

On the First Sunday of Advent (November 27, 2011) Catholics in Canada and in most English-speaking countries throughout the world will begin to use a new edition of the Roman Missal. The Roman Missal is the book containing all the prayers used during the celebration of Mass. From the late fourth century until 1970 Catholics throughout the world celebrated Mass in Latin. Since 1570, the universal Church celebrated Mass using the Missal published by Pope Pius V following the Council of Trent, albeit with minor additions. Following the Second Vatican Council (1962-1965), Pope Paul VI issued a new Missal in Latin and gave permission for the prayers of the Mass to be translated into the various languages of the people who would gather to celebrate Mass. The Missal that we currently use was produced in 1970 and slightly updated in 1975. It was the first edition of the Missal to be published and approved by the Holy Father for use in English.

In 2002, Pope John Paul II issued a new Latin edition of the Roman Missal which included additional prayers for the celebration of Mass in honour of newly-canonized saints and for certain feasts and other occasions. Since that time the Bishops, and other experts associated with them, have been engaged in the arduous task of translation. They have not only been translating new texts, but also revising existing texts in accord with a new set of guidelines for translation which were published by the Vatican in 2001. The document is called *Liturgiam Authenticam*. Now that the work of translation has been completed and the Holy Father has approved the newly-translated texts, the Canadian Bishops are able to publish a new Canadian edition of the Roman Missal. This new edition is the only version of the Roman Missal that is authorized for use in Canada beginning on November 27, 2011.

Why are the words of the Mass in English are changing? In short, they are changing because we have new Latin words in the Missal published by Pope John Paul II and we have new rules for translating in the Roman Instruction, *Liturgiam Authenticam* (2001).

When the Roman Missal issued by Pope Paul VI was published following the Second Vatican Council, the Bishops faced a new challenge. The liturgy had never been celebrated in English. Very few people had any experience of translating liturgical prayers into English. So, the English speaking Bishops established an international commission to do the work of translation. The International Committee on English in the Liturgy (ICEL) was constituted and included Bishop representatives from eleven countries: Australia, Canada, England and Wales, India, Ireland, New Zealand, Pakistan, Philippines, Scotland, South Africa, and the United States of America. They were guided in their work by an instruction from the Vatican called *Comme Le Prevoit* (1969). This instruction directed that the translations be faithful to the Latin, but not necessarily word for word, and in a style of language easily understood. The principal of translation to be used was called “dynamic equivalence”. The instruction also stated that after a period of time all translations would need to be reviewed. ICEL began such a review in 1980.

As a result of the review, people asked for more accurate, word for word translations, the use of the same sentence structure as the Latin (which usually has longer sentences), more formal language to reflect the fact that we are speaking to God in public, and the correction of some mistranslations. For example, the word “Father” was used in the 1970 Missal to translate *Deus*

(God) and *Domine* (Lord). Almost all the requests for an improved translation are found in the new rules for translation listed in *Liturgiam Authenticam*. For this reason, many of the words have been changed in the prayers of the Mass.

What difference will the new words make? Some of the prayers contained in the Roman Missal are ancient, from at least the sixth century; others are very new, composed in recent years. The prayers from the past have nurtured and sustained the faith of generations of Catholic Christians. The newly-composed prayers will nourish our faith and the faith of generations yet to come. The words we use at Mass, along with the signs and symbols, our postures and gestures, all shape our faith. As the ancient axiom states: the law of prayer establishes the law of belief.

The fidelity of the new English translation to the Latin texts and the unity of expression in various languages have the power to unite us as members of one body – the Body of Christ. The beauty and elegance of the prayers have the power to lead us to encounter the mystery of God.

Ultimately, the care and attention we direct to our prayers, as indeed to all we do in the liturgy, will energize us for the mission that Christ has entrusted to us, namely, to make God's love and the Good News of the Kingdom known in our world.

