that he is able to show his greatness even in tiny whispering sounds. By our own attentiveness to silence, we open ourselves to encountering him in ways that are only noticed when we are silent and still.

Questions of the Week:

➤ ***What is the GIRM?***

The *General Instruction of the Roman Missal* (often abbreviated as “GIRM”) is the introduction to *The Roman Missal*. This text offers a general introduction to the Mass itself within the life of the Church, and serves to describe details of the celebration of the Mass. The GIRM is an “instruction,” as it contains the necessary information for “how” the Mass is to be celebrated. It does not contain every detail for celebrating Mass, as some of the ritual directions are contained within the pages of the missal itself (we call these directions “rubrics,” a name that describes the “red” color in which their words are printed in the book).

As we implement the new translation, what we are truly implementing is the “third typical edition” of *The Roman Missal*. The beginning of this new book will contain the GIRM. However, since 2002, dioceses in the United States have already been celebrating *ritually* from this third typical edition. Over these years, the GIRM itself has been published as its own book, even though the prayers of this edition remained unavailable in English. This is why (as you may remember) there were some changes in “what we do” during Mass back in 2002-2003. With the new translation, there will not be any changes in the GIRM – for these already were given in 2002.

➤ ***Sometimes I see the priest moving his lips, but without hearing him. What is he saying?***

Throughout the Mass, but especially when the priest is at the altar, there are some prayers that are said by the priest “in a low voice.” Such prayers are meant to be spoken by the priest in a quiet voice since these prayers are prayed by him for his own sake – that his offering of self as the priest will be acceptable. Some examples of the prayers said in a low voice include those he says during the “preparation of the gifts,” (as he himself prepares to pray the Eucharistic Prayer), and those before Holy Communion. While the people do not hear him, they should be aware that their own prayers on behalf of the priest contribute to these moments. In addition, there are moments, especially during and after Holy Communion, during which the people are encouraged to pray silently for their own needs – just as the priest is able to pray for himself.



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7. To Sing at Mass or to Sing *the* Mass?

“**T**he one who loves, sings.” This quote from St. Augustine both invites our reflection and hopefully captures our own experiences of how music and singing has the power to uplift us, such as in experiences of songs “in our head” in times of peace or joy. These connections of music, joy, and love from daily life (whether we sing well or think that we “can’t carry a tune in a bucket!”) apply also to our invitation to encounter God more fully in the liturgy of the Church in song.

Throughout the life of the Church, singing has been given great attention and status as a way to more properly worship God. An ancient expression (which at times has also been attributed to St. Augustine, though we do not know for sure) is that “one who sings well prays twice,” expressing how prayer is doubly effective when it is sung. As far back as the 5th century we have written musical scores of prayers (primarily the Psalms) that would have been used in monasteries to pray and give praise to God. These settings, which serve as part of the Church’s patrimony that would later become more properly called “chant,” show that singing and worship truly go hand in hand. Music in the liturgy of ancient times was never

thought of as something “extra” or added on to prayer. Singing is at the very core of how the Church ought to pray.

The new translation of the *Roman Missal* will necessarily require that new settings for liturgical music be produced. Familiar acclamations or hymns, such as the “Memorial Acclamation” (the verse that we sing after the words “Let us proclaim the mystery of faith”) and the “Glory to God,” have significantly new structure and wording in places. In addition, there are clearer directives that these words should not be changed in any way, which will therefore require entirely new music settings (we will speak more fully of these directives in later articles on these particular parts of the Mass).

Given the changes in the words, and thus, the need for new music settings, it is once more emphasized that music is not something added on to prayer – but it is the way we “ought” to pray. In the *General Instruction of the Roman Missal*, while it is granted that not every word must be sung at every Mass, it is stressed that on Sundays and Holy Days of Obligation there should be at least some singing during Mass, with particular preference given to “those [parts] that are of greater importance and especially to those to be sung by the

priest or the deacon or the lector, with the people responding, or by the priest and people together.” In particular, this passage refers to the singing of parts such as the prayers themselves, and the greetings and responses that take place throughout the Mass. Accordingly, the Church holds her own patrimony of chant, and the chant called “Gregorian Chant” as having “pride of place,” for it is by way of chant that these particular prayers, greetings, and responses can be sung without the need to change their wording to fit a fixed music melody or tempo. The music and pattern of chant takes its shape instead according to the words themselves – and thus the text itself never has to be altered.

Given this emphasis of singing parts of the Mass itself, truly the Church is inviting us to “sing the Mass,” and not merely sing at Mass, as though music and singing is an extra. Hopefully, as we begin using the new translation, all will be open to learning new music, unto learning to sing the Mass itself. For when we sing the Mass, we are opening ourselves to deeper encounter with the Lord, to whom the Psalms exhort us to sing a new song. Our hearts can be made ready for a deeper joy, causing greater love in the hearts of we who sing, that our prayer may be doubly affective.

Questions of the Week:

➤ ***Why does “Gregorian Chant” have “pride of place” in Church music?***

As mentioned in the main article, chant is at the very heart of the Church’s own musical history, as chant came to be from the Church for the Church, so to speak. Chant has developed throughout the centuries from more primitive types of “plainchant” (which has a very small range of notes) to the more embellished chants of later centuries. The term “Gregorian Chant” refers to Pope Gregory the Great (590-604 A.D.), who organized and gathered a collection of chants as used in Rome. The words of these chants are drawn primarily from the Bible itself. Though not all chant is properly called “Gregorian,” that it is Gregorian Chant which is given pride of place is a reflection of the connection to the Church in Rome and that typically the texts of Gregorian Chant are composed using biblical texts.

➤ ***Why doesn’t every parish have the same books for music?***

In so many words, the Church in the U.S. has not limited the publication of resources for liturgy to one publisher. Multiple publishing agencies exist with permission to produce books with hymns, prayer settings, and other resources for use at Mass. While some of the hymns and settings are usually found in every hymnal or missalette, each company has been given the freedom to produce and publish music while maintaining ownership to the rights of such hymns – and hence, they have the ability to produce a unique collection of music. Accordingly, each parish has the opportunity to choose from several approved options.

At this time, a challenging reality is that while some pieces are found in almost all, if not every hymnal, the versions of the words may not always be the same. It is expected in the future that a unified set of hymns and music settings will be published by all publishers as an “American repertoire,” while still allowing the publishers the freedom to produce their own unique works.



Praying the Mass Anew

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8. Introducing the Mass.

This article begins our look at the particular prayers of the Mass as found in the new translation of *The Roman Missal*. While we will not explore every single prayer in the Missal, it is important to give attention to the more noteworthy changes and reasons for change. In addition, we will speak of the biblical references for each of these parts of the Mass that we treat, along with other information given in *The General Instruction of the Roman Missal* (GIRM) for further explanation. We note that all of the translations seek to be more faithful to the Latin versions, and are translated to show the clearer connection to the biblical texts from which many of them are drawn. We begin by looking at the introduction of the Mass.

The Sign of the Cross

Every offering of the Mass, as an entrance into an encounter with God himself and His saving work, properly begins by our signing ourselves with the Sign of the Cross. The priest leads us in the words of this prayer: “In the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit, Amen.” The names of the three persons of the one, triune God, while they are revealed throughout the Scriptures, are spoken by Jesus himself as he sent out

the apostles in Matthew 28:19 (after his resurrection):

“Go, therefore, and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit.”

These words, with the gesture of the Sign of the Cross, express both our purpose (we make this offering in His name) and our identity (as those who are marked with the sign of His cross, through baptism, we belong to Jesus Christ).

The Greeting and Response

For the greeting, the priest will choose one of the following three options:

- 1. The grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, and the love of God, and the communion of the Holy Spirit be with you all.**
- 2. Grace to you and peace from God our Father and the Lord Jesus Christ.**
- 3. The Lord be with you.**

The first two options are drawn from various letters of St. Paul, who often spoke these or similar greetings at the beginning and the end of his letters. It is noteworthy that these options acknowledge God’s presence in the lives of those who are greeted, while expressing a desire that this

presence be perfected in them. This presence of God is what informs the response that the people will make.

The third option is for the priest to simply greet the people with the words “The Lord be with you.” These words are found in Ruth 2:4, where Boaz speaks these words to the harvesters of grain in his family’s field. This greeting alludes to the name “Emmanuel” (literally, God with us) while giving the sense that we are a pilgrim people on the way to heaven (the Lord be with you on your journey).

“And with your spirit.”

The new English translation of the response of the people to all of these greetings is significantly different from what we have known for all of the years of praying the Mass in English. The words of this response are now given as **“And with your spirit.”** As this response is significant, both in its meaning and its newness, **the subject of “Insert 10” in this series will be an explanation of this new response.**

A Bishop’s Greeting

The greetings given above are typical for use by any priest offering the Mass. In addition to these options, bishops are entrusted with another, alternate greeting that comes from the lips of Jesus himself on that first Easter Sunday evening: “Peace be with you.” A bishop, in his very person as bishop, is the fullest expression of Christ in his diocese, as true shepherd of the flock. These words of greeting that were spoken by the Risen Christ when he appeared to his apostles (John 20:19), convey both the gift of peace, and the connection of the bishop, as High Priest in his diocese, to Jesus himself.

In Summary

The Sign of Cross serves to begin the Mass as a prayer of the Church, in the manner that we properly begin any prayer. The Greeting places us in the awareness of God’s presence, both in this moment, and in the response we make through our offering of the Mass.

Questions of the Week:

➤ ***Why does the greeting refer to the “communion” of the Holy Spirit?***

In the previous translation, the word “fellowship” was used in this particular greeting. The word “communion” is both more literal to the Latin word “*communicatio*,” and the original Greek in the Bible. This word speaks more clearly to the life of the Holy Spirit in God’s Trinitarian nature. The Holy Spirit, as the bond of love between the Father and the Son, is the source of unity in the Church herself. This unity in the Holy Spirit is also evident in the various Eucharistic Prayers (the prayer said by the priest that includes the consecration of the Body and Blood of Christ). In these prayers, the Holy Spirit is invoked, as we ask that the Church be united in all her members – which is a fruit both of the Holy Spirit’s work, and of the Holy Eucharist (hence called “Holy Communion.”) Thus, “communion” is a more fitting way to refer to the dwelling of the Holy Spirit in us, where God is uniting us to Himself “in the unity of the Holy Spirit.”

➤ ***Is it acceptable for the priest to simply say “good morning” as the greeting?***

No. We are to use one of the given formulas, with the response “And with your spirit,” as the liturgy is an entrance into God’s presence and a participation in his saving work. Participation in the liturgy is not of the nature of a social gathering. Greetings like “Good morning” or “Hello” at the beginning of Mass reduce the liturgy to such a level. In truth, the liturgy is an entrance into a sacramental encounter with God. Thus, our focus is to be upon worshiping him and receiving sanctification from him (not merely on being together).

