

New Missal to be ready for Advent

The Third edition of the Roman Missal will be implemented in the Dioceses of Ireland on the First Sunday of Advent, Nov. 27, 2011. A programme of preparation for the new texts has begun in the Derry Diocese which will include workshops for priests, people in parishes, parish liturgy teams, musicians and teachers. It is hoped that in the eight months leading up to November, and also as Ireland prepares to host the 50th International Eucharistic Congress, the introduction of the new translation will help us gain a deeper understanding of the Eucharist. The Mass itself, of course, is not changing.

A Springboard for Renewal

It is expected that the introduction of the new Missal will bring some uneasiness for both priests and people. Change does not come easily for any of us. Pope Benedict recognised this when he greeted the new translation back in April 2010 when he said: *Many will find it hard to adjust to unfamiliar texts after nearly forty years of continuous use of the previous translation. ... I pray that ... the change will serve as a springboard for a renewal and a deepening of Eucharistic devotion all over the English-speaking world.*

The new translation, which is much closer to the original Latin texts of the Mass, will sound different at first. This translation restores many of the scriptural foundations of the missal which were overlooked in the first translations back in the late sixties and early seventies. We will probably also notice a humbler tone because the translation we are using now omitted many of the words in the original Latin which referred to the contrite attitude of our prayer.

Challenges and Opportunities

The introduction of the revised translation certainly presents us with challenges. Being comfortable with the prayers we already have. Means that we will probably experience a certain sense of loss and at first the vocabulary may sound complex and may feel more like reading than praying. The introduction of the missal has already become caught up with debates and controversy about leadership and decision-making in the Church.

Speaking in England during his visit last September, Pope Benedict encouraged us to *'seize the opportunity that the new translation offers for in-depth catechesis on the Eucharist and renewed devotion in the manner of its celebration'*. Our task is to embrace the new missal as an opportunity to understand more about the celebration of the Eucharist which is a precious gift to the Church.

There will be two new forms of the dismissal at the end of Mass. As the Mass ends, the priest will invite the people to "Go and announce the Gospel of the Lord" or "Go in peace, glorifying the Lord by your life". These words express clearly the link

between what happens at Mass and our mission to go out and live sincerely as members of the People of God, the Body of Christ.

Questions and Answers

Is the Mass changing?

The structure of the Mass is not changing. The order and the actions of the Mass remain unchanged. The readings at Mass are not changed. However, with the introduction of the new edition of the Roman Missal throughout the English-speaking world, we will all notice a change in how the Mass sounds. The translations of a number of our prayer texts from the original Latin have changed – sometimes by a particular word or in the word order. Prayers that we have become used to reciting by memory now have to be relearned. Prayers that we are used to hearing the priest say will sound different to us.

The style of language we will hear and pray may seem more formal to us and perhaps, in parts, more complex. But over time, with the praying of these texts, the sound of the Mass will again become familiar to us.

What is the Roman Missal?

The term ‘Missal’ is used to refer to the book that contains all the prayers and instructions for the celebration of the Mass. The Missal is first written in Latin and this Latin text is then translated into the particular language of the people. In this way, while the Mass may be celebrated in many languages across the Roman Catholic world, it is the same core Latin text that is being prayed by the Church. We have been using our current Missal since St Patrick’s Day 1975. It is sometimes referred to as the Missal of Pope Paul VI. Now we have a new edition of that Missal.

When and why are we getting a new edition of the Roman Missal?

The new edition of the Missal will come into full use over a period of time between September and 27 November 2011, the First Sunday of Advent. The new edition is necessary for a number of reasons. Firstly, in the years since 1975 when our current Missal was published, a number of additional texts have been made available for use in the Mass. These include additional Eucharistic Prayers, some new Masses of the Blessed Virgin Mary and Masses for over twenty new Feasts of Saints (for example, St Pius of Pietrelcina/Padre Pio, Edith Stein, Maximilian Kolbe). The new material is to be included in the Missal so that it can be used in our celebrations.

Secondly, in 2001 the Holy See issued new directives for the translation of the Latin texts. Translators were asked to make the English text follow more closely the original Latin in its wording and structure. They were also asked to strengthen the biblical language and images in the texts and to reintroduce some theological vocabulary that may have been lost over the years.

Across the English-speaking world the new edition of the Roman Missal will therefore contain both new material and a new style of translation.

Where do I find the changes in the people's prayers at Mass?

