

LITURGY NOTES

A Resource for Worship & Spirituality Commissions

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New Book... New Words

Over the last few years, all of the English speaking National Bishops' Conferences have been working with translation experts to translate the texts used for Mass. The book used by the priest at eucharistic liturgies is officially called the Roman Missal. Currently, we call that "red book" the Sacramentary; however, in the future it will be called the Roman Missal. This Roman Missal contains all of the prayers the presider proclaims at the Eucharistic liturgy. For instance, the prayers for a feast day, solemn blessings and Eucharistic prayers are all within the Roman Missal.



The current prayer texts with which we are familiar are from the Missal of Pope Paul VI. At the Second Vatican Council, a gathering of the bishops from all over the world by Pope John XXIII, it was decided that liturgical texts could be prayed officially in vernacular languages. This approval came in November of 1963 when they issued the Constitution on the Sacred Liturgy. This Constitution gives the vision for all subsequent reforms in the Roman Catholic Church. Not only was English now possible for liturgy, but also the bishops reformed the liturgical books for the sacraments, including the Eucharist or Mass. The result was the 1969 Missal of Paul VI, a fully revised book though published in Latin. Subsequently, the missal was translated into vernacular languages around the world. In the United States, obviously, that meant English.

In the year 2000, to commemorate the new millennium, Pope John Paul II established a new missal; that is, a

revision to include more ancient prayers and saints' days that have established since the publication of the Missal of Pope Paul VI. As with the previous Roman Missal, this one was first published in Latin. Thus, national bishop conferences have been working to translate the missal in the local languages of the people, in our case, English.

One reason for the new translation is obviously the publication of a new missal. The second is due to new norms for translating liturgical texts. A document called "Authentic Liturgy" (*Liturgiam Authenticam* in Latin) from the Holy See called for more literal translations from the Latin into English. A considerable amount of time has been spent trying to accurately translate the Latin texts in English in a literal manner.

It is important to note that while some of the texts, already having been submitted by the US Bishops and approved
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Resources

Here are some resources for your worship and spirituality commission.

- ❖ **United States Conference of Catholic Bishops' website:** <http://www.usccb.org/romanmissal>
- ❖ **Federation of Diocesan Liturgical Commissions** has a liturgical catechesis page. Check it out: http://www.fdlc.org/Liturgy_Catechesis.htm
- ❖ A 2008 article by Fr. Paul Turner on the Roman Missal originally published in *America Magazine* is available at the author's website: http://www.paulturner.org/pdf_files/America2.pdf

**This
Issue**

The Roman Missal, Part I

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from Rome, they are not to be used. In his June 23, 2008 letter, Cardinal Arinze, then prefect of the Holy See's Congregation for the Discipline of the Sacraments and Divine Worship, stated, "...

the Congregation does *not* intend that these texts should be put into liturgical use immediately." Since the beginning of the translation process, the English speaking bishops' conferences have been working on segments since the missal is so large. Once a segment was approved by all the English speaking bishops' conferences, they would send the segment to Rome for the Holy See's approval. Some of these segments have already been given approval, while others have not. In his letter, Cardinal Arinze gives two reasons why approval did not wait for the entire missal to have been translated: First, so that



musical settings may be composed, and second, for the education of priests, deacons and lay faithful.

In the new translation, both the priest's parts and the people's parts have changed. For example, when the priest presider proclaims, "The Lord be with you." the people reply with "And with your Spirit." "And with your Spirit" is now translated directly from scripture: Second Timothy 4:22. Again, this is a more literal translation of the Latin text.

In November of 2009, the United States Conference of Catholic Bishops approved the last segment of the new translation.

In future issues of *Liturgy News*, the Office of Worship will be providing more information. ✠

Questions for Discussion:

1. How do you think people in the liturgical assembly listen, hear and take to heart the proclaimed prayer texts during liturgy? What is required to really listen to proclaimed prayer?
2. What could your parish leadership (worship & spirituality commission, music director, liturgist, etc.) do to begin preparing parishioners for the new Roman Missal, without using the texts at liturgy?

Notable Quote:

In this reform both texts and rites should be so drawn up that they express more clearly the holy things they signify and that the Christian people, as far as possible, are able to understand them with ease and to take part in the rites fully, actively and as befits a community."

(Constitution on the Sacred Liturgy, article 21, para. 2)