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9. Preparing to Offer Mass: The “Penitential Act.”

As part of the beginning of Mass, and for the sake of preparing to enter more fully into an encounter with God himself in the Eucharist, the people are typically invited to “acknowledge their sins.” This recalling of sin is part of what is called the **Penitential Act**. In this moment, all who are present are to individually remember the *venial sins* they have committed and ask God for his mercy, that all of our sins will be forgiven, so that we will be ready to hear God’s word in Scripture and to approach the sacrament of the Eucharist. (Please read “Question of the Week” on the next page for more detail on sin and preparation for

Holy Communion). In this column, we look at the renewed versions for the Penitential Act.

As in the old version, there remain three ways that the priest may lead the people in this Penitential Act, all of which include the prayer litany of “Lord, have mercy,” and “Christ, have mercy.” The **first form** is the traditional prayer known more formally as the “Confiteor,” (the “I confess to almighty God” prayer). This prayer, which dates to the 6th Century, is offered to prepare us to meet Christ by realistically acknowledging our need for his mercy; not to say how bad we are. The more literal translating of the Latin into English is very clear in the new version of this prayer, shown below:

First Form of the Penitential Act

All recite together:

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,

*And, gently striking their breast three times,
they say:*

**through my fault, through my fault,
through my most grievous fault;**

Then they continue:

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.

- **that I have greatly sinned:**

That “I have greatly sinned” puts into words more clearly the serious nature of sin, toward inviting us to humbly acknowledge our need for God’s mercy and forgiveness more openly.

- **three uses of “through my fault”:**

The three-fold “through my fault” is also more literal from the Latin “*mea culpa, mea culpa, mea maxima culpa*,” the third of which emphasizes our recognition of the gravity of sin as “most grievous.” Once more, such emphasis seeks to open us to a humble recognition of our need for God’s mercy resulting from any and every sin. Note also that the people are “striking their breast” during these words, as though they are stoning themselves for their sins with their fist, that sins might be crushed (not persons).

The **second form** (which is not frequently used) for offering the Penitential Act also has significant changes →

Both the first and second forms of the Penitential Act continue with the priest's words:

May almighty God have mercy on us,
forgive us our sins,
and bring us to everlasting life.

This "absolution" as it is called, does not carry the same effect as absolution given in sacramental confession. It is effective in taking away venial sins and it prepares us for entering into the offering of the Mass more fully. However, in the case of mortal sins, sacramental Confession is the normal means for the forgiveness of any mortal sins.

After these words of forgiveness are spoken by the priest, both of these forms of the Penitential Act are then concluded with the recited or sung litany

Second Form of the Penitential Act

The priest says: Have mercy on us, O Lord.

The people reply: **For we have sinned against you.**

The priest: Show us, O Lord, your mercy.

The people: **And grant us your salvation.**

"Lord, have mercy," "Christ, have mercy," etc. like in the previous translation of Mass.

The **third form** of making the Penitential Act which **contains short invocations by the priest (or deacon) followed by the litany responses of "Lord, have mercy," etc.** is not changed for the people. While the invocations have been retranslated, the litany remains the same. This form is also concluded with the absolution that is used in the first two forms.

The Penitential Act, offered in any of the three forms given, removes venial sin, making us more prepared to enter more fully into Holy Communion with God, through the offering of the Mass.

Question of the Week:

➤ ***None of us are truly worthy of communion. Why does it matter if we have committed sins? After all, isn't the Eucharist offered "so that sins may be forgiven?"***

In our offering of the Mass, the invitation to Holy Communion is not merely a matter of knowing about God or that the Eucharist is an offering for sins. More properly, each person who desires to receive must be striving to live in this Holy Communion. Sin is an offense against God that separates us from God. In order to be in true communion, there can be nothing in one's soul which separates or divides them from God (who is perfect life and communion). Therefore, it remains necessary that all who partake of Eucharistic communion would be free from sin in approaching this sacrament. For forgiveness of venial sins, the Penitential Act of the Mass itself is sufficient. For the forgiveness of mortal sins, confession of these mortal sins in the sacrament of Confession remains necessary in order to assure one is in a proper "state of grace," or free from sin and able to truly be in communion with God.

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10. “And with your spirit”: The New Response to the Same Priests.

In preparing to implement the new English translation of the *Roman Missal*, we once more are reminded that this new translation is more literal to the original Latin, and it seeks to use a more “elevated” or “sacral” style of language, as is fitting for approaching God. These principles in translating, along with the intentional use of more traditional language to express the faith of the Church, are likely most obvious in the people’s response “And with your spirit,” to the priest’s (or deacon’s) greeting of the people. This change is significant because the simple words “and also with you” that we easily and naturally say are being replaced with words that are not part of our common vocabulary. In addition, this change is noteworthy as these new words of response are frequent, typically used five times during each offering of the Mass. What is behind this new translation? How will it impact our offering of Mass?

Why “And with your spirit?”

In order to understand such a noticeable change in the response of the people, the best starting point is the Latin version, “*et cum spírítu tuo.*” The word “*spírítu*” is more clearly translated in the new version

than in the old – with significant effect on the meaning of the response. In this context, we are not directly speaking of the Holy Spirit (which is clear since the words are directed at the spirit of the ordained minister to whom the response is given). *Spírítu* refers to what we might call the “source of life” in the person; that which makes the person “who they really are.”

Accordingly, to discover the deeper meaning of the words “and with your spirit,” we also must understand the basic purpose of the greeting and response. The greetings of the clergy are never meant as simply an exchange of pleasantries. At the beginning of Mass, the greeting “The Lord be with you,” (or any other option for the greeting) is given in acknowledging God’s presence in the lives of the people, who seek to encounter God more deeply during the Mass. The response of the people seeks to fittingly reply to him who that is ordained and the “spirit” that makes him so. It is the “spirit” of ordination that has empowered the priest to give the initial greeting, so that his words of greeting may have a real effect in the lives of those who are greeted. Likewise, this initial greeting, along with the other times the priest (or deacon) greets the people, comes at a moment when he is beginning a

direct exercise of the orders he has received. Hence, it is most fitting that the response of the people is not as though they are saying “the same to you,” but to say “may he be with you in your service to us.” Therefore, the response “and with your spirit,” goes beyond acknowledging the Lord in the life of the priest or deacon as an individual man, to acknowledging that it is the person of Christ who has come to serve, represented as he is by an unworthy man, through the sacrament of Orders.

Responding Well

In practice, while it may take some time to adjust to a new response that replaces one that is very natural for us to say, it may be helpful to remember the following realities. First of all, whenever the priest or deacon greets the people he gives the

greeting not as a function of his own humanity, but according to the Holy Orders that he has received, which is meant to serve and sanctify the people. Second, the greeting itself is meant to have an effect – of making the Lord more properly present in the lives of those who are greeted.

Just as these realities underlie the greetings of the clergy, so the people’s response contains a depth of meaning beyond everyday responses to common greetings. The words “and with your spirit,” invite the people to respond not merely to another person, but to one given the particular grace to serve them as a priest or deacon in their desire for a deeper encounter with God. Thus, these are words that in their own way acknowledge the presence of God in the priest, who is ordained for the sake of the sanctification of all God’s people.

Questions of the Week:

➤ ***How do other languages translate the response that is given in English as “And with your spirit?”***

A not so obvious benefit of the new translation is how the principles of a more literal in translation of the Latin and the more faithful use of particular words of the Church’s teaching and tradition will be recognizable in comparisons between languages. You can note the similarities here when considering how the original Latin phrase “*et cum spíritu tuo,*” is translated in Spanish as “Y con tu espíritu,” and in Italian as “E con il tuo spirito.” The new translation in English as “And with your spirit” more literally translates the Latin in similar manner to these (and other) contemporary languages.

➤ ***What response should we give during the Sign of Peace, when my neighbor in the pew says “Peace be with you?”***

According to the *General Instruction of the Roman Missal*, paragraph 154, when the people exchange the Sign of Peace with one another, a person may say “The peace of the Lord be with you always.” The response of one person in the pew to another is “Amen” (not “And with your spirit.”) The reason that lay people do not respond with “And with your spirit” one to another is due to the meaning of the response in relationship to the particular grace of the sacrament of Holy Orders, present in the ordained. To say “Amen” to the other person among the laity is to acknowledge their words according to the understanding of that word as “so be it,” with a sense of the same peace of Christ dwelling already in the one who has given that greeting. These differences in response allow for the legitimate distinction between the ordained and the laity to be expressed on the level of how each authentically participates in the Mass.

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Praying the Mass Anew

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11. Glory to God in the Highest.

On Sundays outside Advent and Lent, and on major feast days (some of which are given the proper title “solemnity,” as a designation of their importance), the Church proclaims “Glory to God in the highest,” just as the host of angels sang on the night of our Lord Jesus’ birth

(Luke 2:14). Having received the mercy of God in the Penitential Act, the *Gloria*, as the hymn is properly called, is sung to the Glory of the Father, to Christ the Lamb of God, and to the Holy Spirit. Below is the newly translated text:

**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.**

In the new translation of the *Gloria*, the literal translating of the Latin can be seen:

- “*Laudamus te, benedicimus te, adoramus te, glorificamus te:*”
literally: “We praise you, we bless you, we adore you, we glorify you.”
- “*Domine Deus, Agnus Dei, Filius Patris:*”
literally: “Lord God, Lamb of God, Son of the Father.”
- Double use of “*qui tollis peccata mundi,*”
or “you take away the sins of the world.”
- The sentence structure itself of this new version shows that the hymn is ancient – meant to be chanted straight through, rather than broken into verses or fit to a rigid music setting.

In the *General Instruction of the Roman Missal*, this hymn is said to be “very ancient and venerable,” [from the 4th or 5th Century] such that its ancient roots make it so that it is not to be ever replaced by any other hymn or hymn text (GIRM 53). The hymn is meant in praise of God’s glory only, and hence it stands alone in the liturgy, with nothing else taking place as it is sung. In the new translation, the priority for literal translation is very clear, even without appealing to the Latin text. The literal nature of this translation is evident simply in looking at the structure of the hymn that appears very uneven or without rhythm in places, along with the intentional repetition of some of the lines. Such repetition serves to emphasize those words and truths that are repeated.

Like many other prayers of the Mass, there are multiple places within the *Gloria* that have Sacred Scripture as their source. We have already seen how the very first line of the hymn is formed from the words of the angels who appeared to the shepherds at Bethlehem.