The Mass missalette and the congregational card will have all the prayers and responses that are changing. These are also available on www.catholicbishops.ie and www.liturgy-ireland.ie, accompanied by brief video explanations.

There are new translations of 'I confess', 'Glory to God in the highest', the Creeds, the acclamations in the Eucharistic Prayers, 'Lord, I am not worthy' and a number of other prayers and responses, which are very slightly changed; for example, in the Holy, Holy, we say 'Lord God of hosts' and in the response to 'Pray, brothers and sisters', the addition of one word, 'holy' before 'Church'; where we responded 'And also with you', we now say 'And with your spirit'.

Preparing for the *Roman Missal, Third Edition:*
The Sanctus
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When the prophet Isaiah beheld the worship of the heavenly temple, he was compelled to join in the first part of the Sanctus cry heard all around him: Holy, Holy, Holy Lord God of hosts! (Is. 6.1-13). Yet instantly, he realized that his sins were keeping him at a distance from the divine action he saw. When at last an angel came to cleanse his lips with hot coals, Isaiah was made worthy to acclaim God all-holy along with the entire heavenly host.

We hear the second part of the Sanctus in the Palm Sunday cheers of those who welcomed Jesus into Jerusalem, their shouts from Ps. 118.26 echoing in St. Matthew's gospel: "Hosanna to the Son of David! Blessed is he who comes in the name of the Lord! Hosanna in the highest!" (Mt. 21.9-16). No doubt these verses were first taken from a festive hymn that sang the praise of God in the person of the king or high priest, emerging from the temple rites to bless the assembly of Israel. For us, however, the union of Isaiah's and Matthew's words produce our familiar "Sanctus", said or sung at the start of the meal Jesus invites us to share: his eternal sacrifice before the Father, now joined to his body on earth.

The 2011 translation of the Sanctus will restore one of its key phrases, first altered in ecumenical circles in the late twentieth century. As the prophet Isaiah and later, the apostle John (Rev.4.8), have told us, the angels address God ceaselessly with the same title: "*Dominus Deus Sabaoth.*" In the wake of Vatican Council II (1963-65), ecumenical groups urged Catholic, Orthodox and Protestant churches to adopt a "common text" for the Sanctus that would promote a more uniform eucharistic celebration between churches and ecclesial communions. That text then altered the ancient, biblical title for God as sung by the angels to read the way we have known it since about 1973: "Holy, Holy, Holy *Lord, God of power and might.*" However, our recently approved rendering of the Sanctus will restore the biblical language that unites men and angels, heaven and earth in a single song: "Holy, Holy, Holy *Lord God of hosts!*"

There are two important effects produced by this change in translation. The first allows biblical texts to stand on their own in the liturgy. The Bible is the "soul" of the Mass and both John Paul II and Benedict XVI have insisted that, wherever possible, the Mass should resound with the Word of God, whether in text or rite. Naturally enough, this allows us to become more deeply people of the Word-made-flesh, whose voice we hear and body we become at every Mass. In its biblical form, the Sanctus is not a direct address to God – "Holy, holy, holy Lord, God of power and might" - - but a single, undivided cry of the angels, without pause or apposition between the quality of all-holiness (*Sanctus*) and the title of the un-namable

One (*Dominus Deus Sabbaoth*). The revised Mass texts of 2011 now resound with this same biblical style: “Holy, holy, holy Lord God of hosts.”

A second effect is a less often considered one: the realization that the Eucharist is already our entrance into eternal life, where we worship God in harmony with the angels. Indeed, at each celebration of every sacrament, we join with the angels to re-enter the Passover of Jesus, his “gift-making” of himself to the Father. In this endless exchange between ourselves and God, the angels play a crucial role on our behalf, rejoicing in the same Word through whom they also were created and redeemed. At several other moments in the Mass – such as the Confiteor, the intoning of the Gloria, or the closing phrases of every Preface – we are reminded as in the Sanctus that we are not alone before God, but instead belong to what Origen of Alexandria would call the “two-fold Church” of angels *and* saints.

Perhaps it is the Epistle to the Hebrews (12.22-24) that gives us the final vision of this complex friendship we enjoy at every liturgy: “But you have come to Mount Zion and to the city of the living God, the heavenly Jerusalem, and to innumerable angels in festal gathering, and to the assembly of the first-born who are enrolled in heaven, and to a judge who is God of all, and to the spirits of the just, made perfect.”