In the *Constitution on the Sacred Liturgy* from the Second Vatican Council, we read that “the liturgy is the summit towards which the activity of the Church is directed; at the same time it is the font from which all her power flows” (#10). Participating in the liturgy is the single most important thing we do as Catholic Christians. In the liturgy we are most completely united with Jesus Christ in offering our lives to God. And it is from the liturgy that we are inspired, energized and empowered to do all good works such as care for the poor, the sick, and the dying, education of our youth, work for justice and peace, and so much more.

In sum, the way we celebrate the liturgy, and the words we use in our liturgical prayer are important. Our faith relies on them and the future of the Church does too.

So, what are the changes? As the song says: Let's start at the very beginning!

Following the Sign of the Cross the priest greets the assembly with the words: *The Lord be with you*. The new response will be: **And with your spirit**. These words accurately translate the Latin: *Et cum spiritu tuo*, and will bring English-speaking Catholics in line with all other language groups. The greeting is taken from the Book of Ruth (2.4) and the response is found in many of the greetings in the letters of St. Paul. For St. Paul, the spirit is that place deep within each person which is closest to God. The greeting of the priest and response of the people express our awareness of the presence of the Holy Spirit in all. The people's response especially acknowledges the presence of the Spirit, conferred on the priest at Ordination, to celebrate the Eucharist for the People of God. Each time this greeting is extended during the Mass, the response is the same.

Participants at Mass will notice a few word changes in the other greetings of the priest. For example, the first greeting in the Missal reads: *The grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, and the love of God and the communion of the Holy Spirit be with you all.* The word “communion” replaces “fellowship” and more accurately translates the Latin: *communicatio*. The word “communion” is a rich theological word which expresses the unique relationship between the persons of the Blessed Trinity, and the unique relationship which exists among the baptized.

The second greeting which the priest may use has also been retranslated. However, the changes were made here simply to reflect the word order of the Latin, the same word order that is found in Paul’s Letters.

The words for the Penitential Act have been significantly revised to accurately translate the Latin text. In the first option, commonly known as the Confiteor, we have a return to an older English version of the text – the one used during the experimental period before 1970.

The priest invites all to acknowledge their sins and so prepare themselves to celebrate the sacred mysteries. Then, after a brief silence, all say 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,
through my fault, through my fault, through my most grievous fault;
therefore I ask blessed Mary ever-Virgin,
all the Angels and Saints,
and you, my brothers and sisters,
to pray for me to the Lord our God.

The addition of the words: *greatly sinned* translate the Latin: *peccavi nimis*, and echo the words of King David who acknowledged his sin before the Lord (1 Chronicles 21.8). The words: *through my fault, through my fault, through my most grievous fault*, are direct translations of the Latin: *mea culpa, mea culpa, mea maxima culpa*. As these words are spoken, all strike their breast once. The word: *therefore*, in the next line translates the Latin: *Ideo*. Because we have sinned, we therefore turn to Mary and the saints and seek their intercession before God.

The second option has been recast in English and wonderfully echoes the Scripture texts on which it is based.

Priest: Have mercy on us, O Lord.
All: For we have sinned against you.
Priest: Show us, O Lord, your mercy.
All: And grant us your salvation.

The first two lines of the Penitential Act 2 are based on the Book of Baruch 3.2. The second two lines are taken from Psalm 85.8, a text which we use as a Responsorial Psalm during Advent.

The third form of the Penitential Act, which is in the form of a litany, has changed very little and provides a model for additional texts which may be freely composed by the priest.

The words to the Glory to God (*Gloria*) have been significantly altered in English in order to accurately express the Latin text. Before pointing out the changes, it will be helpful to know a bit more about the translation process which took place prior to 1970. The English-speaking Bishops through their international commission (ICEL) worked closely with an ecumenical body, the International Consultation on English Texts (ICET), in order to develop common English liturgical texts which could be used in all the major Christian denominations. As a result, some of the translations were less than accurate, but appealing to all.