Later in the text of the hymn, we see the use of the title for Jesus of “Lamb of God,” as he who “takes away the sins of the world.” These words are drawn from the words of John the Baptist, given in John 1:29, as he sees Jesus approach him at the Jordan River. Other Scriptures that form lines of this hymn include Revelation 15:4, which refers to God alone as holy, and Psalm 83:19, which says “Show them you alone are the Lord, the Most High over all the earth.” Given these scriptural references, we can see very clearly how not only the readings for Mass, but the prayers themselves, are rooted in Sacred Scripture.

As we continue to learn to sing or recite this new version of the *Gloria*, we remain mindful that all glory belongs to the Triune God: to God the Father, and to the Lamb of God, Jesus Christ, who died and was raised up, for our salvation and the salvation of the whole world, and to God the Holy Spirit.

Questions of the Week:

➤ ***Is their ever occasion for the Gloria to be sung by the choir only?***

Yes. GIRM 53 says the following regarding who sings the *Gloria*: “The *Gloria* is intoned by the priest, or, if appropriate, by a cantor or the choir; but it is sung either by everyone together, or by the people alternately with the choir, or by the choir alone. If not sung, it is to be recited either by all together or by two parts of the congregation responding one to the other.”

➤ ***What are the appropriate occasions to sing the Gloria, versus the times to simply recite it?***

Whenever the *Gloria* is prescribed (that is, whenever the Mass of the day requires it), it is truly more fitting to sing this hymn than to recite it. We must acknowledge that not every parish and parish Mass will have the ability or musical leadership to sing this hymn, especially for those Masses on days designated as “feast days” that are on weekdays. Thus, while singing the *Gloria* is always more fitting than saying it, the hymn can be recited when the singing of the hymn is not feasible.



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12. The “Collect” and other prayers of the celebrant.

Throughout the Mass, there are particular prayers that are designated as “**presidential prayers**.” The **Eucharistic Prayer** (the name for the whole prayer that the priest prays during which the consecration of the bread and wine takes place) is the most important of these prayers. Three other prayers are also considered presidential: the **Collect** (or “Opening Prayer” as it was called in the previous translation) that is said before the readings, beginning with the invitation “Let us pray”; the **Prayer over the Offerings** (prayed after the gifts have been received, blessed, and placed on the altar), and the **Prayer after Communion** (this prayer is prayed after the distribution of Holy Communion, when all stand at the words “Let us pray”). These three prayers, along with the Eucharistic Prayer are explained as “presidential prayers” in paragraph 30 of *The General Instruction of the Roman Missal* (GIRM), as they are prayers that are prayed by the priest and “are addressed to God in the name of the entire holy people and all present...who presides over the assembly in the person of Christ.” Hence, while it is only the priest who speaks during these prayers, all who are present are invited to unite their minds and hearts with that spoken (or sung) prayer, offering themselves and their intentions within that one prayer. We will focus here on the other three presidential prayers, looking at the Eucharistic Prayer in a later column.

Each of the prayers of the celebrant is offered for a specific purpose, as is made clear by their timing and placement within the

Mass. The Collect is offered as the end of the Introductory Rites, inviting the people to silently call to mind those persons or needs for which they desire to pray, “collecting” these prayer intentions together as one prayer to the Father. This prayer also serves to expressing the meaning or “character” of the celebration, providing proper context for our prayers to be collected and offered as one. The Prayer over the Offerings invites all to unite themselves more perfectly with Christ in his offering, which is about to be made to the Father in the Eucharistic Prayer. Finally, the Prayer after Communion completes the Communion Rite. This prayer implores God so that the mysteries of Christ in the Eucharist may have an effect in all our lives. Each of these prayers is fittingly concluded with the people’s response of “Amen,” as they unite themselves to that for which we all pray in the name of the entire Church.

In the new translation, it is noteworthy that a more literal approach has given a more poetic style and language in these prayers. In the former version, many of these prayers are translated as multiple sentences. Here, they main text of the prayer is given as one sentence, yielding a more coherent text. In addition, the choice of language in these texts invites us to express a deeper sense of reverence and awe in approaching God. Finally, each prayer no longer contains the words “We ask this,” but follows the literal Latin that says “Through Christ our Lord,” or “Who lives and reigns...” The next page gives us a sample from the Second Sunday of Advent:

Previous Version

New Translation

Collect (Opening Prayer)

God of power and mercy,
open our hearts in welcome.
Remove the things that hinder us
from receiving Christ with joy,
so that we may share his wisdom
and become one with him
when he comes in glory,
for he lives and reigns....

Almighty and merciful God,
may no earthly undertaking hinder those
who set out in haste to meet your Son,
but may our learning of heavenly wisdom
gain us admittance to his company.
Who lives and reigns with you...

Prayer over the Offerings

Lord,
we are nothing without you.
As you sustain us with your mercy,
receive our prayers and offerings.
We ask this through Christ our Lord.

Be pleased, O Lord, with our humble prayers
and offerings,
and, since we have no merits to plead our cause,
come, we pray, to our rescue
with the protection of your mercy.
Through Christ our Lord.

Prayer after Communion

Father,
you give us food from heaven
Teach us to live by your wisdom
and to love the things of heaven
by our sharing in this mystery.
Grant this through Christ our Lord.

Replenished by the food of spiritual nourishment,
we humbly beseech you, O Lord,
that, through our partaking in this mystery,
you may teach us to judge wisely the things of earth
and hold firm to the things of heaven.
Through Christ our Lord.

Noteworthy elements:

- **Style of Prayer:**
The new translation is “elevated” and more “sacral” in style, while using more humble language: e.g. “we humbly beseech you,” etc.
- **Literal translation and use of syntax:** The Collect is given as one sentence as in the original Latin text. Likewise, words are more faithfully translated, such as “merits,” “beseech,” etc.

Questions of the Week:

➤ ***Why do the Collect, the Prayer over the Offerings, and the Prayer after Communion change all the time?***

You may have noticed that each Sunday (or if you are able to participate in Mass on weekdays, at the various weekday Masses) that these prayers are typically prayed by the priest while he is paying close attention to what is “in the book.” He must read them directly from the book as these prayers are not the same from week to week – or even day to day in the case of Masses that honor the saints. These prayers, which come from various times in history (some more ancient than others) are written according to the liturgical seasons (think Advent, Lent, Ordinary Time, etc.) or for the particular feasts of the Lord or of the saints. Likewise, these three prayers usually come as specific sets: one particular Collect will be accompanied by a particular Prayer over the Offerings and a particular Prayer after Communion that are used together. Thus, these prayers are written for particular Masses on particular days or occasions, and are followed in union with the liturgical year of the whole Church.

➤ ***Who writes these “presidential prayers?” Can the priest ever make up his own prayers?***

For the presidential prayers, no priest is permitted to make up his own prayers. As mentioned in the first question, these prayers have been composed over time throughout the history of the Church. Some are very ancient, going back at least to the early 6th century, by such persons as Pope Leo the Great or other popes. Others have been composed more recently – such as those for more recently canonized saints. As these prayers are offered in union with the Church throughout the world, and because it belongs to the Pope and the bishops in communion with him to decide what prayers are used, these can never be freely changed or replaced by prayers composed by individual priests – no matter how eloquent or holy these prayers or the priest who offer them may be.



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13. The Readings: Proclaiming, hearing, and meditating on God's Word.

The *General Instruction of the Roman Missal* (GIRM) refers to two main parts of Mass that are “so closely interconnected that they form but one single act of worship:” the Liturgy of the Word and the Liturgy of the Eucharist. The biblical readings with the Liturgy of the Word are understood as one of the more important elements of each Mass. These readings are to be proclaimed well and listened to with reverence. Hence, while there are ***no changes in the people's responses to the readings***, it is fitting to devote a column specifically to the readings, that all might participate more fully and actively in this part of the Mass.

On Sundays, there are two passages proclaimed by one or two readers. Usually, the first reading comes from the Old Testament, while the second reading comes from one of the “letters” in the New Testament. During the Easter Season, the first reading comes from the Acts of the Apostles, while the second remains as a passage of a New Testament letter. The Responsorial Psalm that is placed between the readings and is typically sung serves the first reading, emphasizing in its words and the response a particular meaning or theme of the first reading, promoting deeper meditation upon God's Word.

The Gospel passage comes as the peak of the Liturgy of the Word, with Christ himself speaking directly to us. Accordingly, the Gospel passage is paid the

highest reverence. The proclamation of the Gospel is reserved to the clergy, who through the sacrament of Holy Orders, have been configured to Christ. All stand and turn toward the deacon or priest proclaiming the Gospel as an expression of their reverence and attentive listening.

The Task of the Reader

When it comes to proclaiming the biblical readings at Mass, a first note of importance from the GIRM is that the reading of the biblical readings is termed “ministerial” and not “presidential.” In other words, he who “presides” over the assembly, leading them in the offering of the sacrifice is not meant to read the readings. Rather, one (or two) of the faithful carry out this task in service of the priest and the people. The ministry of “lector” that all men who are preparing for Holy Orders are to receive during their time of preparation for ordination more officially confers the task of proclaiming Scripture readings on those who receive it. However, in almost all parishes, those who read are not recipients of this ministry. Rather, the readers are given this responsibility simply by proper training to proclaim the readings at Mass and by their designation as readers.

To be a reader at Mass carries particular responsibilities. Of great importance is the **preparation on the part of the reader prior to Mass**. Biblical passages are of several styles of writing:

including narrative passages, prophecy, poetry, dialogue, and didactic writings (that is, teaching). Each style requires different voice inflection, proper awareness of those being addressed in the text itself by the human author, along with the awareness of those in the present moment of proclamation. In so many words, readers should proclaim each passage as if they were speaking on behalf of the author, not as simply reading the words on the page. The reader should always strive to proclaim each passage in order *to most properly convey the intended meaning*. Likewise, the pace with which one reads should be such that it allows for the proper nature of the writing style be clearly communicated. All of these details, along with seeking to communicate the proper emotion of the reading, are facilitated by sound preparation.

The Participation of the People

When the readings are proclaimed well, the participation of the people through **meditation on the spoken word** becomes more realistic. Such meditation allows

what the people to be led to a deeper personal relationship with God. Just as the reader must proclaim the text according to the intent of the author, so the hearer must listen well, so that the author's true message may be heard and meditated upon.