When we can pray this way at Mass, asked St. John Chrysostom, what room is there for sadness?

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“Why is there a revised edition of the Roman Missal?”

Rev. Dennis McManus /© *Magnificat Magazine*

There is only one reason why the Church changes the liturgy: to help us celebrate the mysteries of our redemption more deeply. No matter the kind of change – musical, ritual or textual – the Church’s motive is always to strengthen our unity with Christ, whose prayer before the Father has become our own in every liturgy.

In light of this, Pope John Paul II felt the need for translations in the Roman Rite to be more poetic wherever possible, more faithful to their Latin originals, and to capture as much of the Church’s belief as they could in every line. As a result, in 2001 he called for all liturgical books to be re-translated as soon as the Bishops of each country could arrange it. For John Paul II, the Mass was a powerful statement to the world about faith in Christ -- and if our liturgy wasn’t fully professing our ancient belief in a modern voice, then it wasn’t yet the Church fully at prayer.

An example or two may help to illustrate the Holy Father’s concerns. Throughout his life under Communist and Nazi dictatorships, John Paul saw how important it was for every individual to make their choice to follow Christ an intensely personal one. In the dark years of World War II, many Christians failed to live their faith and often lost it as a result. One of John Paul’s remedies for this modern kind of disbelief was to insist that each of us takes ownership of our own faith by professing it at Mass as individuals. So, in place of the usual plural, “We believe,” the new translation of the Creed will restore the ancient, singular form of “I believe” – reminding us of the need to keep our faith strong by keeping it personal. As Thomas More concludes in the great film, *Man for All Seasons*, when it comes to faith, what’s important is not simply “that I believe it, but that I believe it!”

In just the same way, the Church will intensify our confession of sins when we recite the new version of the *Confiteor* at the start of Mass. The revised wording of that well-known prayer will ask us to admit our failings by stating three times, that sins are committed “through my fault, through my fault, through my most grievous fault” – raising our awareness of sinfulness in general – and helping us to take complete ownership of what we do wrong. Both Creed and Confiteor then teach us that as only *I* can make an act of faith for myself, so only *I* can confess my own sins.

Pope John Paul’s desire to strengthen liturgical translation will soon be realized by his successor, Pope Benedict XVI, who has

approved the use of a new rendering of the Mass in all English-speaking countries, beginning on the first Sunday of Advent in the year 2011. Most of these changes will affect only the priest or deacon, while a few others will alter some of the more familiar parts of the Mass for all of us. In every instance, the Church will challenge us to pay more attention to *how we pray*, and to deepen our understanding of *what we pray*.

Another goal of the new translation is to highlight biblical texts and allusions throughout the prayers at Mass. One example is especially powerful for its pairing of two unlikely gospel voices. We hear the first of these when the priest holds up the body and blood of Christ after the *Lamb of God* and says, "Behold the Lamb of God, behold him who takes away the sins of the world!" Here, it is John the Baptist speaking, who as he sees Jesus for the first time, recognizes him as the Messiah with these very words (Jn.1.8). In response, we now pray at Mass in only a paraphrase of the Roman centurion's appeal: "Lord, I am not worthy to receive you; only say the word, and I shall be healed." But the new English of the Mass will take the centurion's prayer (Mat. 8.8) and put his very words on our lips: "Lord, I am not worthy that you should enter under my roof, but only say the word and *my soul* shall be healed" – substituting concern for ourselves here in place of the centurion's plea for his dying slave. This more literal use of the bible throughout our liturgical prayer is typical of the new language of the Mass and keeps us close to those who spoke with a faith that welcomes prophets and soldiers to the same heavenly banquet.

Some new elements have also been added to the Roman Missal for new occasions, such as prayers over the people at the end of Masses in Lent; the celebration of vigil Masses on the evenings before the feasts of the Ascension and the Epiphany; new blessings at Masses for the sick and the dying, and some revised rubrics for the many celebrations of Holy Week. These kinds of additions help to update the Roman Missal, as the Church stays current with the best ways to meet the needs of the faithful in every season of life.

One of the most important goals of the Church's reforms following the Second Vatican Council was to deepen the participation of all of the faithful in the Liturgy. May the renewed translation of the Mass in 2011 strengthen our celebration of Word and Sacrament, that in our proclaiming and our hearing, our offering and our eating, we may, as Augustine has said, "become what we have received."

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