The first change we notice in the Glory to God is in the first two lines, which have frequently been used as a sung refrain. The new words are:

Glory to God in the highest,
and on earth peace to people of good will.

The Latin text reads:

*Gloria in excelsis Deo
et in terra pax hominibus bonae voluntatis.*

The words, *bonae voluntatis*, were omitted in the previous English translation.

The next section of the Glory to God has greatly changed to include every word that is found in the Latin text:

We praise you,
we bless you,
we adore you,
we glorify you,
we give you thanks for your great glory,
Lord God, heavenly King,
O God, almighty Father.

The present English translation abbreviated this text to express the general ideas, but did not faithfully translate the text in its entirety. The result of the new translation is a longer and more complete text. However, it poses challenges for musical settings. There are far too many words to be sung using the existing melodies. For this reason, all parishes will be engaged in learning a new musical setting of the Glory to God.

During the Liturgy of the Word, the only change in the assembly's words is found in the Profession of Faith. The sentence structure has been changed to match the sentence structure in the Latin. For example, in the Apostles' Creed, instead of nine sentences in the present text, we will have three sentences in the new text, to match the number of sentences in the Latin text. This has been done so that the connections between each article of the Creed are more fully expressed.

In the Apostles' Creed, the current words: *He descended to the dead* have been translated: *he descended into hell*. The word "hell" translates the Latin phrase: *ad inferos*. It does not refer to the place of the damned, or the abode of Satan. Rather, it refers to the dwelling place of the righteous who died before Christ. The Risen Lord descended to this place to draw these people up to share in his victory over sin and death. Many Eastern icons beautifully express this doctrine by depicting the Risen Lord, standing on top of the grave, reaching down to pull Adam and Eve by the hand and raise them to share in his glorious victory.

In the Nicene Creed, there are a few significant word changes. First of all, the prayer begins with: *I believe*, instead of: *We believe*. The new translation matches the Latin: *Credo*. Even though the Nicene Creed originally began with "We believe" it has traditionally begun with "I believe" when used in the liturgy. St. Thomas Aquinas explains it this way: when we pray in the liturgy, we pray as one body. Therefore, "I believe" is fitting.

Three other new words or phrases appear in the Nicene Creed. The *only Son of the Father* now reads: *the Only-Begotten Son, born of the Father before all ages*. This translates the Latin: *Filium Deo Unigenitum* and makes clear the unique sonship of Christ. We are all adopted sons and daughters by virtue of our baptism. Christ is the only-begotten Son of the Father. The second new word is "consubstantial". Instead of saying: *one in being with the Father*, we will say: *consubstantial with the Father*. This translates the Latin: *consubstantialem Patri*, and expresses the true divinity of Christ. Finally, instead of saying: *by the power of the Holy Spirit he was born of the Virgin Mary*, we will say: *and by the Holy Spirit was incarnate of the Virgin Mary*. This translates the Latin: *Et incarnatus est de Spiritu Sancto ex Maria Virgine*. The word "incarnate" is an important theological word which expresses our belief in the humanity of Christ and echoes the words of the prologue of St. John's Gospel: And the Word became flesh and lived among us (John 1.14).

During the Preparation of the Gifts, the words of the priest have been slightly altered. However, the only change in the assembly's responses is found in the last line of the concluding prayer. The word "holy" has been added to match the Latin text: *Ecclesiae suae sanctae*.