Often, parishes will have the readings available in the little books that people in the pews often use for Mass called "missalettes." While missalettes serve a good purpose to familiarize the people with the readings and prayers, full participation in the liturgy by the faithful means **listening well** to the readings without relying on a written text. Challenging though it may be, all are encouraged to practice listening to the readings, without looking on in the book – that the spoken word itself may become our point of focus, and whatever particular message strikes at our heart may be that which we truly meditate upon (even if it is only one word or phrase). In this way, participating fully in the readings, our "Thanks be to God" will resound with a deeper appreciation for God working in our life.

Questions of the Week:

➤ ***Why don't all of the parishes have the same missalettes?***

It has become common that parish churches have books that contain the specific readings for each day, along with all the prayers for Mass, called "missalettes." Since there are several publishers of these books, often the layouts of each version are different. What is important to note is that each missalette will have the essential content for the prayers at Mass, along with the given readings for each day.

As mentioned above, missalettes can be a great help in becoming familiar with the Mass. They are also useful for those who may have difficulty participating in Mass for one of a variety of reasons. However, as we grow in our knowledge of Mass, the goal should always be to become **less dependent** upon the missalette. We should become more easily able to meditate on the spoken word simply by hearing it spoken, rather than relying upon words printed in the book.

➤ ***Is it ever permissible to use readings from other sources besides the Bible?***

Non-biblical readings are not permissible for the Liturgy of the Word. The Second Vatican Council gave renewed emphasis to the readings from the Bible as an essential part of every offering of the Mass, referring to these readings as the means by which "the table of God's word is prepared for the faithful, and the riches of the Bible are opened to them" (GIRM, 57). The readings deliver to us God's own word. Accordingly, the readings can never be replaced by non-biblical readings – which do not contain His word.



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14. Professing our Faith.

At Sunday Mass and at Masses for those more noteworthy days in the year that are designated “solemnities,” the profession of faith is made by singing or reciting of the Creed. Typically, we recite the “Niceno-Constantinopolitan Creed.” This creed receives its name from the two ecumenical councils in the 4th Century: the Council of Nicea in 325, and the Council of Constantinople in 381. Generally speaking, it is from these two councils that the formulations of faith that are recited in this creed were more clearly articulated. The option for use of the “Apostles’ Creed” also exists for use as a profession of faith, particularly during Lent and Easter. The name “Apostles Creed” implies that the words of this prayer contain the faith of the Apostles. While the Apostles Creed is

unchanged in its formulation in the new translation, the translation of the Niceno-Constantinopolitan Creed has significant changes, as shown on the back side of this page.

The creed is at times called the “Symbol,” as the word symbol, in its Greek origin means to “bring together.” The Creed brings together in a single profession of faith the statement of all that we believe and live by as Catholic Christians. As we profess our faith, we give voice to our commitment and assent of the truth of God that we have just heard and meditated upon in the readings and the homily. Likewise, this placement of the Creed within the Mass after the readings and homily places it in close relationship to the Eucharistic Prayer, wherein the words of faith spoken in “symbol” are then accomplished in the Eucharist.

Question of the Week:

➤ ***Are there ever any times when the Creed is not said on Sunday?***

As a matter of fact, on Easter Sunday, the dioceses in the United States replace the reciting of the Creed with the renewal of baptismal promises (that contains the faith professed in the words of the Creed in the form of questions). While this renewal of baptismal promises properly is offered at the Easter Vigil, in the U.S. we have the well established custom of Saturday evening Masses “in anticipation of” Sunday, which serve to aid people in fulfilling their Sunday obligation on Saturday evening (after 4:00 pm). In the case of Easter, where the Easter Vigil Mass serves this purpose for some, and so that all might be able to properly renew their baptismal promises (not only those who attend the Easter Vigil Mass), the renewal is also offered on Sunday in place of the Creed. On all other Sundays and Holy Days of Obligation, the Creed is to be included.

The Profession of Faith

The Niceno-Constantinopolitan Creed

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,

*At the words that follow, through
and including “and became man,” all bow.*

**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.

- **Overall:** As we look at the words of the Niceno-Constantinopolitan Creed, there are notable changes and style and in particular words that are used:
- **“I” believe** – The very word in the Latin version is “credo,” not “credimus,” (which would be “We believe.”) The “I” is not meant to make our act of professing faith individualistic. Rather, it might be understood as the Body of Christ, of which we are all members, professing faith as one. Note also that we say “I believe,” at the beginning of each new section of the creed.
- **“consubstantial with the Father”** – “consubstantial” literally means “one in being,” as the former version had us say. The use of “consubstantial” more properly reflects the traditional, elevated language of Church teaching on the reality that God the Father and God the Son are one “in substance;” they are united in being.
- **“by the Holy Spirit was incarnate of the Virgin Mary”** – that God takes on human flesh in the person of Jesus Christ is a mystery properly called the Incarnation. That Jesus “was incarnate of the Virgin Mary” more truly reflects that he was not simply “born,” but truly takes on human flesh through Mary.
- **Regarding the style of the prayer** – another notable change is the way that some phrases, which in the previous translation were given as complete sentences, are now parts of larger sentences. While this style is more literal, the connecting of phrases unifies the prayer more properly, better connecting related statements.



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15. The Prayer of the Faithful and the Offering of the Gifts.

The Liturgy of the Word concludes with the Prayer of the Faithful (also called the “General Intercessions”) wherein the people express their prayers both as a response to God’s word that they have just heard and meditated upon, and as an imploring of God for the good of community united in faith and the needs of the world. Usually, the petitions reflect the prayers and needs known to a particular people. Accordingly, there are no direct changes that will affect this part of the Mass. Indirectly, however, the prayers offered at this time will likely become more like unto the style of the *Roman Missal* itself, making use of elevated language, seeking to approach God the Father with a greater humility of heart. Those who write petitions are encouraged to compose prayers in consistency with the style used in the Missal.

The Liturgy of the Eucharist begins after the intercessions with the Preparation of the Gifts. The ritual includes a few of the faithful bringing forth the gifts of bread and wine that will become the Body and Blood of Christ. Once more, nothing of the ritual itself will change at this time; only the words of prayer will be new. During the Preparation of the Gifts, the priest takes the bread, and then the wine, and offers prayers of blessing to God. Both prayers acknowledge God as the Creator through whom we are given what we ourselves

are made able to offer. Hence, the prayers convey gratitude to God for both his creative work and his generosity to us. In addition, the reality of sacrifice that is present in the prayers reflects back on God’s providing for us. Here are the texts:

The priest prays over the bread as follows:

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.

*The people respond: **Blessed be God for ever.***

The priest prays over the wine as follows:

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 respond: **Blessed be God for ever***

The underlined portions of the texts express the revisions in the translation. Once more, the new texts possess a greater sense of humble dependence on God than the previous version – as “we have received” what we now offer. In other words, there is humble acknowledgement that even our opportunity to make an offer, and the

offering itself that we give, have their source in God.

The most noteworthy change in the Preparation of the Gifts comes in the priest's words inviting prayer that the sacrifice be accepted:

(After the priest has washed his hands,) he turns toward the people and says:

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

The people rise and say:

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.

Once more, the changes are underlined. Whereas the previous version makes reference to “our sacrifice,” we see here the reference to “my sacrifice and yours,” as though there are two separate sacrifices. In truth, while the true sacrifice is that of Jesus Christ, offering himself to the Father for the forgiveness of sins, what is distinguished here is *the way of participating in the sacrifice* by the

lay faithful and the ordained. As with the response “And with your spirit,” that expresses the grace of Holy Orders more clearly, the nature of the sacrifice offered here by the ordained is in the place of Christ. Through ordination, the priest offers the sacrifice as Christ himself. The laity also offer the sacrifice, *but as an offering of themselves in union with Christ*. The offering of the laity is thus as members of His Body, with Christ himself as the Head of the Body.

That the sacrifice is offered for the “good of all his *holy Church*” is simply a more literal translating of the original Latin version. To call the Church “holy” is both in keeping with the Creed (that the Church is holy is one of the “four marks” of the Church), and an expressing of the nature and dignity of the Church.

The Preparation of the Gifts concludes when the priest offers the “Prayer over the gifts,” which, as in the Collect (Opening Prayer), is specific to each occasion. It concludes with the people's “Amen,” thus concluding this time of humble asking of acceptance of the sacrifice that is to be offered.

Questions of the Week:

➤ ***Sometimes the priest does not say “Blessed are you, Lord God of all creation...” Is that correct?***

The priest always prays these prayers, even if the people can not hear him. In the ritual of Mass, the Preparation of the Gifts is a time that is meant to include singing. When such takes place, the priest is to say the two blessing prayers in a low voice. When there is no music, he is permitted to pray them aloud, with the people giving their proper response.

➤ ***Why does the collection take place at this time?***

As the Preparation of the Gifts is the moment in which we present the offering for sacrifice, it is fitting that the offerings of the people in honor and thanksgiving to God and for the good of the Church and her works would also be made at this time. In this manner, whatever is offered in the way of donations can be understood in connection with the offering of self that all are invited to make during the Mass.

The bulletin series, “Praying the Mass Anew” is prepared for use in parishes in the Diocese of Duluth. For additional information on this page or copies of related pages, log on to www.dioceseduluth.org to download “pdf” files, or contact the Diocese of Duluth, Office of Liturgy and Spirituality, 2830 E. 4th St. Duluth, MN, 55812; 218-724-9111.



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16. The Eucharistic Prayer: Part I – The “Preface” and “Holy, Holy, Holy.”

At this point, we have looked at the Liturgy of the Word and have begun to look at the Liturgy of the Eucharist. The gifts of bread and wine to be offered have been prepared on the altar, and now it is time to make the offering through that prayer that is the “center and summit of the entire celebration: namely, the Eucharistic Prayer” (GIRM, 78). That we might give fitting consideration to this prayer, we will look at its contents in three separate articles. The first article will deal with the purpose and meaning of the prayer and the beginning parts of the prayer. In the second article, we will explore the “words of institution,” or the words by which the bread and wine become the Body and Blood of Jesus Christ. Finally, in the third article, we will look at how the people most properly participate in this prayer, especially through the “Memorial Acclamation,” and the “Great Amen.”

The Eucharistic Prayer is to be understood as a prayer of “thanksgiving and sanctification,” wherein the people are invited to lift their hearts to the Lord in thanksgiving and prayer. The Eucharistic Prayer serves as the prayer by which Jesus Christ’s offering of his Body and Blood to the Father for the forgiveness of sins is *re-presented* (that is, “made present again”) so

that all may be able to partake of His one true sacrifice and receive its benefits. As a sacrifice that we participate in, offering praise and thanksgiving to God, the prayer fittingly begins with the dialogue between the priest and the people that follows:

Priest:	The Lord be with you.
People:	<u>And with your spirit.</u>
Priest:	Lift up your hearts.
People:	We lift them up to the Lord.
Priest:	Let us give thanks to the Lord our God.
People:	<u>It is right and just.</u>

In the words of this dialogue, the priest turns toward the people to invite them to enter into the offering of the sacrifice, lifting up their hearts to God in thanksgiving. The whole dialogue is reminiscent of the prayer of Azariah found in Daniel 3:26-45, as he, along with Hannaniah and Mishael, give themselves as an offering of thanksgiving to God while being subject to death in the fiery furnace. Their prayer of thanksgiving is heard, as God preserves them from the fire – hence, their offering of thanks leads to new life.

Noteworthy changes in the new translation are in the responses of the people. The response “And with your spirit” is once more used, consistent with the earlier usages during Mass. In

addition, the words “It is right and just” are more literal translations of the Latin, expressing that it is truly appropriate and owed to God that we make an offering of self to the Father, lifting our hearts to the Lord.

The prayer that follows, called the “Preface,” is chosen based on the day. Most Prefaces are either seasonal (such as those for Ordinary Time) or meant for particular types of celebrations (those of martyrs, of the Blessed Virgin Mary, etc.). There are a few that are used only once for a given Solemnity – such as the preface of Christ the King. All prefaces contain words of thanksgiving to the Father, remembering the works of the Son, while seeking the gifts of the Holy Spirit. The Preface concludes by inviting all to join the song of the angels in heaven:

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.

This heavenly song draws together two Scripture passages. In Isaiah 6:3, the prophet witnesses the angels in the temple proclaiming “Holy, Holy, Holy is the Lord God of hosts,” acknowledging the dominion of God – he has “hosts” of angels and saints. Meanwhile, the words “Hosanna in the highest” remind us of Jesus’ triumphant entry into Jerusalem before his passion and death, when he is proclaimed as the Messiah (Matthew 21:9; Mark 11:9-10; Luke 19:38; and John 12:13). Our joining in this song contains both elements of proclaiming God’s dominion and that Jesus is the Messiah who comes to save us.

The changes may seem minimal in these words – but it is significant in that the new translation is more literal. The preface, as a prayer of thanksgiving, and the singing of the “Holy, Holy, Holy,” prepares us (as it did Isaiah) to encounter the Lord more fittingly, making us ready to offer ourselves more completely.

Questions of the Week:

- ***Will we be able to use the old music settings for the “Holy, Holy, Holy,” even though the translation is new?***

As we have seen throughout our look at the prayers, one of the marks of this new translation is that the prayers are more literal to the original Latin, in order that the traditional language for expressing the faith may be employed. Given this emphasis on the importance of literal translation, it is of equal importance that texts and prayers are not paraphrased in music compositions. Accordingly, it will be necessary that new settings are composed for our use that are faithful to the newly translated texts – or that previous settings are revised to properly incorporate the changes.

Along that line, the *Roman Missal* itself contains music settings for each part of the Mass. These settings will be published in **all** missalettes and future hymnals. Therefore, these are the settings that all parishes in the Diocese of Duluth will initially use – as they will be available to all of the parishes, and will give all the faithful of the diocese knowledge of one consistent set of acclamations. Parishes will be able to learn and use other settings once all have proper mastery of these settings from the *Roman Missal* itself.

- ***We use the Latin settings for the Mass parts on occasion. Will these need to be changed?***

The Latin versions of all of the prayers remain the same – as these prayers are the sources for the translation. Thus, if your parish is accustomed to using the “Sanctus,” “Agnus Dei,” and the other Latin texts, you are encouraged to continue to use them regularly.



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17. The Eucharistic Prayer: Part II – The Consecration

In the last article, the first part of the Eucharistic Prayer, consisting of the Preface and the “Holy, Holy, Holy,” was treated. In the current article, we will look specifically at the words by which the bread and wine are changed into the Body and Blood of Jesus Christ in the consecration. These words of consecration are often called “the words of institution,” as it was by these very words that Jesus Christ gave us the gift of the Eucharistic sacrifice.

Before treating these words directly, it is important to place them within the whole of the Eucharistic Prayer. In the *Roman Missal*, there are multiple options for the Eucharistic Prayer. Most missalettes will print some of the prayers according to their familiar names, calling them “Eucharistic Prayer I,” “II,” “III,” and “IV.” Beyond these four, there are additional options that are not frequently printed in these booklets. Within all of the options are particular consistencies in wording, and in what is asked for in prayer. For example, all of the Eucharistic Prayer options will contain words that “remember” the saving works of Christ, along with prayers for the unity of the Church, for Church leaders [particularly the Pope and the local bishop], for those who have died, and of course, the narration of Jesus’ act of giving us the

Eucharist at the Last Supper. While the words used in expressing these prayers and narratives vary between the Eucharistic prayers, all of them use the same formula for the words of institution – mainly because these are the words of Jesus Christ himself, handed down in the Church through the centuries, by which this great sacrifice is to be properly offered – even if all of the scriptural sources for these words are not an exact match.

The words of institution are drawn from the Last Supper accounts found in the Gospels of Matthew, Mark, and Luke, and as related by Paul in 1 Corinthians 11. Within the renditions of the words, what is absolutely key is the connection of the Last Supper with his crucifixion: that he *will* offer his body and shed his blood as the blood of the covenant for the forgiveness of sins. His words establish that the Eucharist is the way to “perpetuate” his sacrifice – that all may share in his offering, and in the forgiveness of sins that his sacrifice accomplishes. That is to say, Jesus’ words at the Last Supper instituting the Eucharist intend to make his sacrificial death present in all times and places, that all generations may be able to partake of his saving act of love. Looking at the words themselves will help us to understand this truth:

Previous Version

Consecration of the Bread

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

Consecration of the Wine

Take this, all of you, and drink from it:
this is the cup of my blood,
the blood of the new and everlasting covenant.
It will be shed for you and for all
so that sins may be forgiven.
Do this in memory of me.

New Translation

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.

Notable Changes:

- “eat of it” – as members of the body of Christ, we partake “of” the sacrifice.
- “for [this is my body/this is the chalice...]” – connects the realities of that which is sacrificed (his body and blood) with the act of partaking in the sacrifice.
- “chalice” – more literal (Latin text use the word “calix,” which literally means “chalice.”) This word also denotes elevated use of language, and therefore inviting greater attention to the sacred.
- “poured out” – more descriptive of the Eucharist as a sacrifice. For, in ratifying the covenant, the blood of the sacrifice is literally “poured out” upon the altar (see Exodus 24:6). In addition, the sacrificial offerings included the “pouring out” of the libation (usually wine) upon the sacrifice (see Exodus 29:38-40)
- “for many” – Latin text says “pro multis,” which literally is “for many” (not “for all,” which would be “pro omnibus” in Latin). These words have been in longstanding use in the Church and thus were to be retained in any translations. The Latin version of Bible (called “the Vulgate”) uses these words in Last Supper accounts of Matthew and Mark. In addition, Isaiah 53:11 is a key text: that the suffering servant will “justify many.” This does not mean that Christ died only for some – rather it implies that his sacrifice continues to be effective as the “many” continues to increase – whereas to say “all” might render the action as though its effectiveness were already exhausted. Another way to interpret: salvation becomes effective only in those who cooperate with Christ. Thus, to say “for all” is inaccurate, as unfortunately some are unwilling to accept Christ.

The words of institution, as the words of Christ pronounced by the ordained priest during the proper time at Mass, are effective in consecrating the Eucharist. Through these words, the Body and Blood of Jesus Christ are made present, that we may partake of the same sacrifice that Jesus offered once for all, in giving his body and blood on the cross. Hence, these words have extreme importance.

All are invited to reflect on the changes and the reasons for the changes, as given above – that all might be able to enter into the consecration at Mass with greater understanding of Christ’s saving love. Such understanding, it is hoped, will promote a greater desire to share in the offering, by making an offering of self, (which we will speak of in the next article.)

Question of the Week:

➤ ***If the words of consecration are the words of Jesus, how can we change them?***

The issue here is not changing the words themselves, but the accuracy of the translation. Once more, the Latin text that is the standard text is not changing – only our English expression of these words. Thus the words themselves are still as have been handed down for centuries.

On the other hand, we must also keep in mind that the approval of all texts for liturgy belongs to Holy See (the Vatican), and that there have been times in history where words expressing faith have been changed – not as a change in teachings, but to give greater clarity to a truth that was always known. Thus, changes of words in such important prayers, while they should be rare, are by no means problematic when necessary.

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Praying the Mass Anew

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18. The Eucharist Prayer: Part III – The People’s Participation.

We continue our look at the Eucharistic Prayer by reflecting more fully on the participation of the people in this central prayer of the Mass. While the spoken words of the people during this prayer are minimal, their participation is meant to be quite particular, as we will see.

When thinking about the participation of the people in the Eucharistic Prayer, of first importance is the invitation to *listen* and to *meditate* on the spoken words of the priest. In the plainest of terms, the *General Instruction of the Roman Missal* says that the people are to “lift up their hearts to the Lord” (which is invited during the Preface, as was considered earlier), to “join itself with Christ in confessing the great deeds of God and in the offering of Sacrifice,” and that the prayer “demands that all listen to it with reverence and silence” (GIRM, 78). As we consider the purpose of the Eucharistic Prayer, we are mindful that the offering of the bread and wine is a *sacrifice of thanksgiving*, offered to God the Father, through the Son, in the unity of the Holy Spirit. The priest standing in the place of Christ and offering Christ’s one saving sacrifice, makes the offering on behalf of the people. The people, for their part are *not spectators* in this sacrifice. Rather, they enter into the sacrifice by their own *offering of themselves*, giving God their own lives as a sacrifice of

thanksgiving and praise, particularly through listening well to the prayer and uniting themselves with it through meditating upon its words. Such participation obviously requires that *the priest prays the words of the prayer in a manner that invites meditation*. Equally as important is that the people recognize that this prayer is offered *to the Father*, and not primarily for their viewing or witnessing. Thus, they are to unite themselves to the prayer, through listening and meditating upon it, not simply watching it happen. Such meditation, while it may be difficult at first, truly increases with practice.