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

The Eucharistic Prayer, the highpoint of the entire liturgy, begins with what is called the Preface Dialogue. It begins with the priest's greeting: *The Lord be with you*, and the new response: *And with your spirit*. The second part is unchanged. However, the final part of the dialogue is changed in the assembly's response to match the Latin text: *Dignum et justum est*. The new response is: *It is right and just*. The priest will then take up this response and continue the prayer with these words: *It is truly right and just...*

The words of the Holy, Holy, Holy (*Sanctus*) have been changed only in the first line. Instead of saying: *Holy, holy, holy Lord, God of power and might*, we will say: *Holy, Holy, Holy Lord God of Hosts*. This translates: *Sanctus, Sanctus, Sanctus Dominus Deus Sabaoth*. According to the punctuation in the present text, the words "God of power and might" describe the Lord. In the new text, "Holy Lord God of hosts" is the name by which we are addressing God. The word "hosts" refers to the armies or groups of angels around the throne of God. See the vision in the Book of the Prophet Isaiah (6.3).

The invitation to the memorial acclamation has changed. Instead of the priest interrupting the Eucharistic Prayer with an admonition or instruction addressed to the assembly (*Let us proclaim the mystery of faith*), he will simply say: *The mystery of faith*. This matches the Latin: *Mysterium fidei*. The familiar first form of the acclamation: *Christ has died, Christ is risen, Christ will come again*, has never been in the Latin edition of the Roman Missal, and therefore, will not be found in the new English edition. Instead, the fuller Latin text has been freshly translated and included: *We proclaim your Death, O Lord, and profess your Resurrection, until you come again*. The other two acclamations have likewise been retranslated as follows:

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

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

During the Communion Rite there is a notable change (to match the Latin text) in the invitation which the priest extends and in the assembly's response:

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 priest's text echoes the words of John the Baptist (John 1.29) and the words from the Book of Revelation 19.9. The assembly's response echoes the words of the Roman Centurion, found in Matthew 8.8.

In addition to the changes in the words of the assembly, the Revised English edition of the Roman Missal contains many changes in the words spoken by the priest. These changes have been made in order to bring the English text in line with the Latin text and to express more fully the rich meaning of the prayers of the Church. Many of the prayers are biblically inspired and the new translations will make this obvious. One example will illustrate this point.

During the past forty years, we have become familiar with these words, spoken by the priest in the Third Eucharistic Prayer: *From age to age you gather a people to yourself, so that from east to west a perfect offering may be made to the glory of your name.* The new text, a more accurate translation of the Latin reads: *and you never cease to gather a people to yourself, so that from the rising of the sun to its setting a pure sacrifice may be offered to your name.* These words echo the words found in the Book of the Prophet Malachi (1.11) Furthermore, they highlight the eternal offering rather than a geographical or spatial offering of the one pure sacrifice offered to God.

In addition to the changes in the words, there are a very few changes in the postures of the assembly which are being introduced at this time. These changes are specified in the new edition of the General Instruction of the Roman Missal (the document which provides the instructions for celebrating Mass).

The first change takes place during the Presentation of the Gifts. The priest invites all to pray, saying: *Pray brothers and sisters that your sacrifice and mine may be acceptable to God, the almighty Father.* All stand and then respond with the words: *May the Lord accept the sacrifice at your hands...* The assembly will no longer wait to stand until after they have made their response.

The second change is more of a clarification. The Canadian edition of the General Instruction states that the approved gesture for the sign of peace is a handshake or a bow. The Instruction makes no mention of any words being exchanged at this moment.

The third change is related to approaching Communion. As each person approaches the minister to receive Communion he or she is asked to make a simple bow of the head. This is a sign of reverence in immediate preparation for the act of receiving Communion, which, in Canada, is to be received standing. This gesture is made only once before receiving Communion. It is not repeated again when receiving Communion from the chalice. Other personal expressions of piety or devotion, such as profound bows or genuflections are not appropriate. A common gesture of reverence is desirable to foster the unity of faith which Communion expresses.

One of the new dismissal texts in the Roman Missal states: *Go in peace, glorifying the Lord by your life.* To these words, we say: *Thanks be to God.*

May the new words of the Mass and our attentiveness to the common postures and gestures in the liturgy lead all of us to take up this commission with renewed commitment.

CHANGES TO THE LITURGY
THE REVISED ROMAN MISSAL