As we use the new translation, it is essential that all understand that these Eucharistic Prayers *will sound significantly different* than what we have grown accustomed to hearing, as the words are more literally translated, and the sentence structure is also more reflective of the original Latin versions. **Priests will need to be very deliberate in proclaiming this prayer, simply because of the new wording and structure, if not for other reasons. Accordingly, the people should begin to practice meditative listening now – so as to be prepared to listen when we begin using the new versions.**

There are two key moments when the people verbally respond (usually in singing). The first moment comes immediately after the consecration, and is called the “**Memorial Acclamation.**” In

the previous version, this acclamation was intoned by the priest singing or saying “Let us proclaim the mystery of faith.” The words of the priest in the new translation are simply to sing or say “**The mystery of faith.**” Once more, this is a

literal translation of the Latin, *Mysterium fidei*. The following are the newly translated options of this Memorial Acclamation:

Previous Version

1. Dying you destroyed our death,
rising you restored our life.
Lord Jesus, come in glory.
2. When we eat this bread and drink this cup,
we proclaim your death, Lord Jesus,
until you come in glory.
3. Lord, by your cross and resurrection
you have set us free.
You are the Savior of the world.
- (4.) Christ has died,
Christ is risen,
Christ will come again.

New Translation

- 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.

(Not given in the new translation)
(See below: “*Question of the Week*”)

As with other parts of the Mass, these options are more literally translated from the Latin. The three options for the Memorial Acclamation all are directed *toward Christ*, proclaiming his saving works and looking forward to his glorious return.

The other moment of response comes at the conclusion of the prayer. The priest says or sings words of glory to God (called the “doxology”):

“Through him, and with him, and in him,
O God, almighty Father,
in the unity of the Holy Spirit,
all glory and honor is yours,
for ever and ever.”

The people respond with their “Amen,” (called the “Great Amen,”) as an assent to the offering of all glory to God, which has been made in the whole of the Eucharistic Prayer. As such, the offering is brought to its fitting conclusion.

Question of the Week:

➤ ***Why is there no setting for “Christ has died, Christ is risen, Christ will come again?”***

In the new translation, no provision was made for this acclamation (or any similar version of it) for two reasons. First of all, the acclamation is not in the original Latin missal, but was inserted into the first English version. Second, it is structurally different from the other, approved options: the approved options are all formulated at words of prayer *offered to Christ*, where this version is a statement *about Christ*. The purpose of the acclamation is to address Jesus Christ in proclaiming the mystery of faith, not merely to restate his works.

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19. The Lord's Prayer and Sign of Peace.

Over the last several articles, we have examined the Eucharistic Prayer as the “center and summit” of the offering of the Mass. Now that the offering of Christ's Body and Blood has been made, presenting to the Father “all glory and honor,” we prepare ourselves to partake in the sacrifice more perfectly through praying the Lord's Prayer or “Our Father.” We follow this prayer by asking Christ for a share in the peace that only he can give. We examine each of these moments separately:

The Lord's Prayer

Every offering of the Mass includes the prayer that Jesus gave to his disciples when he taught them to pray. As we continue to make ready to pray the Mass anew, please note here: **the words of the Lord's Prayer have not changed.** The way we have all learned to pray this prayer remains the same. However, *the words by which the priest will invite us to pray* are changed, giving our praying of this prayer deeper significance.

In the new translation, the priest is to use these words in inviting the people to pray:

“At the Savior's command and formed by divine teaching, we dare to say:”

As we already have seen elsewhere, great emphasis has been placed on

following the Latin words literally, holding more formally to the original meaning. These words of invitation to pray are another clear example of literal translation. Within this translation, it is particularly noteworthy how the Lord's Prayer is invited as a “dare.” If nothing else, hopefully this causes us to stir with the question of “what are we *really* praying for that we are ‘daring’ to say it?” When we pray the Lord's Prayer, we “dare” to call God “Our Father,” asking within this prayer that the Father's “will be done on earth as it is in heaven,” and to “forgive us...as we forgive those...” In short, we are committing ourselves to a way of discipleship that requires openness to God's will in its entirety, which requires the willingness to forgive that we might be his true children. Hence, we are once more to pray the Mass anew through this translation, with a deeper sense of the power and meaning of our prayer.

The Sign of Peace

As with the Lord's Prayer, the words by which the priest introduces the sign of peace have seen changes that make the prayer more in keeping with the Latin. The only notable change for the people is what we have already pondered elsewhere, as the people will now respond to the words “The peace of the Lord be with you always,” with the

response “And with your spirit.” As in other places, this response once again expresses the awareness of the grace within the priest that configures him to Christ in ordination.

As further reflection on the Sign of Peace, what is very important for all to understand is the nature of the peace that is “offered” in this moment. The priest prays that Jesus Christ may “graciously grant [the Church] peace and unity in accordance with [his] will.” Simply put, the peace that is asked for is not merely a mutual peace among participants at Holy Mass; we seek *the peace of Christ given “not as the world gives”* (See John 14:27), which

implies a sharing in salvation. Hence, as we are exhorted by the priest or deacon with the words “Let us offer each other the sign of peace,” we are not suddenly being thrown into a social time; rather, we are to visibly express our share in the peace of Christ and the true self-sacrificing charity that such peace contains. (More is said about the “Sign of Peace” in the questions below.)

Having prayed according to Jesus’ command and for the peace that only he gives, we are made more ready to partake in Holy Communion, where the salvation of Christ, the true Lamb of God, is to be beheld.

Questions of the Week:

➤ ***What is the proper way to “offer” a sign of peace?***

In GIRM #82, the Sign of Peace and the way that it is offered between individuals is said to be decided by conferences of bishops, who are to be mindful of “culture and customs of the peoples.” Accordingly, the US bishops have designated the “handshake” as the fitting way to offer the Sign of Peace. Furthermore, the same paragraph tells us that the Sign of Peace is appropriately given by each “only to those who are nearest and in a sober manner.” While some give hugs, or sometimes you see spouses give a kiss to one another, the significance of the gesture is to be as a pledge of “self-sacrificing love;” that by expressing this sign, you are saying “I would willingly die for you than have you sin.” Admitting that most people are not aware of this meaning of the Sign of Peace, this question serves all of us as a good reminder of the deeper meaning behind this part of the Mass – that we express self-sacrificing love for one-another as we prepare to receive Jesus’ self-sacrifice in the Eucharist. Hence, our goal with the Sign of Peace is never for the sake of pleasantries; it is an expression and participation in the self-sacrificing love of Jesus Christ.

➤ ***What words are supposed to be said by the people during the Sign of Peace?***

This question may be answered two ways:

- GIRM #154 shows that when people offer peace to one another, they can say “The peace of the Lord be with you always,” to which the other simply responds “Amen,” (not “And with your spirit.”). Here, the response “amen” is a simple acknowledgement of *Christ’s peace* within each person. (This response was also treated in Insert 10 of this series, on the response “And with your spirit.”)

- The offering of the Sign of Peace, while it *appears* as though each person can openly talk, is not meant as a social time. As we learn to pray the Mass anew, might each and every one of us has an opportunity to dignify the Sign of Peace with reverent silence, exchanging the proper sign with one or a few people around us (we should not have to leave our pew), saying only the words prescribed in the first part of this answer. May we leave all desire for casual conversation at the door of the Church – for above all we are entering an encounter with God; not merely a social encounter with one another.



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20. The Lamb of God and Holy Communion – Encountering Heaven on Earth.

At the conclusion of the Sign of Peace, the supplication “Lamb of God” begins as the priest breaks the host. At this moment, we focus on the altar and the Holy Eucharist seeking to more fully encounter Christ himself, who by offering the sacrifice to the Father, now offers himself to us in Holy Communion as the living bread that came down from heaven. In this moment, heaven and earth are truly being united in a visible and supernatural way.

In the hymn “Lamb of God” there are **no changes** in the text of the new translation. The words themselves are based on those of John the Baptist, who in seeing Jesus approach, proclaims “Behold, the Lamb of God, who takes away the sin of the world” (John 1:29). His title for Jesus, “Lamb of God,” contains both the allusion to the Passover sacrifice of the “unblemished lamb” and the prophecy of Isaiah 53, who prophesies that he will be “like a lamb led to the slaughter.” Furthermore, the Book of Revelation testifies to the “lamb that seemed to have been slain” to whom all worship and honor is given.

In this proclamation of “Lamb of God” and our final preparation for Holy Communion, several beautiful meanings are present. At one and the same moment we proclaim the Lamb of God in heaven,

who was “broken” for us in his saving sacrifice, and the Lamb of God who is “re-presented” for us in the Eucharist. Our proclamation places us in an encounter with Christ in his sacrifice at Calvary as the true Lamb, now worshiped and glorified with the Father and the Holy Spirit by the saints in heaven. Simply put, all time (past, present, and future glory) are present as one. As the supplication “Lamb of God” is sung, the priest prepares for Holy Communion by breaking the host, placing a small piece in the chalice (this act is explained in the *Questions of the Week*.) In addition, he prays that his own reception of communion may be fruitful. While the breaking or “fractioning” of the host contains great meaning and is to be carried out in reverence, nonetheless it is not meant to draw undue attention to itself.

For, at the conclusion of the fractioning and the “Lamb of God,” the priest genuflects, then takes part of the broken host and presents it (he may hold it over the chalice, or simply over the paten [the plate with hosts]). He echoes John the Baptist in proclaiming the Lamb of God, and joins in the response of the people to the Lamb. Below is the new translation of these words.

Priest:

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.

All:

**Lord, I am not worthy
that you should enter under my roof,
but only say the word
and my soul shall be healed.**

- The new translations of these texts are very faithful to biblical sources:
 - John 1:29 – “Behold, the Lamb of God.”
 - Revelation 19:9 – The angel proclaims “Blessed are those who are invited to the marriage supper of the Lamb.”
 - Luke 7:6-7 – The centurion says to Jesus, “Lord...I am not worthy to have you come under my roof...”
- “The supper of the Lamb:” These words connect us to heaven’s worship – at Mass, we participate in heaven on earth.
- “Under my roof:” Not literally the “roof” of our mouth; perhaps can be thought of in reference to our bodies as “temples,” where God desires to make his dwelling.
- “My soul:” The Eucharist is truly food for the soul – in need of healing from sin and its effects.

Of particular note in the new translation is the fidelity to the biblical sources of all these words. What is equally important is the clearer expression of humility that the new translation yields – that we are not worthy of the Eucharist. Yet, God in his mercy still offers us himself so that our souls may be healed.

When the time comes to approach the Eucharist, we receive the Lamb of God who takes away sins and brings us to everlasting life. Hence, when we receive

Holy Communion, as in times past, we give our assent through our “amen.” This “amen” is an expression not only of faith in the Eucharist, but a humble profession of Catholic faith and a full assent to the whole truth that God has revealed and that the Church proposes for belief. Proper reception of the Eucharist places us in communion with Christ and all the saints in heaven, through his sacrifice. Indeed how blessed we are to be called to the true supper of the Lamb.

Questions of the Week:

➤ ***When we sing the Lamb of God, is it acceptable to use other titles, such as “Jesus, Prince of Peace?”***
Many know music settings for the “Lamb of God” wherein each verse begins with a different title for Jesus. In truth, the only acceptable words are those of the given text itself: “Lamb of God.” GIRM #83 says that this given line “may be repeated as many times as necessary until the rite (of fractioning the hosts) has reached its conclusion, the last time ending with the words ‘grant us peace.’” It does not allow changing these first words. Accordingly, whether the supplication is sung three or more times, it is always initiated with the words “Lamb of God.”

➤ ***Why does the priest put part of the host in the chalice?***

Part of the ritual of fractioning the Eucharist involves the priest taking a small part of the broken host and placing it in the chalice. This act, called the “fermentum,” has two different explanations, both symbolizing unity. One is symbolic of unity in the Church. An ancient custom was the entrusting of small pieces of the host from the Mass of the bishop to deacons, who brought them to the local priests. A piece of host was placed in the chalice of each priest offering Mass, as a sign of unity with the bishop. The other meaning concerns unity in the sacrifice itself. In dying on the cross, as the Lord’s body was pierced and blood and hence they were separated. In the Mass, the Body and Blood of Christ are offered separately (as at the Last Supper), but as one sacrifice. Hence, the priest says these words as he places the small piece of host in the chalice: “May this mingling of the Body and Blood of our Lord Jesus Christ bring eternal life to us who receive it.” These words call to mind the separation and the union within the sacrifice, or in other words it calls to mind both Christ’s death and bodily resurrection to new life.



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21. Concluding Rites – Going Forth.

Having received Holy Communion, we draw near to the end of the Mass. In the Eucharist, God truly dwells within us – for as Jesus says in John 6:56: “Whoever eats my flesh and drinks my blood remains in me and I in him.” While we should take what moments of silence are given after receiving Holy Communion to give thanks to God for the gift of Holy Communion. Such thanksgiving prepares to be sent out to live this gift of communion with Christ.

As the fitting conclusion of Holy Communion itself, we all are invited to stand and pray. The priest offers the **Prayer after Communion**, asking God that the mysteries of Christ in the Eucharist may have an effect in all our lives (as was covered in “Insert 12” earlier this fall). Following the “Amen” of the people, the Mass is brought to its proper conclusion as the priest blesses the people and then either he or the deacon dismisses them.

The dismissal of the people of the Mass is best understood as *the “sending” of the people to live more fully in Christ*. The new translation for the concluding rite makes this truth of being “sent” very clear. In addition, it is noteworthy that Pope Benedict XVI himself has given us three new formulas for use in dismissing the

people from Mass. We will consider all of the formulas for dismissal.

“Go, it is sent”

As we know well, the new translation is very literal in interpreting the original Latin prayer texts for Mass. In fact, it is from the Latin text of the dismissal that the word “mass” is derived. The Latin text is *“Ite, missa est.”* Literally translated, the words are “Go, [it] is sent.” At the heart of the statement is the word *missa*. Taken from this word are several familiar words in English, including “mission,” “missal,” and of course “mass.” Hence, if we took the most literal translation of this phrase as “Go, it is sent,” the “it” may be understood as not simply the people themselves, but the “mission” task that they are sent to live.

In the new translation, given that we take the word “mass” from *missa*, the words of the deacon or priest have been rendered **“Go forth, the Mass is ended.”** Note that the text says “Go forth”: we are to go forth to live what we have just offered and received in the Holy Mass. All are entrusted with taking the gift of Holy Communion with Christ into their lives, to offer themselves more perfectly in all that they are called to be. Hence, we have a new beginning from every Mass.

Pope Benedict XVI's Additions

While the word *missa* contains the root of the English word “mission,” the connection of these words has universal significance. Pope Benedict himself observed in 2007 in his exhortation on the Eucharist called “The Sacrament of Charity” that while the word *missa* originally meant “dismissal,” it has grown to contain this character of “mission.” Accordingly, he has given three additional formulas for dismissal from Mass that express this truth of mission. These texts of Pope Benedict are new and will be officially used for the first time in this latest edition of the *Roman Missal*. The new texts are in the box below.

Response of the People

Aware that the priest or deacon may choose from the four options for dismissing the people, the **verbal response of the people is unchanged**. After the dismissal, the people will still respond **“Thanks be to God,”** giving thanks both that they have not only partaken in the Mass, and that they have been entrusted with the mission that they are now sent to live. Hence, the true response of the people is not merely in words – it is by **living the mission of charity that we have offered in the Eucharist and are called to live as his disciples**.

New Dismissal Options – added at the request of Pope Benedict XVI

1. **“Go and announce the Gospel of the Lord.”**

literal translation of “Ite ad Evangelium Domini annuntiandum”

2. **“Go in peace, glorifying the Lord by your life.”**

literal translation of “Ite in pace, glorificando vita vestra Dominum”

3. **“Go in peace.”**

literal translation of “Ite in pace”

- All these formulas emphasize that we “Go” – we are “sent” to live.
- Each formula offers a distinct aspect of evangelization and mission.
- The people respond:
“Thanks be to God.”
 - Not “Thank God it’s over.”
 - Rather “Thanks be to God for the call to be your witness.”

Questions of the Week:

➤ ***What gives the Pope authority to “add” prayers to the Mass?***

As we read in an earlier insert, no individual priest has the authority to change any of the prayers or the ritual. However the pope and bishops are given authority to guard and hand down the liturgical rituals of the Church, always mindful of the purpose of the liturgy and the particular circumstances that may be present. Likewise, the pope, by virtue of being the pope, is able to implement changes or new liturgical practices for the good of the whole Church. Truly, this happens more frequently than we may have considered – such as Pope John Paul II’s declaration of the 2nd Sunday of Easter as “Divine Mercy Sunday,” which he set forth in the year 2000. Thus, mindful of the whole Church throughout the world, the pope may add or eliminate prayers, give further clarification on prayers, or make adjustments to the way the liturgy is celebrated.

➤ ***I notice people who leave right after they receive Holy Communion. Why is this wrong?***

Now that we know from the main section of today’s insert the meaning of the dismissal from Mass as a sending forth, to leave Mass immediately after receiving Holy Communion has two main problems. First of all, we have not fully finished the act of receiving Holy Communion itself (which is only accomplished in the **Prayer after Communion**). Second, we have not yet received the blessing of God or the exhortation to go forth to live the faith that we have just celebrated. By way of analogy, leaving Mass before the final blessing is like a soldier marching into battle without being confirmed or directed in his mission.

Accordingly, we remain for the final blessing and dismissal so that as we are sent, we go forth with the fullness of God’s blessing and commission.

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The Day Has Arrived: We Pray the Mass Anew!

On this 27th day of November, in the year of our Lord 2011, we arrive at multiple new beginnings. Today's Mass celebrates the First Sunday of Advent, the beginning of a new year in the Church and the beginning of that season of the year that places us in a mindset of preparation for the coming of Christ. While our liturgy focuses on continuing to prepare, this day also contains the long awaited *arrival* of the official use of the 3rd edition of *The Roman Missal* in its English translation. Our offering of Mass today has brought to fruition several months of deliberate preparation for this new English translation of the prayers for Mass, culminating in this very day that we are invited to "pray the Mass anew."

As we offer today's Mass with the new translation, it is quite understandable that our prayer may seem a little awkward on several levels. Likely, all of us – including the clergy – will need to rely heavily on a printed text for the prayers, whether from the *Roman Missal* itself, or from a card or booklet in the pews. Such dependence on a book or card may at first cause us to question the sincerity or relevance of our prayer of the Mass for today. However, in this same moment of dependence as we pray the Mass anew on this First Sunday of Advent, we are invited to consider some "big picture" realities that can lead us through and

beyond today into a deeper, more fervent, and ultimately very beautiful participation in the Holy Mass that can last for years to come. Today's insert on this day of arrival seeks to remind us that it is reasonable for our prayer today to be a little bit unfamiliar or even difficult – as such a beginning can lead us to a deeper and more profound encounter with God. Consider the following:

1. This is *only* the first day.

Obviously, each of us has had many "first time" experiences in life: the first day of school, the first practice for a sports team, the first day of a new job, etc. It is likely that each of these "first" occasions was both memorable and filled with unexpected moments. Our first opportunity to pray the new translations may still include some accidental words from of old (e.g. "and also with you..."). Yet today is only the first time. Through each future offering of the Mass, all of us will become more comfortable and more confident in our praying of the new translation. While we may never forget this new experience, in time we will become quite comfortable and confident in our praying of the new translation of the Mass.

2. Remember Jesus' teaching on "childlike trust."

We remember how Jesus exhorts the disciples that "unless you become like children, you will not enter the kingdom of heaven" (Matthew 18:3). Today, might we remember that this new beginning offers us an opportunity to trust Jesus, who willingly gives himself to us in the Eucharist, even if *our words* for praying the Mass are still somewhat unfamiliar. May this moment remind us of the importance of trusting in God's will – for he has willed through the offering of the Mass in his memory the greatest spiritual benefit of communion with him.

3. We are "practicing our faith."

No child is fully successful in walking the first time he stands on his two feet; nor will we be "perfect" in our first offering of the Mass with the new translation. As God's pilgrim people who still journey in this life toward the fullness of life in heaven, we are called to "practice" our faith, that it may become perfected by God in his kingdom. Hence, today we "practice" for the first time according to the new translation, what God himself, through his grace, wills to perfect in us.

4. Repetition leads to deeper understanding.

Related to point "2," children who learn the Lord's Prayer in kindergarten may have little understanding of the words. However, these children learn the prayer with great joy at having it memorized. As these children grow, all the while praying that prayer regularly, they grow in understanding of the *meaning* of the prayer. Today, might we remember that as we pray using the new translations, we are invited to allow these words to continue to resonate in our hearts, increasing their meaning at each and every offering of the Mass.

5. Keeping the fire burning.

To prepare ourselves for the new translation, we have spent several weeks learning new prayer texts, along with hearing explanations of what the texts really mean and why we pray them. As we begin to pray the Mass anew, remember that our preparation was *not just for today*. We can see today as a *the first of many days in years to come*, all of which are meant to draw us more closely to God the Father in heaven, through Jesus Christ, in the unity of the Holy Spirit.

Question of the Week:

➤ *With the arrival of the new translation, will there be any new hymns for Mass?*

Truly the new translation does not directly pertain to hymns that are sung at Mass. However, as we move forward and become more accustomed to the sacral and elevated style of the new translations, it stands to reason that new hymns will likely be written in keeping with this style. Likewise, it is also quite possible that older hymns may be revised to be more consistent with the new translation in style and wording.

Another very real possibility in the future is the increased use of the "Entrance Antiphon" and "Communion Antiphon" for singing instead of hymns. (These "antiphons" are the short verses that missalette typically print in the weekday Mass section of the book). The use of these antiphons as refrains, while a cantor or choir sings verses from a particular psalm, has always been a legitimate option for singing at the beginning of Mass and during Holy Communion. With the new translations of these antiphons, there will likely be new compositions of these antiphons that will become available.



Praying the Mass Anew

*The New Translation of The Roman Missal
and Our Actual Participation at Mass*

Easter 2011: Celebrating Jesus Christ's Resurrection Anew at Mass.

“**T**his is the day the Lord has made; let us rejoice and be glad.” Today, we sing “Alleluia” in praise of Jesus Christ, risen from the dead. We proclaim that our Risen Savior has won the victory over sin and death through his sacrifice on Calvary and his resurrection, and that the Lord offers to all of us a share in his new life. These are among the mysteries of faith that we participate in through the offering of the Holy Mass today, and the renewal of our baptismal promises that we will make. Yet, these saving mysteries of the life, death, and resurrection of Jesus are celebrated beyond today.

While Easter Sunday itself directly places us within the mystery of Jesus' death and resurrection, *his saving sacrifice of love is celebrated at each and every Mass ever offered*. The Mass is far more than simply the meal that Jesus ate with his disciples before he died. Jesus instituted the Holy Eucharist as the way by which all generations until the end of time would be able to enter into his sacrifice on Calvary, partaking fully in the victory over sin and death. Every time the Mass is offered, these mysteries of redemption are made present as the one true sacrifice of Christ. The saving sacrifice is “re-presented” in the sacramental way that

Jesus instituted at the Last Supper, through bread and wine that are offered to the Father. Through our partaking of this offering of Jesus to the Father, we receive not bread and wine, but the Body and Blood of Christ, risen from the dead, that his risen life might truly be in us. Hence, Easter is celebrated not only once a year, but at every offering of the Mass.

Today, as we celebrate Easter, it is important to inform everyone that we are being invited today to prepare to pray the Mass anew. On the most basic level, hopefully all of us know more fully through today's Easter celebration the great gift that the Mass truly is for us – (that we are privileged to receive) the gift of salvation. In the coming months, we are being afforded a beautiful opportunity for this gift that we receive today to grow, as together we learn new words by which we will begin to pray the Mass when Advent arrives on November 27 of this year. Let me explain further.

Several years ago, in the year 2000, the Church issued its latest version of the book from which the Mass is prayed, called the *Roman Missal*. For multiple years since this version was given, work has been done to translate the original texts (written in Latin) into the various languages used throughout the world. A

year ago, the new English translation was given official approval for use in Masses offered for the entire English speaking world. Today, we are in the midst of a process to prepare for the full implementation of these English prayer texts for Mass. On November 27, when we begin the season of Advent, we will begin praying the Mass anew in this updated English translation.

In the meantime, all are invited now to learn to pray the Mass anew. Bulletin inserts such as this one have already been placed in your parish's weekly bulletin for multiple weeks to begin such preparation. These inserts will continue through the remaining weekends of this spring, and during the weekends of next fall. These inserts give an overview and explanation of how we can pray the Mass more fully, while

showing us the new versions of the prayers that we will begin using later this year. In addition, all of the bulletin inserts can be downloaded through the Diocese of Duluth website, www.dioceseduluth.org, under the title "Praying the Mass Anew: Roman Missal Resources." Next fall, weekly attention will be given to each of the prayers that we may learn the new versions well so as to pray them well.

Through learning to pray the Mass anew, may we all grow in deeper understanding of our words of worshiping God at each and every offering of the Holy Mass. May we be opened wider to encountering Jesus and his saving sacrifice. May we always rejoice in this celebration of Easter, made present and offered anew at every Holy Mass.

Questions of the Week:

➤ ***What's a Roman Missal and why do we need it? Doesn't the priest decide what happens at Mass?***

The *Roman Missal* is the title of the book that contains all of the prayers and ritual instructions necessary for offering the Mass. (Note the spelling – we are not speaking of a “missile.”) The word “missal” derives from the Latin word “missa,” meaning “mass.” It belongs to the Holy Father and the bishops of the Church to oversee and put forth the prayers and rituals by which the sacraments of the Church are celebrated. For the Mass, the *Roman Missal* serves this purpose.

Jesus Christ himself offered the first Mass at the Last Supper. His act of taking bread and wine and changing them into his own Body and Blood are at the very core of the Mass. Other elements, such as reading from the Bible during Mass, are also present in the early history of the Church. The Church, rooted as she is in Tradition, is guided through the centuries by the Holy Spirit and entrusted with preserving and handing on the sacraments and the rituals by which they are celebrated. In this way, all Catholics throughout the world truly celebrate the Mass in union with one another, and more properly, in keeping with what Jesus himself established. (Accordingly, priests are to follow what has been handed on to them by the Church.)

➤ ***What value does changing everything have? Shouldn't the Church be trying to meet people where they are?***

The changes in the prayers that are coming are *not for the sake of change*. The changes that are taking place at this time, while they will require all of us (especially priests) to learn new versions of prayers, are meant to more clearly express the original Latin words and to lead us to more fully entering into the mystery of the Mass. All of us will be invited to pray the Mass more fervently by learning this new English version, challenging as that may be. The new translation has the capacity to lead us to a greater understanding of the Mass itself and toward more fully living the Catholic the faith.

The bulletin series, “Praying the Mass Anew” is prepared for use in parish bulletins by the Office of Liturgy of the Diocese of Duluth. For additional information on this page or copies of related pages, log on to www.dioceseduluth.org to download “pdf” files, or contact the Diocese of Duluth, Office of Liturgy and Spirituality, 2830 E. 4th St. Duluth, MN, 55812; 218-724-9111.



Praying the Mass Anew
*The New Translation of The Roman Missal
and Our Actual Participation at Mass*

Special Insert: CHRISTMAS 2011

“**T**oday a light will shine upon us, for the Lord is born for us; and he will be called Wondrous God, Prince of peace, Father of future ages: and his reign will be without end.” These poetic words, drawn from the prophet Isaiah and the Gospel according to Luke are given in the prayers for the Nativity of the Lord “Mass at Dawn,” as the entrance “antiphon” or verse. The words beautifully speak of the birth of Jesus Christ who comes into the world as the true light of all nations. It is in the joy of Christ’s coming that we come to offer the Mass and celebrate Jesus Christ who is “Emmanuel,” or “God with us.”

While the greatest source of joy and renewal in our praying of the Mass this day is in the newborn Christ himself, our own experience today of offering the Mass is marked by its own newness. For, as we pray this Mass, only four weeks have passed since we fully implemented the newly translated prayers of the 3rd edition of the *Roman Missal*. During recent months we have studied these new English translations of prayers and have grown in our understanding of the Mass itself. Finally, back on November 26-27, as we began our Advent journey, we offered the Mass with these new

translations for the first time. On this day that we celebrate the birth of Christ, let us reflect momentarily on how the words of the prayers for Mass impact our celebration. First, however, some background is needed on the new prayers themselves.

In the year 2000 the most recent version of the book that is used in celebrating the Mass, called the *Roman Missal*, was issued by the Church – but only in the Latin language. Since 2000 much work has gone into translating the Latin version of the book into the various languages. In 2009 the translation of the missal into English was completed, and in 2010 it was officially approved for use.

Over the last year parishes throughout the English speaking world have been preparing to implement the English version of this latest edition of the *Roman Missal*. Here in the United States all parishes were to prepare so as to be ready to use this edition fully beginning on November 27. Today, as we celebrate Christmas, we have not only completed such preparation; we have truly begun to pray the Mass anew and are continually being renewed in our prayer.

Our Christmas Masses today illustrate what is new and beautiful in the

new English translation of the prayers. One very visible change that you may have observed are references in the missalette or parish bulletin to today's holy day as "The Nativity of the Lord." Likewise, the prayers of the Mass that directly speak of today's celebration regularly refer to Jesus' birth using this same word "nativity." You may have also noticed some different words used during Mass such as "consubstantial" and "chalice," or the phrase "and with your spirit." All of these choices of words reflect how the English translations of the original Latin prayer texts are more literal, using more elevated, sacral, and doctrinal language. Today, as we celebrate the Lord's birth, the words used in the prayers make the meaning of this

holy day even clearer. In particular, that the prayers frequently speak of Jesus as "incarnate" expresses that God has taken on the nature of man "in the flesh" in the person of Jesus Christ. The "birth" of Christ is only one moment in the truth of his being incarnate and living in the human condition.

In days to come, our prayer of the Mass will continue to be opened up to many opportunities for deeper understanding of our faith and the words that we pray. May today's celebration of the Nativity of the Lord, when Jesus is born for us as the light who shines upon us, help to illumine our path, that we might always pray the Mass in the joy that comes from Christ our Lord.

Questions of the Week:

➤ ***What will be the benefit of these new translations of the prayers?***

When considering the benefits of the new translations, some of the benefits can already be listed while others remain to be known. To this point, the preparation for the new translations has aided many people both in their understanding of the meaning of particular words and prayers used at Mass, and in their understanding of the meaning of the Mass as a whole.

A fundamental principle of how the Church worships is that "the law of prayer is the law of belief" (or in Latin, "*lex orandi, lex credendi.*") This principle means that the way that we pray (including both the words and the rituals) will inform our way of believing and living the faith. That our prayers and ritual actions have very definite meaning in light of Sacred Scripture and Tradition serves us in how we understand the truth of Catholic faith and how we live that truth. Thus, one of the greatest benefits to this new translation has already been seen in the renewed learning of the faith that has taken place in the lives of many believers, and the many more who will continue to grow in their faith *by the way we worship.*

➤ ***Where can I still learn about the new versions of the prayers?***

All of the bulletin inserts entitled "Praying the Mass Anew" are available on the website of the Diocese of Duluth, www.dioceseduluth.org. This series of bulletin inserts treats each of the people's parts of the Mass in great detail. Some of the more notable parts spoken by the priest at Mass are also given extensive explanation. In addition to explaining the prayers, all of these inserts contain explanation and teaching on the parts of the Mass as a whole.

To read or download any of the "Praying the Mass Anew" inserts, simply click on the "Office of Worship" and on "Roman Missal Resources." You will find a menu item there entitled "Praying the Mass Anew" that will give you access to all of the inserts, along with other related materials for the new translations of the *Roman Missal*.

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